

We are Alive

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Good Morning first Church!

Would you please pray with me? Dear God, may the meditations of my heart and the words that come out of my mouth be as one with your spirit. God may Jesus's love and companionship be ever present in this time that we get to open your words of guidance. Amen

First church, it has been some amazing nine months. I am deeply grateful that on this Pentecost Sunday, where we get to celebrate and lift up our ribbons of joy in recognition that the spirit of God is in us, I can also say how God's spirit has been present to me through all of you.

This morning, we will be in conversation with two scriptures that are both part and needed in our Pentecost Sunday. Acts and Ezekiel give us different images of life and death, solitude and companionship yet- we see places where promises are fulfilled. Before we get into the joyful celebration of the descendant spirit I want us to think about this question seen in Ezekiel:

Can these dry bones live?

The valley of the dry bones was a traditional text back home in Honduras . Whereas a country and community we faced hard times. It is a text to acknowledge grief and emptiness while holding on to a promise of hope and a life worth living.

However, I recognize how this verse has been overused a lot of times to just gas light times where grief is needed and space for that grief is needed. But this morning I want to use this text as the way I

described it before, as a text where we hold on to a promise of life, a promise that carries us on through valleys of heart aches. And to give the spirit of God all the space and time that it needs to rest upon us.

When I first read Acts and Ezekiel, I got too deep into thinking about how our bodies physically work. Now I know we all know that oxygen is the source of life, that we cannot go 5min without it without experiencing harm.

Now, I am no medical expert, but I gotta do some research on how the oxygen we breathe gets to our brain. According to the medical encyclopedia, oxygen is carried to our brain by arteries and micro vessels.

And to think that we often are told to separate our heart from our minds or vice versa.

Now I refer to this for a brief moment, because I think that what we see in Ezekiel and Acts is a manifestation of hearts and minds feeling connected even though there are differences among their talk.

When the spirit rested upon them it was how Ezekiel saw those dry bones come to life.

The spirit in us is as one- like oxygen in our lungs as it travels to our brains by blood vessels. This second nature act becomes so interconnected and deeply intimate to our existence.

Meaning that God knows us so intimately so deeply into our valleys of shadows and our fear yet-he tells us that we are alive and worthy to embrace joy!

The spirit did not only make Peter recognize that this was not an act of drunkenness or failure, but indeed this was an act of God's liberatory presence transformed into different languages of his love.

Here there were people from all regions, experiencing what it meant to be alive!

We see how Ezekiel's vision was not just limited to his time, but we are seeing a version of dry bones coming to life on the day of Pentecost.

So, can these dry bones live?

Beloved, not only did these dry bones lived and raised upon adversity, famine, failures, sickness, crucifixions, and death, but these dry bones lifted up as a community in all its diverse beauty.

We see different shades of flesh covering the dry bones and speaking into different languages from all regions. The familiar and unfamiliar come together to break open a covenant of love and justice no matter what shade of flesh these dry bones now have. Because what matters is that we realize that we are ALIVE!

And what does it mean to be Alive and intimately known?

Towards the end of Acts chapter 2 they ask this question:

All were amazed and disturbed. They asked each other, "What does this mean?"

The spirit can create uncomfot, or it may come as a wind turning things upside down, however, once it settles- once it rests upon our heads as Acts chapter 2 describes it, we are able to embrace all that it brings.

When the spirit is in us, we embrace the different ways of being alive whether that is our heritage, families, native language, or vocations- we lift it up to praise God for enabling us to be one with the spirit and we are able to preach.

Now I know that preaching is often related to the pulpit, but I wonder if what the word preach in the context of Acts chapter 2 referred to was the way that people were praising God in different languages and embracing the truth *that God knows us*. That we are all different reflections of its image.

God Knows us in our uniqueness that its spirit calls us to not assimilate into systems that are meant to oppress us. When we are alive we are able to call out death when we see it. Just as Ezekiel was encouraged by the hand of God to call out the dry, dead bones laying in a valley, to rise and come alive. Friends, this Pentecost Sunday, I think it is proper to celebrate the joy of fulfilled promises, the joy of dreaming, the joys of not giving up our need for a radical imagination for the future. While at the same time knowing that the reason we need to hold on to this breath of life is because there are many valleys of dry bones out there and in us.

Finally, the spirit in us is the ultimate prophecy of life and with this same breath we are set free to accept the global differences among us. Respecting our heritages, respecting our different languages, and cultures without setting one specific language/heritage above other. Because we know what can happen when we let fear of differences, fear of multicultural spaces, fear of change, can cause. And that is how dry valleys of bones happen.

Because as I would like to see both of these passages today, the spirit does not belong to a specific culture, place or time. It is ever present, and ever capable to come down upon creation and rest upon it.

Let us not be afraid of our differences, let us not be afraid of the unknown but let us be so intimately in tune with the spirit that when we do face culture clashes or differences, may we be like Peter, and recognize the work of the spirit in all its beauty and diversity.

We ARE ALIVE! And we honor all of those who have given us life through their breath of fresh air in ours. We remember those who were life on this earth and we set out a promise to be alive for one another!

