

4.14 Valley of Dry Bones

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Date: Dec. 3 & 7

Unit Verse: For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

The Point
God Brings Life

STORY SUMMARY: Valley of Dry Bones

In our lesson this week, the people of God are still in exile from their homes and are feeling lost and hopeless. God gives the prophet Ezekiel a vision that emphasizes God's love and power to bring hope to the hopeless and give life to those who think they are dead. The Jewish people in exile were feeling hopeless. God had promised Abraham a nation of descendants and a land. God had blessed the people with God's presence in the temple. But through the people's disobedience, they were now captive far away from their homes, and the temple was destroyed. The people say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely" (Ezekiel 37:11). The people feel abandoned by God, or even possibly that their God was not as powerful as they thought. God responds to their crisis of faith with a new vision for the prophet Ezekiel. In this vision, God shows Ezekiel a valley full of dried-up bones. God asks the prophet a key question: "Can these bones live?" Without our scope of understanding, we can confidently say, "No! Once something is dead, it is dead." However, that is not God's answer. Through the power of God's words and God's Breath (or Spirit-the original word is the same), the natural process of death and decay is reversed, and the dead are resurrected to new life.

THE POINT: God's powerful presence brings new life and heals broken relationships.

Ezekiel's vision gave the people a promise of hope based on the love and presence of God's Spirit with them. God gives the people a promise of the end of exile and a return home, and a hope of new life and new connection with God's Spirit. This vision also speaks to us on the side of Jesus' resurrection. God gives us the promise of new life, both today and forevermore, and the hope of the Holy Spirit's abiding presence, which is closer than our own breath.

BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS: Return from Exile

After a series of wars and changes in rulers, the Jews in exile were finally permitted to return to their homeland in the sixth century BCE. The temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem. Not all of God's people returned to Judah; they had come to know that God was present with them outside of their homeland and that it was possible to worship God outside of the temple, so they remained in the communities in which they had formed connections. The "dry bones" metaphor refers to the nation of Israel being restored to wholeness and the exile ending.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Fellowship

God's people were feeling alone and deserted during their many years in exile. Sometimes we also feel alone and as if God has deserted us. It is important to remember that we have a group of friends at church who are empowered by God's Spirit to help us.

(S&T)

Hope Youth Volunteers

What a wild story. Maybe you feel dried out. You might be counting down the days till you have a break or until this holiday season is over. If you are feeling like some dry out bones there is hope. God promises to breath new life into each of us. What a wonderful blessing to know that we have a God who can make all things new. He will promises to give us His spirit and give us a new life here now and forever. What a wonderful comfort and blessing. Praying that you feel his presence and power as you serve the Lord.

Blessings

The Youth Team