

Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones - Part 3

by Steve Evans

Revival is linked to obedience and unity in the church, and it's a time of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Duration: 43:52

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, two brothers who were initially at odds with each other were challenged to reconcile. After a confrontation at one of the brother's houses, they were able to reconcile and apologize to each other in front of the church. The speaker emphasizes the importance of unity within the body of Christ, using the analogy of a body with all its parts functioning together. He also highlights the need for revival and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The sermon concludes with a call to the Church of Seamanstamper to rise up and impact the nations.

Transcript

One of the passages we read, Ezekiel chapter 37, we've been looking at it for two Sundays, this is our third Sunday. It's the Valley of Dry Bones. And it's the prophet Ezekiel, many, many years ago, being taken into a valley which was full of dry bones.

And God said to him, this is what my people are like now. They're just dry bones. But you preach to them, tell them the word of God.

And when you do, he says, they're going to come to life. It was an impossible ministry, but Ezekiel prophesied in those verses that we read about. And he sees miracles happening before his eyes.

By faith, he preaches to bones, dry bones. And what he sees, we are told in those verses 7 to 10, tendons come and link them together. The bones come together, tendons link them together.

Flesh covers them, skin is added to them. And eventually, which we'll come on to perhaps next week, breath enters them, and they become a living army. Now, that's it.

Now, why are we studying that, something that happened so many years ago? It's because we believe that when God visits his people again, this happens. That when God comes to us, and we need that, that dry bones, which might well represent our lives, we're as dry as anything, and as dead as anything, perhaps, that when that happens, we'll see and experience this happening. And I want to look at that this

morning with you.

Verses 7 to 10, we'll be looking at. So, I prophesied as I was commanded. So, the first point I want to say is from verse 7, I prophesied as I was commanded, is this.

Revival, it's all about revival, okay? Revival means coming back to life, if you like. Revival is linked to obedience. He said, I prophesied as I was commanded by God.

I did exactly what God told me to do. I had no arguments. He doesn't say he argued with God, does he? There were no excuses.

There were no questionings. There was no rationalizing. Say, how in the world can this happen, Lord? Didn't say that.

He didn't sort of look at those bones and say, Well, I better get a team of paramedics ready for these people here now. I better get a team of osteopaths ready to get these bones in working order. And then massagers to get the muscles back working.

Or physios on reconstructive surgery. All of that human speaking and thinking went out through the window. Says this, I prophesied as God commanded me to do.

I did what God commanded me to do. And I depended on God to do it, not on myself. I prophesied as I was commanded.

Obedience, you know, is part of being a Christian. Obedience is part of living the Christian life. And obedience is part of knowing God's blessing descending upon us.

This is what it says in the book of Acts. You want the Holy Spirit in your life, don't you? And so do I. It says this in the book of Acts. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him.

God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him. You obey him. Ask for the Spirit and obey him.

And God will give you the Spirit in fullness. You have the Spirit as a believer. But the Spirit in fullness.

Why is it that we try to do everything and anything that we can to bring life to a dark and dead world in our own strength? But what God wants is faith and obedience. To see what he can do. I wonder, how obedient are you in your life? How obedient am I? In the work of the Lord, how obedient are we? What if Ezekiel had been disobedient to God? Would that valley of dry bones have come to life? The answer is probably no.

God might have found another way. But as far as Ezekiel was concerned, he was obedient and God used him. We are told even about Jesus himself.

Listen to this verse. Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered. By the things that he suffered.

Authorized version. Jesus learned obedience. If he learned obedience, we need it.

We need to be obedient to the commands of God. We need to be obedient to the will of God. Andy referred to that verse we sang.

To take away my selfish will and make me wholly thine. Revival is linked to obedience. Let's move on to my second point.

I've got to be careful with this one. Revival can be noisy. It says in verse 7, listen to it.

There was a noise. A rattling sound. It's in the verse there.

And as I was prophesying, there was a noise. A rattling sound. And the bones and so on came together.

You see, it was quite peaceful before. If you wanted peace, you could have gone to that valley of dry bones. And you could have sat there.

It would have been the peace and the silence of the cemetery. If that's what you wanted, you could have had it. And of course, silence can be good.

Silence can be wonderful. There is such a thing as being still and silent in the presence of God. And just knowing his presence.

