

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

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“37 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,² And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.³ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.⁴ Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.⁵ Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.⁸ And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.⁹ Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.¹¹ Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.¹² Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.¹³ And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,¹⁴ And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.”

-Ezekiel 37:1-14

In our text Ezekiel is shown the power of prophecy, of speaking God's Word. People tend to think prophecy is about telling the future, and there certainly can be an aspect of foretelling things to come in prophecy. But primarily, it is speaking God's Word. A helpful way of phrasing it is biblical prophecy is forthtelling not foretelling.

When Ezekiel is carried to the valley, it is full of dry bones, the Lord tells him to prophesy and then tells him what to say. Ezekiel is obedient and says what the Lord told him to say and the prophecy is effective. This is how God's Word works. When we faithfully proclaim what the Lord has given us to proclaim it doesn't return void, it accomplishes what it is sent to do. The power was not in Ezekiel, but in the Word the Lord gave him to speak.

God uses this valley of dry bones to show Ezekiel that this is directly related to his ministry. At that time, the spiritual state of the House of Israel is like these dry bones. Dead. God gives Ezekiel a prophecy for them, and just as these bones came to life at the hearing of God's Word so will they. We can be encouraged by the way God works in this world. No matter where we are God is working through the proclamation of his Word to save those who are lost. Even when everything seems bleak and all around us is dead bones the Word of the Lord reigns supreme and endures forever.

God's Peace,
Nicholas Kandoll