

5.7.26 pm: Life in the valley of death

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Date: 05 July 2026

Preacher: Reverend Scott Macleod

[0:00] Good evening, a warm welcome to your service, warm welcome to those who are visiting with us and those who are watching online and we pray the Lord's blessing on our time together.

So a couple of intimations to highlight for the week ahead. Elders prayer meeting meets on Monday 6pm and ladies fellowship will hopefully meet on Monday night as well.

The usual through the week Little Fishers Road to Recovery prayer meeting Wednesday at 7.30pm and please be praying also for Hugh and Julian's wedding on Friday at 1pm.

And the church family are invited to attend that if you're able as well. Service next Sunday morning will be taken by David and Rev Petrie de Coq. It's Hannes' father. It will be a baptismal service as well.

And David will take the evening service next Sunday. So all these intimations are God willing to be prayerful over them. So we'll begin our time of worship. We'll sing in Gaelic. Sing in Psalm 139.

We'll sing from verse 5.

[1:31] It's one verse 5. It's one verse in English and two verses in Gaelic. So in English it is behind before thou hast beset and laid on me thine hand.

Such knowledge is too strange for me to hide, to understand. So we'll remain seated as we sing in Gaelic. These words and afterwards we'll have a prayer in Gaelic also and Angus M will lead us in prayer after.

So we'll be singing in Gaelic.

So we'll be singing in Gaelic.

So we'll be singing in Gaelic. So we'll be singing in Gaelic. Oh Oh Oh

[4:37] Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh .

. . but still having a moment. I wish I could still wish.

I wish I could still wish. I wish I could still wish.

[7:08] I wish I could still wish. and as you are still having a moment, you are still having a moment.

You are still having a moment. Take a moment. Take a moment.

Take a moment. Take a moment. but now but now the risk and earlier earlier but still having a moment.

I've done a moment. I've done a moment. I've done a moment. I've done a moment. I've done a moment.

I've done a moment. I've done a moment. .

[illegible]

I still wish you a moment. I wish you a moment. I wish you a moment. I wish you a moment.

I wish you a moment. I wish you a moment. I wish you a moment. I wish you a moment.

I wish you a moment. but still having a moment. Take a moment.

Take a moment. Take a moment. Take a moment.

[illegible]

was upon me and he brought me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley it was full of bones and he led me around them and behold there were very many on the surface of the valley and behold they were very dry and he said to me son of man can these bones live?

and i answered Lord God you know then he said to me prophesy over these bones and say to them dry bones hear the word of the Lord thus says the Lord God behold i will cause breath to enter you and you shall live and i will lay sinews upon you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you and you shall live and you shall know that i am the Lord so i prophesied as i was commanded and as i prophesied and as i prophesied and behold a rattling and the bones came together bone to its bone and i looked and behold there were sinews on them and flesh had come upon them and skin had covered them but there was no breath in them and then then he said prophesy to the breath prophesy son of man and say to the breath thus says the Lord come from the four winds and breathe on these slain that they may live so i prophesied and commanded me came unto them and they lived and stood on their feet an exceedingly great army and he said to me son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel behold they say our bones are dried up and our hope is lost we are indeed cut off therefore prophesy and say to them thus says the Lord behold i will open your and raise you from oh my people and i will bring you into the land of and you shall know that i am the Lord when i open your graves and raise you from your graves oh my people and i will put my spirit within you and you shall live and i will place you in your own land then you shall know that i am the Lord i have spoken and i will do it declare the Lord Amen may the Lord bless the reading of his word to all who have heard it and before we come back to that passage we sing once more mission praise number 51 be thou my vision O Lord of my heart not be all else to me save that thou art thou my best thought by day or by night by night waking or sleeping thy presence my light we'll stand in a moment to sing these words melodies melodies melodies melodies!

melodies melodies melodies melodies melodies melodies melodies that thou art Thou my best Lord by day or by night Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light Be thou my wisdom though my true word I ever with thee Thou with me Lord Thou my great Father I light you Son Thou in me dwelling and I with thee one Be thou my battle shield sword for the fight Be thou my dignity thou my delight Thou my soul shelter Thou my high tower Raise thou me heavenward O power of my power Riches I need not your man's empty praise Thou mine in meditative now and always Thou and the holy first in my heart

[26:03] I king of heaven my treasure the one I king of heaven after victory won may I reach heaven's joint O bright and sun heart of my own heart whatever be thought still be my vision for you not fall I will turn back to that passage we read in Ezekiel chapter 37 read again at verse 14 and I will as

God's sure promise in this passage and I will put my spirit within you and you shall live and I will place you in your own land as we come to this passage let us pray first of all our father in heaven we thank you for the time that we have together here to join together to worship you we pray that you would bless us we pray that your spirit would help us and guide us when we feel unable to speak to these passages and sufficiently teach from them but we know that it is not in our strength nor power nor in the eloquence of our words we pray for the power of your spirit to speak where your word is read and taught speak into our lives and make this passage speak to our circumstances and hearts and minds

Lord be with us help us we pray in Jesus name Amen Now if I was to ask you about the resurrection where would your thoughts go?