But silence can also be the silence of the cemetery. The silence of death. You know, when a baby is born, it cries.

It makes a noise. Not a very pretty noise. It shows it's alive.

It makes a noise. Corpses are quiet. Becky read from the second chapter of Acts.

Do you know there was a noise that day as well? What she read was this. There came a sound like the blowing of a violent wind from heaven. And it filled the whole house.

The sound did. And the wind. There was a sound from heaven.

Colin Peckham, who's been here, has written a book called Sounds from Heaven. He's talking about revival in the Hebrides. In the 1940s, 50s.

There was a noise on the day of Pentecost. There was a sound from heaven. So don't be surprised if revival is a bit noisy.

Don't be surprised if when bones are brought back together for the first time in a hundred years, how long have they been like that? Don't be surprised if there's a bit of noise. Don't be surprised if there's some life signs around. You know, static bones make no noise.

Living bones join together, form living beings, and there might well be some noise. Now I'm not into noisiness for its own sake, even in Christian worship. I find it at times offensive.

I find it at times childish. I find, at times, and quite often I find it unnecessary and distracting. I find it sometimes self-exalting, and sometimes it's just human exuberance.

I say all of that in order to say that we're not going into noise for noise's sake. But when God moves, don't let's expect things to be the same. Don't let's expect the silence of the cemetery to continue when God moves.

Change will come. A sound from heaven will come. I'm not talking about a literal sound.

It might be, but I'm not saying that. I was reading of Andrew Murray in South Africa, in his church. They were praying for revival.

He'd been preaching about it. He wasn't in the prayer meeting this particular day. He came from another meeting quite late.

By the time he came, you know, revival had come. They literally heard a sound coming. They literally heard a sound like a mighty wind blowing into them.

They were sane people writing about it, you know, later on. When Andrew Murray opened the door to walk in to join the meeting, which has been going on for some time, there was a noise there. And the first thing he said was, we can't have this.

Not in this Presbyterian church. We can't have this, he said. And he actually went to the front eventually and tried to stop it.

And he'd been preaching about it. And it happened the second night. Same thing.

He was there then. He couldn't do much about it. And there was a man standing at the door.

You'd never seen him before. Watching all this happening. He'd just joined in.

He was from America. He'd seen God blessing out there. And he said, Mr. Murray said, this is God at work.

There's a movement from God here. Don't get in the way. And Andrew Murray walked into the fullness of blessing, or came into the fullness of the blessing.

He was not just a revival in his church, he was a worldwide speaker in various Christian conventions for the deepening of Christian life. Change will come, you know, a sound from heaven will come. When God is at work, there will be a noise, a rattling sound, as we hear it here.

And all for a sound from heaven. Don't you want that? Don't you want God to do something? It doesn't matter how he does it, we leave it in his hands. He might come in the deep stillness and silence.

It would be such an awe of his presence. We won't want to open our mouths. But he might come and so energize and innovate our very beings that we can't at all but praise him and thank him and worship him.

And there'll be a noise. Jesus wasn't averse to a loud voice. We are told this about him.

Jesus cried with a loud voice in the temple. If anyone is thirsty, he said, let him come to me and let him drink. Why did he say it with a loud voice? Because he felt it.

Anybody thirsty around here, he said to the people in Jerusalem. Come on to me and drink what I can give you. I'm going to change your life.

You'll never thirst again, he said to another person. If anybody is thirsty, come to me. You know, tongues are loosed when God is at work.

Tongues will call upon him and praise him. Hallelujahs are released when God invades the heart. And the spirit comes in fullness into your life and mine.

Haven't we sung this hymn many times? Revive thy work, O Lord. Thy mighty arm make bare. Speak with a voice that wakes the dead.

And make thy people hear. That's what happened here. And there was a sound and a movement and a noise from heaven.

Quicken, we sing the second verse sometimes. Revive thy work, O Lord. Disturb this sleep of death.

That's what happened in this valley of dry bones, this sleep of death. Disturb it, O God, he says, the hymnist. Disturb this sleep of death.

Quicken the smouldering embers now by thine almighty breath. God just breathes into us new life. You know, they tell me 1904 was noisy.

Very often. 1735, 1760s in Flangeitho and other places was noisy. Very often the minister had to stop preaching, Daniel Roland.

