

Speaking Life To Dry Places

1. Warm up: Pastor Robert began his sermon by telling us a story about a man dying of thirst and reminding us of the Dos Equis beer ad that said, “Stay thirsty my friend.” Thirst is one of our primal experiences. Tell us about a time in your life when you were extremely thirsty? What was your beverage of choice to quench your thirst?
2. On Sunday we talked about thirsty dry places in our life. Robert began by reminding us how we misuse all kinds of products from ginger-ale to duct tape to Gorilla Glue. Most products are designed to be used in a certain way. If we follow the instructions, we’re generally safe. It’s when we use them for something they’re not designed to do that bad things happen. Then Robert said, “News flash. Another misused product is our words.”
 - a. Proverbs 18:21 says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.” What do you think that means?
 - b. Can you think of a time when someone said something to you – good or bad – that had a huge impact on how you see yourself? What did they say? How did that affect you?
3. In this week’s scripture reading, the prophet Ezekiel learned a powerful lesson about the power that God gives us through our words. At the time of Ezekiel’s vision, Israel had been overrun by the Babylonians and was in a desperate state – as good as dead. Figuratively speaking, they found themselves in a valley of dry bones. Let’s read Ezekiel 37:1-14, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. Many Israelites were saying, “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.” Ezekiel 37:11. When in your life have you felt most hopeless?
 - b. In what aspect of your life right now are you tempted to feel hopeless?
 - c. Clare Boothe Luce once said, “There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them.” What do you think she means? Do you agree or disagree?
4. So what do we do when we feel like dry bones, hopelessly dead or defeated? Pastor Robert said, “When you introduce the God factor into your impossibility, God transforms our impossibility into a possibility.” And the of introducing God into our impossible situations begins with prayer.
 - a. If God is in control, and God already knows everything, what’s the point of prayer?
 - b. Prayer brings us closer to God. Robert said, “Our relationship with God can sometimes be like knowing a famous person without ever meeting them.” What

do you think he meant? At this point on your journey, does God feel to you like a distant “famous person” or a close friend?

- c. Philippians 4:6 says, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” According to this verse, what happens to our inner psyche when we engage God in intimate conversational prayers?
 - d. Once our spirit calms itself in prayer, we’re finally in a place where we can hear God’s guidance. Have you ever experienced that? When? What happened?
5. Transforming our impossibility into possibility begins with prayer, but it doesn’t end there. Prayer awakens within us a sense of expectation that God can turn things around and faith that God will do it.
- a. In Mark 11:22, Jesus said, “Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” As best you understand, what does that passage mean? And what doesn’t it mean? Are there any qualifications?
 - b. In Question 3.b. we asked, “In what aspect of your life right now are you tempted to feel hopeless?” Are you carrying within you right now a sense of confident expectation that God can turn that situation around? If so, why? If someone was skeptical, how would you explain to them why you have so much confidence?
 - c. If you’re struggling to have a confident expectation that God can turn your situation around, why is that? What makes you skeptical?
6. Prayer leads to expectation and faith. Expectation and faith then puts us in a position to begin to speak a new reality into existence, like Ezekiel did. God commanded Ezekiel to speak aloud about the vision God had given him of the dry bones coming back to life.
- a. Robert said, “God’s servants must speak in the power of faith,” giving voice to the vision God gives us in our situation of dryness. So let’s do some prophesying over our own lives tonight. Remind us of that situation in your life where you’ve been tempted to be hopeless, then share the vision of hope God is giving you in that situation.
 - b. Are there any practical steps you can/should take to begin to live into that prophetic vision God has given you? Are you ready to take those steps?

Don’t settle for God’s second best in your life. Stay thirsty, my friend!

Ezekiel 37:1-14

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. ² 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. ³ He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

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

⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ⁵ This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶ 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.'"

⁷ 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. ⁸ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹ 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.'" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹ 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.' ¹² 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. ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ 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.'"