

# 3/29 Sunday School for Youth

READ:

Ezekiel 37:1-14 New International Version (NIV) **The Valley of Dry Bones**

**37** The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

<sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! <sup>5</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath<sup>a</sup> enter you, and you will come to life. <sup>6</sup> I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup> I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'"<sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. <sup>14</sup> I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"

\*suggested/potential answers are in blue

#### BACKGROUND:

This reading takes place around 600 BC. Ezekiel, the writer of this text, is a Hebrew prophet, and we see him here having a conversation with God. The Israelite people, the descendants of those who escaped Egypt, are now hopeless once again, because their nation has fallen in what is known as the "Babylonian Captivity." Israel's holy cities have fallen to their enemies and now they are forced to live away from their Promised Land in a foreign land they do not know, and their neighborhoods and communities are scattered. However, God tells Ezekiel to tell the Israelites not to lose hope. They may be like sad, dry bones now; however, God will soon make the dead bones, a metaphor for the sad people, come alive again. He promises that they will return to their Promised Land and be re-united!

#### REFLECT:

- Have you ever felt like "dry bones" – sad, abandoned, hopeless? What gives you strength during those times? How can you be like Ezekiel and give hope to others when they feel sad?
- What were the role of prophets in the Old Testament?  
They were not just people ordained by God to "tell the future," but they were also called to inspire hope in people by speaking to God's heart (seen here) and to challenge the social order of the time by explaining that God wanted justice. Because of the latter, sometimes their messages were angry and people did not like them!
- Many people have seen this story of God making beautiful things come out of hopelessness, of making "dry bones" come alive, as symbolic of Jesus Christ. Can you think of how?  
The message of Jesus rising after being on the cross was that God and Love ALWAYS have the last word. No matter how bad things seem, God is always with us and working in us for good (even if we don't see it).

\*suggested/potential answers are in blue

PRAYER:

*Either alone, or with a family member, take about thirty seconds and just sit in silence. There is no need to do anything. Just breath. Take this time as a symbol that in the face of anything and everything, God is working even when we are still. This silence says we trust you, God; we trust that you are working and that Love will prevail even when it feels like we are powerless.*