Very often the place rang with hallelujahs. Pentecost was noisy. As soon as the street in California, when the Pentecostal movement really began, was noisy.

Heaven itself, at times, seems to be noisy. John heard the sound of many waters. The roaring of many waters in heaven.

Sounds from heaven. That's my second point. When God moves, things will change.

Revival can be noisy. Third point is this. Revival brings re-unity and reconciliation.

You say, where do you get that in that passage? The latter part of verse 7. It says this. The bones came together, bone to bone. Do you notice what he was saying? All those dry bones or those bodies that had been left there on that valley floor, a defeated army apparently, all the bones had been dislocated.

They had been broken off. The tensions that held them together were gone. Animals had probably roamed through them.

The whole lot was all a mixed up mess. There was dislocation in the bodies. Scattering.

The body had been dispersed, if you like. And when that's the case, because they couldn't work together, your bones not joined together can't do a thing, they can't function. There was one bone here and its partner bone was there.

And no wonder the body couldn't function. Dislocation everywhere. And dislocation means, of course, that it's not in the right place.

Not where it should be in the body. And this is a wonderful picture and a terrible picture and a sad picture of the church of Jesus Christ. So very often we're dislocated from each other.

We can be dislocated within a fellowship here. We should be having people working together bone to bone. I'm not saying this is so.

I'm saying it could be so. Bone to bone, working together. And it's not happening because of dislocation.

Or it could be between fellowships. Between churches. I've told you before there are apparently 30,000 Protestant denominations.

And I think that's a shame. There are a multitude of different groupings all over the place. And they have no fellowship with the other groupings.

You get, forgive me for naming names. It doesn't matter. Some of you are from these backgrounds and so on.

And I can say it without apportioning blame as such. But you have brethren. You have Pentecostals.

You have Calvinists. You have Anglicans. You have Charismatics.

You have Armenians. Et cetera, et cetera. You go on and on and on.

And they never have fellowship, true fellowship, with each other. And they're the body of Christ. They never worship together.

But they do criticize each other. But each one is scriptural, remember? So they say. Each one is standing for the truth of God, so they say.

I might have told you this before. A friend of mine, Dick, we were students together. We went to a conference in Llandrindod.

And the minister there was an assistant minister to a very well-known London minister. He was taking the conference, IVF conference. And we're having lunch, and he was on the table with us.

And he was asking us, where are you from? And my friend Dick said, he's from Hove in the south of England. And this minister said, oh, he said, there are no good ministries there, are there? Now, Dick's father was a minister, an Anglican minister. So he didn't let on, but he said, oh, he said, there is a Kenneth Pryor, he said.

Oh, he said, is he reformed? And he meant, is he Calvinistic? Now, my friend Dick didn't have a clue what that meant. He'd never, ever heard of that term, reform. And when he said, is he reformed, he thought he'd said, is he deformed? I said, oh, no, he said, he's quite normal.

I've often thought about that. I've laughed about it. But I thought, isn't it sad that you've only got a good ministry if you adhere to a certain standpoint? As if the body of Christ is only made of an arm? Where's the other arm? Where's the legs? Where are all the other organs and functions of the body? Oh, no, he said, he's quite normal.

I feel sometimes we're not normal. You know, we sang this in the wedding yesterday, Natalie and Stuart's wedding. As they came in, we sang, bind us together, Lord.

We need to sing that as a church. And amongst churches, we need to sing, there is only one God. There is only one King.

There is only one body. That is why we sing, bind us together, Lord. There's only one body of Christ.

One. If I repeat myself from what I said last week, the week before, a few times, please forgive me. Actually, Ezekiel did it several times in this passage, so I'm in good company.

But here we can spend our whole Christian life and experience sometimes in a ghetto. In a theological and Christian ghetto. We never worship with anybody outside that little box, that little ghetto.

We think we have all the truth, and all the rest are wrong. Now, truth is important, I believe that. I believe we stand for truth.

But primary truth, essential truth about Jesus as Savior and Lord and God and so on. The cross, the resurrection, primary truth. Secondary truth we must accommodate.

Worship styles, hymns or songs or both. Ancient or modern. Versions of the Bible.

Views on prophecy. God's sovereignty, man's freedom. Gifts of the spirit or whatever.

These are all things we accommodate. With other emphases and with other believers. They're important, don't get me wrong.

