

FROM DEAD BONES TO LIVING PEOPLE, DAILY



Dry Bones, Come Alive courtesy of Ilse Kleyn

Among all the people who claim to be followers of Jesus there are really only two kinds:

There are those who burn with the life of God,
and convey that life to people around them.

And those who are full of religion—

religious insight, religious jargon, religious convictions –
but produce only the aroma of death.

And here's the mystery:

The people who convey God's life are continuously offering themselves up to death;

And the people who convey the aroma of death are forever clinging to their own life ...

their own point of view,
their own ego,
their own doctrinal position,
their own convenience.

The Lord took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. He led me all around among the bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. Then he asked me, “Son of man, can these bones become living people again?”

“O Sovereign Lord,” I replied, “you alone know the answer to that.”

Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

So I spoke this message, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons. Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.

Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.’”

So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army.

Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, ‘We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone. Our nation is finished.’ Therefore, prophesy to them and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the Lord. I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the Lord has spoken!’”

Ezekiel 37:1–14 (NLT)

You could say that this prophecy applies to the Israel of Ezekiel’s day which was destroyed. The temple lay in ruins, and the people who weren’t killed, or didn’t starve to death, found themselves captives in a foreign land.

They were without hope. They said, *“Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone.”*

Hence this prophecy through Ezekiel to Israel:

“The bones are going to be gathered together and they are going to be restored. They are going to be given breath, and they are going to be brought back on the land. “

As we know, it all came to pass.

You could also say that this prophecy applies to the resurrection of the new Israel at the end of the age, the New Jerusalem that comes as history, as we understand it, has ended.

“And then I saw thrones, and seated on them was those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life again and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life again until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Revelation 20: 4-6

Between the prophecy that was given to Israel of Ezekiel’s day and the prophecy that can be applied to the new Israel at the end of the age, there is another application of this prophesy which is aimed at us – if we have the ears to hear and the eyes to see.

The bones that are being gathered together even at this moment

That a people are being called out of Babylon into the new Israel at this very hour....

A people are being raised up with hearts circumcised to God....

Lives totally, utterly, and radically given over to God....

People who are being raised from death into life by the power of the Spirit of God.

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy son of man, and say to the breath [or the wind, or the spirit], Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

In the midst of wars and rumors of wars, of the present moment— in the midst of prosperity in one place and famine in another, and sometimes prosperity and famine in the same place—the bones are being brought together. Now, at this hour.

And they are being formed, and they are being in-breathed with the life of God.

And they are being raised up by the Spirit of God “an exceedingly great army “ in order to take the gospel of the kingdom out over the earth, perhaps for the last time.

And every person in this army walks this earth with power,
because each has been brought forth out of a grave.

We’re not talking about “churchianity”

We’re not talking about “Christendom”

We’re not talking about respectable Christians living their innocuous lives

These men and women manifest the resurrection life of Jesus every day,
because they themselves have been lifted out of their graves.

Then 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 clean cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you up from your graves, O 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, the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, says the Lord.”

I will raise you out of your graves.

I will fill you with life.

I will bring you into my Kingdom.

I will bring you back to me ...

Notice that the *initiative* belongs to God.

God is the one who brings the bones together.

God is the one who breathes life into them, sets them up on their feet and sends them forth as a vast army.

But God can’t do any of those things until the bones are dead, and know they are dead...

“The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” And he said to all, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Luke 9:22-23

“ I am going to a cross to die. If you want to follow me, don’t sit around and meditate; deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me--- to death!”

If you deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me to death— you will be raised from the dead, not only in the next world, but right here, and right now.

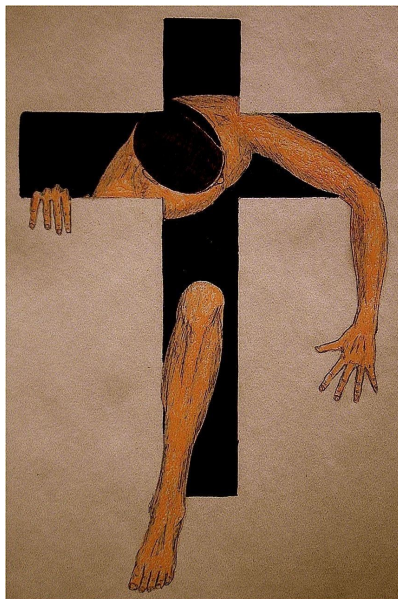
God will take care of his part.

