

Ezekial 37 – Mission: Possible

Dry Bones

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We are in week #2 of our Mission: Possible Series where we are looking at situations in the Bible that seem absolutely impossible to us, but with God, they are made possible!!!

Take your bible if you would and if you don't have one, I'm going to ask that you use one in the row your sitting in. and here's what we're going to do.....RAISE YOUR BIBLE, PROCLAIM, "NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD!!!" (1,2,3!!!) and He proves it to us time and time again in his word!!

Background – This passage of scripture is one of the most familiar visions that was received by the prophet Ezekial. And this vision took place in a valley "full of dry bones" and those dry bones represented people who had been dead for a long time. And the reason God gave this vision to Ezekial was because earlier in Chapter 36, God had spoken to Ezekial and had told him that even though Israel had turned their back on God, they had defiled their own land, even though they were still rebellious during God's wrath, and had even been scattered among other nations, God, because of his love for his people, wanted to renew, and restore, and rebuild the people of Israel. And he tells us in 36:24 and following these words!!!

²⁴ "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. ³⁰ I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. ³¹ Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. ³² I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!

³³ "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. ³⁴ The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. ³⁵ They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." ³⁶ Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.'

Can I ask you a question today? If you took some time out and away from the crazy schedules, the chaos and confusion and conflict that so dramatically impacts all of our lives on a daily basis, would you say today that there are some areas of your life that you desperately need God to restore? Are there some areas of your life that you desperately need God to renew? Are there some aspects of your life that are broken down, that you desperately need God to rebuild? If so, this message is especially for you today? Because this passage is about a God who loves us so much that he will do the impossible in order to restore us, in order to renew us, and in order to rebuild us!! He wants us to wake up! He wants us to come to life! He wants us to live again!!!

If you're taking notes today, let's dig in to see what God has to say....

Here's the first thought from our passage – if we are going to be renewed, and restored, and rebuilt, we have to first

- a. **Trust in God's Promises** – We've just read in *Ezekial 36* that God is speaking to Ezekial about the blessings, about the renewal, the restoration, and about the rebuilding that He will accomplish and that will come upon his people!! And then we read in 37:12-14 where God reiterates this plan- ¹² Therefore prophesy 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'm going to bring you back from death!); I will bring you back to the land of Israel (the promisedland!). 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 it, and I have done it!!'" And here God is promising both a Physical and a spiritual restoration and renewal and rebuilding.

Maybe you're here today and there have been times in your life when you feel that God has not come through on his promises!! Friends, if it is any encouragement to you today, know this. There are over 5000 promises in scripture and God will meet every one of those according to his plan and in his time!! God always fulfills His promises!!

Trust in God's promises to pull you through some of those dark and trying days of life when you have doubts, when you have fears, when you have worries and anxious thoughts. Trust in God's promises when there's a health scare or a job layoff or when the relationships in our lives seem to be drifting away or when one end doesn't meet the other.

I love how God reminds us here in our passages that "He has spoken it, and He will do it!!!" and we have to trust in that!!!

Here's the second thought for us if we are going to experience renewal, restoration, and a rebuilding that God wants to do in our lives....

2. **Don't stay in the valley!** - *Ezekial 37:1-2* – "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. "

The bones here represent the people of Israel and what happened to them when they turned away from God. And God wanted Ezekial to see this vision because there were times in ezeekials ministry when he felt that those he was preaching to were spiritually dead and that they were listening with a little bit of curiosity but then they went on doing whatever they wanted to do and to live how they wanted to live!! And friends, isn't that like you and I at times? We hear God's word from our devotions, from our prayer times, from our bible studies and on Sunday mornings, and perhaps during the week on the radio or tv stations with a little bit of curiosity and then we go on living how we want to live and there is a spiritual deadness to us!!? This is the epidemic in the American Church!! We fall right in line with 2 Tim. 3:5 and 2 tim. 4:3-4 that tells us we will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. ³ For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will

gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”

And Ezekial, in his priestly role and responsibilities had nearly given up hope that God’s children would one day be spared from death, in a valley such as this....

And friends, there’s some life application here for us as well.....I wonder if maybe we should pause and ask a simple question that could easily be overlooked if we just want to read through it and not really study it?

And here’s the question.....

Why were these people/these dry bones in the valley? Let me share some probabilities with you....

a. They had been in a battle with their enemy and their enemy killed them!

They died because they didn’t have the right armor, enough strength, nor the right numbers of people to come against their enemy!! And friends, we too will die in the valley if we lack in these areas when we go to battle! Ephesians 6 tells us that there is a battle coming and we have to be prepared!!

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ **Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.** ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that **when the day of evil comes (not if it comes, but WHEN it comes!), you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.** ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

There are times in our lives when we are in a valley and if we are unprepared to face some challenges, some trials, some battles, we’ll lose everytime and more often than not, we will die sometimes physically and almost all the time spiritually right there in that valley. But if we prepare ourselves in the manner that Paul spoke about here in Ephesians 6, God will deliver us and we can get out of those valleys in life!!