But they're not essential truths. They're not primary truths. And God uses them all.

John Wesley said this. I want the whole Christ for my Savior. The whole Bible for my book.

The whole church for my fellowship. And the whole world for my mission field. The whole church for my fellowship.

Thank you, John Wesley. Heaven isn't just my standpoint, you know. Or our standpoint.

Heaven isn't just for one particular grouping of people. What's the worship of heaven like? Have you read the book of Revelation lately? I know it's complicated and difficult. When you get to heaven, what are you going to see? John draws back the curtains in the book of Revelation.

We peer in, we see some things. What do you see in the worship of heaven? You see Christ-centered worship. You see the Lamb on the throne.

You see the Lamb is the light. You see the Lamb is the one before whom they all fall down. Heaven is filled with praise.

Jonathan Edwards said, Heaven is a world of love. It's all about him, not me. In the worship there.

And it's filled with hallelujahs. Didn't Handel get the idea from that? The hallelujah chorus from that book of Revelation? And they're falling down there before him, by the way. In that worship.

They're falling down before the Lamb that was slain. The four living creatures, we are told, fall down. The 24 elders fall down.

John himself falls down. Let me tell you this. If they fall down, we will as well.

You might not want to do it now. You will then. You'll bow down.

You'll worship the Lamb. You'll worship Jesus. As never before in heaven.

It's centered on Jesus. And we say, and it's happening now in heaven. We say, don't we? We quote this, and Jesus told us to pray it.

You will be done, Lord, on earth as it is in heaven. So if that's the worship of heaven now, perhaps it should be the worship on earth now as well. Born, says Ezekiel, came to born.

People long separated were joined. People dislocated from each other with criticism and all sorts of things were brought together. A wonderful harmony resulted.

The body began to function as a body again. Oh, it might be noisy. It might be disturbing.

It might be a bit messy at times. But only then, when that happens, will the body of Christ function. A dislocated army can't fight for God.

We tend to fight each other instead. Jesus prayed that every believer may be one with the others. Just, he says, Father, as we are one.

I in you, and you in me. He prayed that you might be one with every other believer. Nor the believer in the world must you be dislocated from in Christ.

Nor the believer must you despise. Nor the grouping in the body of Christ must you attack. Stab.

That is stabbing Christ. Isn't the church the body of Christ? Don't stab Jesus, my friends. Brothers and sisters, we are on dangerous ground.

Burn to bone. Reunited. Reconciliation.

This has often led to revival, you know. Gareth was sharing with me the other day about the revival that took place in Canada. When was it, Gareth? 1971.

1971. Two men. Tell us, Gareth.

Your voice will carry. Yes. They were allowed in.

But the brother was very angry. He was late in time. He didn't want to see his brother.

They came in. And he refused to be reconciled. He said, if you knew what you had done to me, I cannot forgive you.

Because at least a few Christian men had been saved here. And so, right when he was there, Gareth, he stopped him. And he says, I pray.

He said, look, brother John, he doesn't want to be reconciled with you. Die for him. And John was so challenged after several minutes that he broke down.

The two men were reconciled. The next day in church, they went to the front of their whole families, embraced one another in front of the church, and apologized to the church and revived for them. Yes.

Thank you, Gareth. Revival came when those two brothers in Christ were reconciled and brought it to the church. Let me ask you and ask myself, is there any way in which we are guilty before God of being un-reconciled to other brothers and sisters in Christ? There must be no discord, no unforgiveness, no criticism, no slander.

We must have bone brought to bone. I believe you know that blessing is delayed until bone is brought to bone. The blessing didn't come until those bones were brought together.

Until the right relationships take place. Now, here, perhaps, in this church, in other churches, in our links with other places, it might be somebody far away from you. I don't know.

Might be in the past or the present. But let's make sure that there is no barrier or blockage to blessing in our lives. We can be an obstacle to blessing, or we can be a channel of blessing.

If God speaks to you about something like this, you might need to speak to someone else. You might need to make that phone call. You might need to write a letter or send an email.

You might need to make confession. Perhaps restitution. Perhaps you've wronged someone.

Perhaps you've slandered someone. Perhaps you've broken fellowship with someone. Perhaps you've criticized other Christians.

Or you've attacked, therefore, the body of Christ. You and I have got to repent of things like that. We cannot afford to stab the body of Christ.

