

NEWNESS OF LIFE

In this difficult time **in our heads** we know that God is at work, that there is a lesson in all of this and that darkness will never overcome the light.

But in our hearts we may have some doubts.

The pages of Scripture bear out the truth that God continually has brought _____ out of the ashes of humanity's despair.

The prophet Ezekiel spoke to the people of Israel from 593-571 BC just prior to and while they were in exile in Babylon.

It was a time when the national sin of God's people had reached an all-time high, leading to an all-time spiritual low.

It was a time of deep grief and mourning, fear and doubt.

God called upon Ezekiel to pronounce judgment on the Israelites.

Ezekiel 7.5,7: Disaster! Unheard of disaster! See, it comes! . . . The time has come! The day is near! There is panic, not joy, on the mountains

In the ancient world, bones symbolized the _____.

The valley of dry bones was a picture of how the people of God felt: scattered, lifeless, dried out, washed out, with no hope of revival.

The first step to new life is coming to grips with life as it is.

Ezekiel 37.3a: Son of man, can these bones live?

Ezekiel 37.3b: Sovereign Lord, only you alone know.

The first step in bringing new life back into the valley of bones is to stand still amidst the wasteland, listen to the pain in the valley, and bear witness to the grief in our own life and in the lives of others.

God could have spoken life into those dry bones all on his own; but God instead commanded Ezekiel to prophesy.

And Ezekiel's _____ became the means through which God worked to bring life to that valley of bones.

Ezekiel 37.11,14: These bones are the people . . . They say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone." But Ezekiel, I want you to tell the people, "I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live."

E. L. Allen: Who among us has not stood at some time or other by the grave of his hopes? Who has not faced a situation in which any possibility of recovery seemed to be ruled out in advance? At such times we can appreciate the message of this vision. It speaks to us of a God who can achieve the impossible.

Our God can achieve the _____.

But it's still up to us to speak the truth of the hope to be found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 10.17: Faith comes from hearing the message.

It is time for us to speak and if we don't, someone else will be all too willing to substitute their own lies and nefarious agenda in place of the living truth of the Gospel.

1 John 4.1-4: You, dear children, are from God and you have overcome these false prophets because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

My One Thing: God can bring _____ out of the driest of bones.

It is time for us to be _____: to prophesy to the bones, to speak life into the lost and broken, and to speak hope into the hearts of silent Christians, negative Christians, and hesitating, half-hearted Christians.

God will use this moment in history to awaken us and unify us and breathe new life into the mission of the church.

God will use this moment in history to empower the church to speak forth God's truth more boldly than ever before.

God will use this moment in history to bring more people to their knees in faith.

The times may be dark,
But there is always reason to hope.