Here’s another probability as to why these people died in the valley.

b. They chose to stay in the valley

III. How many of you have ever had a pity-party? Whoa is me? Life stinks!! Well isn’t it true the longer we stay in it, the worse we get. And that’s exactly what will happen to us when we choose to stay in the valley!!!

We just kind of look around at the hills we have to climb to get out of the valley and think that we just can’t do it!! We just can’t mend the relationships in our lives!! We just can’t get out of debt! We just can’t change some bad habits that we’ve formed in our lives!!

But here’s the thing.....if we’re going to get out of the valley that we’re in, we have to be willing to take the necessary steps to climb the tough terrain in order to get to the mt. tops!! Not everybody who was in battle in this vision died!! But the ones who lived.....did what was necessary to get out of the valley!!

Don’t be like the Israelites who not too long into the journey to the Promisedland started complaining to Moses and felt like they were better off in the captivity in Egypt!! God was meeting all their needs and guiding

them to the promised land, and they just couldn't get themselves to a place where they were willing to take the necessary steps in order to reach the promised land!!! And sometimes you and I are just like that.....we'd rather stay in our captivity, we'd rather stay in our valleys and suffer a slow death rather than climbing to the peaks!

Friends listen, that's not what God has in store for us!!! Don't make choices in life that keep you in the valley!! (and let me just say this as an aside.....sometimes in our lives, we have to make choices that will separate us from friends and family members who want nothing more than to keep us in the valley. And we can't listen to those people!!

Jesus tells us in John 10:10 that he has come to give us LIFE, not death!!! And Satan is the one who comes only to kill, steal, and destroy and he knows that he will be successful if he can keep us in the valley!!

And then here's the 3rd probability about why people died here in this valley...

- c. **It was a dry and thirsty land** ~ this valley was part of the Desert of Judah. There was nothing that produced life for them – no water, no vegetation – just a plain, dry, and thirsty land. David referenced this in Psalm 63:1– “ a Psalm of David, When he was in the Desert of Judah. “You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.” And our lives can get like this from time to time, just kind of plain, dry, thirsty, not really producing anything. But if we want to make it out of the valleys in life, we have to make sure that our spiritual life is being nourished!!! Get into the Word! Get into a bible study with others for some fellowship!!! Get into some prayer time! Get into CHURCH and worship on a regular basis!!!! Get into practicing those things that God asks us to practice!! We do not have to stay in a dry and thirsty land!!

Friends listen! Spiritually dead people stay in the valley!!! Don't stay in the valley!!!

Alright, our third thought from this passage today.....if we're going to be restored, renewed, and rebuilt, we have to:

3. **Acknowledge God's Sovereignty – On multiple occasions in *Ezekiel 36:22-23, 32 & 37:3, 9,12, 13-14*, we see that God's Sovereignty is spoken of and that we are to acknowledge this!!! Listen to these selected passages in Chapter 36 as our example.....**²² “Therefore say to the Israelites, *This is what the Sovereign LORD says*: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but *for the sake of my holy name*, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ *I will show the holiness of my great name*, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. *Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.*

The word Sovereign means to have dominion, to have rule, or to have power and authority over us!!! And the secret to our renewal, restoration, and rebuilding is to acknowledge God as our authority, as our Sovereign Lord!!

And we can see this all over the OT and the NT!! – We see in the 10 commandments that we are to have NO OTHER GOD BEFORE Him!! He should be our top priority!!!! And in the NT, we are instructed to seek HIM FIRST and to Love the LORD our God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind, and strength! And when we make a deliberate choice of acknowledging God in the manner that he is requesting of us, he will take our broken down, burned out, in desperate need of repair lives and begin to put them back together again!!

2 Chronicles 7:14 – “¹⁴if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” And can I tell you that from my observations in life and ministry, this is perhaps where we go wrong much of the time. Because often times we are more interested in placing ourselves in the top position and the first priority, instead of God and that’s not how He wants it.....and this is where many of us get in trouble spiritually!

Friends, what will it take for us to get to the place where we acknowledge God as first in our lives? When will he be first in our worship? in our time? In our service to people? In our finances? We can’t pick and choose where we put God first in our lives! **Because if he’s not first IN ALL, He’s not first OVER ALL!!**

Thought #4 for us today is this....if we are going to be renewed, restored, and rebuilt, we have to

4. Keep Hope ALIVE!! - *Ezekial 37:11-14* - ¹¹Then 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.’

It’s easy for us to lose hope sometimes isn’t it? It’s easy for us to feel like people have given up on us. It’s easy to look at our bank accounts and amount of debt and just think there’s no possible way to climb out. It’s easy to lose hope when our job status changes or when our when health takes a turn for the worse.....and the list could really go on and on for us.....

Our hope is not built upon our job status, our bank accounts, our health, or anything else!! Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord! Plans to prosper you and not to harm you! I have the plans that will give you HOPE and a future!!

III. Old Hymn in the church that we’re going to close with today and it tells us where we can find out hope!!

Prayer!

Invite to sing!!! Our hope is built on NOTHING LESS than Jesus’ and righteousness!!

Benediction statement!

If God can take lifeless dry bones without tendons, without blood, without flesh, and without breath and bring them back to life again, can’t He surely do something with you and I? Nothing is impossible with God!!