What would you think about? We'd probably go to the tomb of Jesus we'd probably go to that morning where Mary met the gardener or who she thought was a gardener and Jesus revealed himself there as the risen Lord Jesus the tomb empty the stone rolled away but before even getting to that point Jesus revealed the power and work of resurrection in his life you think of the woman of Nain's son whom he resurrected at the funeral you think of Jairus' daughter who was sick and Jesus resurrected her and maybe more well known we'd think of Lazarus who had been dead for a number of days and was called out of the tomb living and these resurrection stories

I hope to look at them in the time that I have left with you I thought what would we look at in the last few services that I have and I thought well what better than to consider the greatest display of power that we have in the resurrecting work of Jesus but I'm sure you've noticed that we're not in

the New Testament we're not even reading the story of Jesus but we are reading about the power of God to resurrect Ezekiel's vision here provides maybe one of the most memorable pictures that we have in the Bible about God's power to bring to life those that are dead and God will do it is what he says so we're going to start off in this passage almost as an introduction to the idea of resurrection to the idea of that power to the idea of that work as we go on then to the gospel of Cain so what do we notice first of all as we look at this vision at this passage well you'll probably notice that God's speaking to Ezekiel in it and what you'll see as we look through this passage [31:03] God speaks in a number of different ways to Ezekiel there's three different ways in which he speaks first of all there's a question posed by God in verse 3 after that there's commands given by God in verse 4 and 9 and then we have promises from God in verse 12 and 14 we have the Lord's question we have the Lord's command and the Lord's promise structure that we can use as we look at this account it's God speaking and I suppose if there's ever a time to listen it is when God speaks whenever and however he speaks God's word does not pass away God's word will accomplish the purpose in which it is sent so God's word demands our attention and as we hear it tonight we should rightfully listen so let's work our way through this vision and let's firstly look at the question now we heard a lot about questions this morning questions maybe on the opposite side of the scale that we're considering tonight questions that were full of deceit and sin questions from man but here we have an entirely different question we have a question from God did you notice it as we read through you'll see it there in verse 3 if you have a Bible

God's question to Ezekiel in this vision is son of man can these bones live what's going on well we'll just rewind a bit to the verses prior to the question we see Ezekiel being led by the spirit of God into a valley which we see in verse 1 full of bones and he wasn't just taken there into this valley to see these bones it says that the spirit brought me around or brought me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of that full of bones and verse 2 led me around there it's almost as if he was given a tour of this valley wasn't enough just to look at it to take him through it it's almost as if the spirit of God is saying let me show you truly the extent of the situation here and the impression that we have that is made on Ezekiel seems to be profound as he was led through the valley as he was given this tour of the extent of death and the bones that were gathered there Ezekiel describes it by saying behold he himself realised there's something important it's almost as if he's saying look at this you know when you come across something that fascinates you or takes you by surprise or wonder you'll say to the ones did you see that happen it's almost as if Ezekiel saying when I walked or was led through this valley you know what I saw behold there were very many on the valley surface and not only that behold they were very dry the vision is so vivid in our minds and it sticks in our minds because it's quite a bleak image to begin with isn't it it's a sight of sadness and sorrow and we can picture

Ezekiel here as he's been led through toward this valley it's the extent of it's far beyond what he would have initially thought of it's worse than he ever expected there was very many and it was very dry it's a scene of defeat and despair it's a scene of a whole nation very dead now this vision isn't without reason key to this vision is reading verse 11 if you have a bible look at it it's explained to you a son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel and behold they say the house of Israel they say our bones are dried up and our hope is lost this is a vision that explains how Israel are feeling and why are they feeling this way it's because they haven't been listening to God they've been exiled to Babylon they've been warned about Babylon this powerful nation are going to come and take you into slavery and they're there defeated enslaved ripped out of their country they're facing the consequences for not listening to God and how do they feel in their hearts they feel like they're dried up they feel like their hope is lost they feel like they're cut off God's hearing it God knows they're in our thoughts and this vision is exactly that it's exactly how Israel are feeling when they've not listened to