He will gather the bones.

He will bring them together, and quicken them with his Spirit.

He will set them on their feet and send them forth,
when we begin to do our part...

Our part is to die.



The Narrow Way by David Hayward

“Follow me to death,” says the Lord, “and I will then raise you from the dead with the power of my resurrection Spirit.”

*“If any one [any man, woman] would come after me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

What does it mean to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow the Master?

You go out to the valley of the bones, where all the other dry bones are, fall on your face before God, and with an act of your will become one of them. You die to yourself.

When I go out to the Valley of Dry Bones, I don't just take my 'Sunday morning self' ...

I take my dreams and they die.

I take my resentments and they die.

I take my bitterness and it dies.

And my fears ... and my possessions ... and my abilities ...and my achievements ... and my ambition.

I fall on my face before the Lord and become a dry bone.

When we do this, there is a rattling and a shaking, and the bones come together. The resurrected bones find unity in the Lord.

It's easy to see who has been to the valley of dry bones and who hasn't.

Those who have been to the valley of dry bones are walking around free of themselves. And those who haven't are still locked in their self prisons.

*If any man would come after me,
Let them deny themselves, take up their cross daily...*

Daily!

From now on!

Every day of our life begins out there in the valley of dry bones.

Every day of our life begins with offering ourselves up to death for the glory of the Father.

We roll out of bed, drag ourselves to the valley of the dry bones, and begin there again – each day.

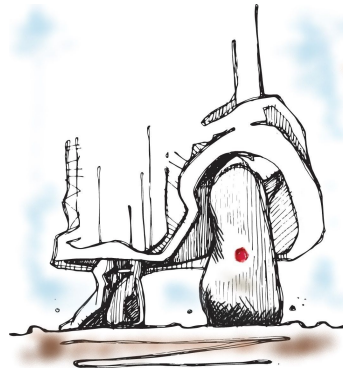
“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2: 20

I die. He lives.

When someone hurts our feelings, or fails to give us proper recognition, we feel the Spirit nudging us with the reminder that we're dead. Dead to ourselves; alive only to God.

*“If any man would come after me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*



Follow by Bernardo Ramonfaur

Follow me!

Follow me through death into life.

“Follow me through the valley of dry bones into a life that is utterly committed to my lordship.”

So now I begin the day committed to him. He's going to guide me. And I'm going to follow.

The things that aren't clear; don't worry about them.

Don't worry about whether God wants you to go to China four years from now.
If he wants you to, he'll let you know when the time comes.

In the meantime, there is the matter of getting right with your brother.

Repenting.

Giving to someone who is in need.

Speaking a word of encouragement to someone who needs to hear it.

There are specific things for us to do in obedience that the Lord will show each one of us,
if we are willing to go to the valley of the dry bones every day.

And as we obey, awesome and wonderful life begins to manifest itself.

Each of us makes the decision to be obedient as an individual. But once we start walking in obedience, we soon find ourselves in company with other dry bones who have come to life.

Together with them, we become the body of Christ.

And *together*, as that *mighty army* raised out of that valley of dry bones, and filled with the life of God...we go forth to proclaim the kingdom with power, to heal the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, to bring good news to the poor...

***“If any man would come after me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”***

If we are afraid, God will help us with our fears.

If we're confused, he'll clear things up for us.

If we're full of doubts, all we have to say is,.....

“I believe, help my unbelief,” and he will help us.

Because the life we seek, begins and continues forever, at a cross

– not only his cross – our cross.

Don't be afraid to take hold of your cross, pick it up and carry it.

Because when you do...

the power of his resurrection will flood you,

and guide you,

and anoint you,

and fill you,

and satisfy you, every day you walk this earth..

Prayer: *Jesus, Lord, we follow you into the valley of dry bones because this is where we find you, precious Saviour. Open our graves, breathe into our dead bodies, bring us to our feet so that we may live again. Daily we follow you into this valley, falling on our faces and becoming dead to everything but your call. And daily put your Spirit in us and raise us up together as a mighty army burning with life for you.*

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This piece was originally titled “Take Up Your Cross Daily”



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WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN