

Life to Dry Bones

Rev Christine Coram

Settling down to worship:



Breath slowly and try to clear your mind.  
Picture a cross and offer yourself to God.  
Breath in his Holy Spirit

A Prayer

Holy and precious God, I come to you to worship and love you.

I place myself in your hand and offer you everything I am in the space and peace.

I worship you for your goodness and love....for Jesus and his death for me.....for the blessing of your Holy Spirit.

Forgive me for my moments of weakness despite your strength, my loneliness despite your presence, my fear despite the hope I know in you.

Thank you that I have received your forgiveness.

I adore you as I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

StF 18

Be still and know that I am God [repeat]

I am the Lord who saves and heals [Repeat]

In you O Lord, I put my trust [repeat]

Praying for others

Pray for the people you normally see at Church on a Sunday – those you sit with or try to speak to each week. Picture them and lift them to God.

Pray for your neighbours, picturing their houses and the people in them. Lift them to God

Pray for health workers and food retailers. Pray for charity workers as they try to find new ways to support those in need.

Cast your mind around the world and pray as you feel God lead you.

Pray the Lord's prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.

*Anonymous*

## Reading - Ezekiel 37.4-10 & 14

<sup>4</sup>Then [the Lord] said to me, 'Prophesy 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, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, 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>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."

## Sermon

"I will put my Spirit in you and you will live."



I hope that no one is offended by this picture – but it says a lot to me about what it means to be alive – but not fully alive.

And that is what Ezekiel experienced in the valley of dry bones.

At first the bones were just a pile of sun-bleached remains – a sad and hopeless sight.

When God first speaks to Ezekiel, he asks him if the bones can live again. Ezekiel's seems to answer: 'Don't ask me!' But actually, rather more respectfully he says 'I don't know the answer – but I believe that you do' and maybe even 'If you say it's possible, I believe you.'

And he discovers, as he obeys God's instructions that the fleshless bones can be reformed into human bodies – but they are still dead.

And then comes my favourite part of the story – God breaths life into the bodies – HIS life and they stand up, restored, rehabilitated, really alive.

The words 'breath', 'wind' and 'spirit' are all one word in Hebrew.

So, are the bodies filled with breath or God's Spirit? Or both? To be fully alive we need both.

At the moment, separated as we are from each other, we may feel as if we are a heap of dried bones – that the things that are life-giving to us have been taken away.

But maybe, the lives we've been living have been the dry bones, and this time of limited activity and aloneness are God's opportunity to become more aware of his presence with us and to be filled again with his Spirit that truly gives us life.

Jesus promised us life after death – but life now 'IN ALL IT'S FULLNESS'.

We can be living and not alive to God – living and not alive to the power, love and glory in the world.

American author and speaker, Joyce Meyer says:

'It's never too late for a new beginning in your life'

Maybe this crisis is an opportunity for a new beginning?

When did you last listen to bird song or watch the clouds drift across the sky? When did you last really listen to another person in a conversation on the phone or enjoy the

sun through the window on your face? I thank God that this crisis has come at a time when the natural world is waking up from its winter 'death'. There is new life all around us. The air smells different, the colours of the grass and earth are more intense, the dull earth is alive with shoots – and it doesn't matter if they are weeds!

What is God saying to you in the sights and sounds around you?

#### StF 441

As water to the thirsty, as beauty to the eyes,  
as strength that follows weakness, as truth instead of lies,  
as song-time and springtime and summertime to be,  
so is my Lord, my living Lord,  
so is my Lord to me.

Like calm in place of clamour, like peace that follows pain,  
like meeting after parting, like sunshine after rain,  
like moonlight and starlight and sunlight on the sea,  
so is my Lord, my living Lord,  
so is my Lord to me.

As sleep that follows fever, as gold instead of grey,  
as freedom after bondage, as sunrise to the day,  
as home to the traveller and all we long to see,  
so is my Lord, my living Lord,  
so is my Lord to me.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith*

Responding to God's word

Take some time to appreciate something that you have recently taken for granted.



Slowly re-read God's words – and know they are God's promise to you...

I will put my Spirit in you

and you will live.

Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken,

and I have done it, declares the LORD.

StF 457

Author of faith, eternal word,  
whose Spirit breathes the active flame -  
faith, like its Finisher and Lord,  
today as yesterday the same:

To you our humble hearts aspire,  
and ask the gift unspeakable;  
increase in us the kindled fire,  
in us the work of faith fulfil.

The things unknown to feeble sense,  
unseen by reason's glimmering ray,  
with strong, commanding evidence,  
their heavenly origin display.

Faith lends its realizing light,  
the clouds disperse, the shadows fly,  
the Invisible appears in sight,  
and God is seen by mortal eye.

*Charles Wesley*

A Celtic Blessing

God bless the earth that is beneath us,

The sky that is above us,

The life that lies before us

Your image deep within us. Amen.