[37:40] God when they're groaning in their heart for all the mistakes that they've made and they're realising the error of their ways look at where we are look at the situation I'm in today God's healing and God brings this vision to Ezekiel so that he can give them a message to counter how they're feeling and how they're thinking the bleak vision God asks Ezekiel can these bones live and you would imagine this scene if we can do the best of our ability can they live if we would say it's a silly question anything that's lived and died and has decayed to such a point it's not going to live even the best doctor will tell you that of course they cannot is what we would be tempted to say but

Ezekiel is almost wiser than to jump to his own conclusion and his own understanding how does Ezekiel answer the question oh lord you know oh lord god you know can god do it that's a christian i don't know if you've ever had the experience where you've been watching people i remember standing on buchanan street in glasgow and the run up to christmas fiona was in a shop and of course i was standing outside waiting and and there's hordes of people going up to can and down and about five metres away there was a man with a sign and on the sign he had a bible verse i can't remember what verse it was but i was just standing watching everyone going about their business no one paying attention to the word of god he was standing there and the heads were just passing by didn't want to know ignored it walked around him and i remember there's always been an amazement and it's like are we so spiritually dead that no one wants to hear about the word of the word of god the hope in life the one that came to die for us at christmas time came into this world and he would die for us are we so spiritually dead maybe god takes us into places maybe our workplace maybe even our own home maybe takes us to great cities and small villages and he opens our eyes that we might see the extent of unbelief and if you haven't had that experience maybe maybe it's something to think about tomorrow when you go to work or when you're traveling or when you reach your destination and you see people do you ever wonder how many believe are people so spiritually dead that they do not want to listen to

God maybe you know even someone that you can think about that will not listen to God and has ignored God for years and years and years and you think well will God ever do our work in that person he's so dead and dry the right answer is to say oh Lord you know if there's anyone who can do it it is the Lord Israel here knew they had gone wrong they felt empty they had been enslaved because of their sin they were captured they were taken away they felt so dry and there was absolutely no hope for them they felt cut off maybe that's you maybe that's the way you feel maybe you've made many mistakes maybe you've made many blunders maybe God spoke to you in the past but you didn't listen maybe maybe you feel the weight of that guilt you feel the weight of the sin you feel like you're almost enslaved in all the errors of of not listening to the word of God not listening to God when he spoke and maybe you feel so dry maybe you feel very dead and maybe you're the one that's asking can I learn maybe you're the one that's asking is there hope for me maybe you acknowledge

I am the one that's lost the Lord knows the Lord knew what Israel were thinking the Lord knows the Lord knows at heart did God abandon Israel he didn't will God abandon you no there's something in this vision that makes all the difference and it's when the word of God was prophesied over them and it comes in the form of two commands so we had that question there posed and Ezekiel acknowledged that the Lord knew best but what about the commands that we have secondly now if God questions us we'd probably rightfully hesitant to answer

God who knows all things and we are limited in our understanding someone once asked me here in this building what is God doing in your life at this moment I don't think I could I don't think I could satisfactorily answer that to know what God is doing in my life but it's entirely different when the Lord commands us when the Lord commands us we are to obey there's no question the best thing to do is obey and in that sense we can maybe ask answer then what the Lord is doing by faithfully obey Ezekiel is given a command about this vision the dry bones that he has here a command to prophesy over these bones verse 4 tells us prophesy over these bones say to them oh dry bones hear the word of the

[46 : 45] Lord hear the word of the Lord that Israel had not been hearing that they had been blanking out I will cause breath to enter you and you will live I will give you flesh and you will live and you will know that I am the Lord and this resurrection almost that's going on in this scene in this vision it's got two stages to it two different commands firstly have that command that he obeys to do and we have the result that the bones are a noise a rattling in verse 7 of the noise and he uses that word again behold noting the significance of it they came together the bones bone to its bone and the flesh was put back on them but at the end of verse 8 it tells us there was no breath in them outwardly they looked complete entirely dead inwardly though there's nothing doing and so the second command comes we'll read about that in verse 9 then he said to me prophesy to the breath prophesy son of man say to the breath thus says the

Lord God come from the four winds of breath and breathe on these that they may live so he prophesied and the breath came into them they lived and they stood on their feet what made all the difference was the spirit coming it's almost if you have a toy with no batteries in it the thing there is

complete but it's not going to work without that power in it and if you have a tool that needs to be plugged in it needs power to operate the spirit of God is the life changing power without the spirit there's no life but with the spirit there is life these bones lived stood on their feet and formed an army the thing that was so weak made so strong the dead made alive a work of God through man but man was obedient God commanded him and he listened to what was his duty and he and when the spirit accompanied his faithful obedience to pronounce God's word it resulted in life the preacher will find his confidence here to speak the word of God and we pray always that the spirit would accompany it the spirit can revive us and restore us accompanied with the word of God as we hear it oh hear the word we're commanded it's the thing that makes all the difference when the word and spirit are together that's when we're made into new men new women new boys new girls the most amazing thing is it is the work of God we can't do anything ourselves it's as if we are the dead bones it's a work of God God in his great grace doing a great work when we have been so disobedient when we have closed our ears and we have been so dead we must be born again that's what Jesus said to Nicodemus we must be born again and born of the spirit there's two stages in this resurrection the commentators will say that it's for