No wonder the spirit is grieved. No wonder the spirit is quenched. No wonder the spirit withdraws.

When this happens. I always say, I'm just being biblical. I'm standing for truth, we say.

And that can so often be a cover for being not biblical, but diabolical. Because things like that don't come from God. Bone will come to bone when God speaks.

And revival power comes and touches us. I got my final brief point, which I'll elaborate, God willing, next week. Revival needs that, but it also needs the breath from heaven.

Do you notice what happens? In verse 8, it says, though, that the tendons and the flesh and the skin all came together and the body looked as if it was okay. There was no breath in them. No breath in the bodies.

What they had already experienced was wonderful and was the work of God. They had been transformed from being dry bones, dislocated, to be brought into bodies which looked alive. But there's more to come.

They needed those bodies to be empowered with the breath from heaven. There were bodies without breath in them. They needed the breath of God.

You know, sometimes God works like this. He restores. He reforms.

He gets things ready for the great coming of the spirit. He prepares the body for the spirit to descend in fullness and in power. I believe it's happening and happened, perhaps, in our land in the last 50 years or so.

New churches and fellowships have been formed, out of the denominations and in the denominations. There's a resurgence of Bible-believing, evangelical, charismatic truths. All those things, I believe, are scriptural.

The world of Christian books has been transformed to what it was when I was a child. And the Christian media is now available as never before. All these are signs of life, signs of God's power, signs of the spirit at work.

But there's an overwhelming need, if you'll be honest and if I'll be honest with you, for the breath of heaven to be in us, in fullness. For more of the breath of heaven, for the wind of the spirit to come. Every Christian has the spirit.

You don't have the spirit of Christ, you are none of his, said John. But there's a sense we can know the fullness of the spirit. In every church, we need the gale of the Holy Spirit to blow.

Tell me, are you ready for what God has for you? And am I. Are we ready for the wind of God's spirit to blow upon us, to transform us? There might be a noise. There will be obedience. There will be reconciliation.

There will be a location rather than a dislocation. But when that happens, we'll still be calling on God and expecting the Holy Spirit to come. As on the day of Pentecost, when they were all together, of one accord, one place, and of one mind.

Let's pray. Lord, you see us, your people, as we bow before you. We name the name of Jesus.

We take him as our Savior. And we want to thank you, Lord, for all that you have done in our lives, in our fellowship here, and in other fellowships and churches. We pray, Lord, that anything that you see wrong in our lives, anything that is a barrier to blessing, anything that is an obstacle, as Andy shared with the children, we pray, Lord, that that shall be removed, that the power of your Holy Spirit shall be in us, that we shall not want to take one step without your aid.

Blessed Spirit, come, we pray, come here for Jesus' sake and for his glory. Fill every life bowed before you here. Create a thirst in our hearts for the Holy Spirit's presence to be in us and upon us and for his glory alone.

Amen. If we can have the next hymn up to close. Here it is.

I hear the sound of rustling in the leaves of the trees, the Spirit of the Lord has come down on the earth. This is now a time of adoration, a world to go to all men everywhere, a church in the healing of the nations. Before the day of Jesus' growing day, my God will be the bread of ready bread for us.

And what the Father gives to me I'll see. I only want to be his bread. I only want to glorify the King.

All around the world the Lord he raises strength and glee. The promise of the Father is now ready to fall. The watchmen on the tower are all exalted to prepare.

The church is full of people who will answer the call. And this is not a day which is passing. The start of a new age of peace will come.

And where peace was not understood, Before the day of Jesus' growing day, my God will be the bread of ready bread for us. And what the Father gives to me I'll see. I only want to be his bread.

I only want to glorify the King. The glory of repairer, Lord, and ready for all. The brooding of his spirit, we have heard on our land.

The mighty, mighty army and the name of the Lord. Heaven, sea, and people, they die with a plan. Until another Lord in our nation.

Now we shall love and serve our God as one. His spirit will be in the United Nations. And the blood and blood of Jesus shall be mine.

My God will be the bread of ready bread for us. And what the Father gives to me I'll see. I only want to be his bread.

I only want to glorify the King. Let's say the grace together. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you for watching!

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19259.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/steve-evans/ezekiels-valley-of-dry-bones-part-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net