Israel of course firstly and it's saying that Israel you're in captivity you're under Babylon but the first thing I'll do I'll bring you back and then the next thing I'll do I'll bless you with my spirit there's two stages there for the nation God will revive them God will give them life all in his grace it is his work what does it have to do with me tonight well we have seen that there's hope for the dearest of the dead when the word and the spirit come together as Christopher Wright says there comes life out of utter deadness to come under the word of

[53:04] God as we gather here here is a great blessing it is a great privilege it's where dead people are brought to life it's where the Christian who feels so dry can be refreshed and strengthened where the weak person gets strength to stand when the word of God is blessed to us through his spirit where else can we find such a power to whom else can we go no one no one so if you've been rejecting God or if you feel the weight of your sin you feel the guilt like Israel you've made so many mistakes let us hear the word of God if we feel that we've flatlined as a Christian we feel so dry let us hear the word of God let us read the word of God in our own time let us come to the means of grace when there is time and the amazing grace of God will do our work it's promised to us that he will do a work he will bring life where there is death and he faithfully promises that so we've had a question from God we've had commands from God and lastly and briefly there's promises made by God here now having a promise is a reassuring thing to lay hold of simplest of thoughts is that if someone's promised to pick you up you know you're not going to be abandoned someone's promised to pay you you know you're not going to be out of pocket and looking ahead when there's a promise in marriage that you will have someone to be with you until you part but we know our best intended promises fail but the word of the Lord is sure and steadfast it does not fail and we find the promises here made in verse 12 and 14 made to those who are feeling helpless those who have made the mistakes those who are groaning in their heart those who are feeling defeated say to them in verse 12 thus says the Lord

God behold I will open your graves and raise you from your graves oh my people I will bring you into the land of Israel and then again in verse 14 I will put my spirit within you you shall live and I will place you in your own land when God calls Israel his people that's his promise that's a covenant promise there God has his people I will be your God and you will be my people he's not going to abandon them he's not going to leave them in the state that they're in when he hears their cries he hears their groans he says I will do a work you lay hold of me you trust in me you call upon me and I will save

I will bring life but it seems so dead who can revive a nation who can revive a church who can revive!

you is it anything that we can do is it having special meetings or is it having special events it's a promise keeping God that can bring us life that can revive my heart that can save you from death we have the promise of life through Jesus Christ we trust in him if you will trust in him how many times have you heard that gospel hope how many times have you been warned if you do not trust in Jesus you will be lost Israel suffered the consequences for not listening to the word of God when the word was spoken to them and I say oh dry bones if there are dry bones hear the word of the Lord that if you trust in him he will save you Ezekiel here is described as the son of man through him life was brought to these bones but when Jesus came and walked in this world he often

referred to himself as the son of man the greater son of man that would bring resurrecting power to those that are dead in whom we can have our life in whom we can find a sure promise for tomorrow even in our groanings even when we've made so many mistakes we can lay hold of the promise that

[60:11] Jesus makes even though you die yet shall you live dry bones hear the word of the Lord we pray the spirit to accompany his word that he may bring life to us that we may be resurrected from spiritual death that we may be born again and that he may revive the dry Christian with his word with his spirit the vision of the valley of the dry bones God's question God's commands God's promise for Israel but for you and for me it is the spirit who gives life the flesh is of no help at all the words that

I have spoken to you are spirit and life John 6 verse 63 amen we'll conclude by singing in psalm 33 psalm 33 and we'll sing at verse 18 behold on those that do him fear the Lord doth set his eye even those who on his mercy do with confidence rely from death to free their soul in death life from them to yield our soul doth wait upon the Lord he is our help and shield so in his holy name we trust our heart shall joyful be Lord let thy mercy be on us as we do hope in thee so we'll stand to sing these words to

God's praise behold on those that do him fear the Lord does set his eye he knows who on his mercy do with confidence rely!

From death to fear their soul in death life unto them to yield!

our soul of wake upon the Lord he is our help and shield since in his holy name we trust our heart shall joy for me Lord let thy mercy be on us as we do hope in thee you may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the

[64:20] Holy Spirit be with you all Amen Amen.