

SERIES: MAKE IT PLAIN
SERMON: SPEAK
2-18-24

SERIES OPENER:

Habakuk 2:2 Then the Lord answered me and said:

“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.”

OPENER:

Ezekiel 37:1-10 The Lord took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. ² 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. ³ 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.”

⁴ Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! ⁵ This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! ⁶ 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.’ ”

⁷ 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. ⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.’ ”

¹⁰ 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.

NOTE: Setting

The prophet Ezekiel was living in Babylon with the early Jewish exile. Ezekiel prophesied to a broken people. And to these defeated, exiled people, Ezekiel promises a coming day. This prophecy is symbolic of the Babylonian captives return. Of the future glory of Jerusalem under the reign of king David and of the future glory of the Forever King Jesus Christ of the New Eternal Kingdom. For he has put His Spirit with us and brought us from death to life.

Earlier this year, this word came to me.....I heard the Lord say that.....“The church is standing at the edge of an old battlefield.”

Standing and looking at the devastation, we are battle weary. We have suffered loss, we have experienced failure, we feel like the enemy has won. And God is asking us, “Can there be life here?”

1. WE HAVE LOST OUR VOICE

ILLUSTRATION:

Most of the month of December I was not feeling well. To the point that I lost my voice. Everyone around here was calling me Fran the Nanny. You remember that old show from the 90's?

But, when our soul is sick we can do that too, we can lose our voice. I know when I am discouraged or I become weary or I have experienced a setback. Or I feel like I have been attacked by the enemy and lost, the first thing to go is my voice. The last thing I want to do is pray. The last thing I want to do is speak of the goodness of the Lord. It is hard to praise Him when you feel defeated. It's almost as if you feel like the enemy has a gag over your mouth.

**I HAVE HEARD IT SAID THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE LOST A BATTLE,
DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE LOST THE WAR.**

**WE ARE GOING TO LOSE SOME BATTLES.
WE ARE GOING TO SUFFER SOME DEFEATS.
WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT IN THIS SPIRITUAL WAR WE WILL HAVE SOME
LOSSES, SOME DELAYS AT TIMES,
SOME SETBACKS.**

Even Jesus has told us that..... *"in this world we will have trouble."*

If we look at the scriptures, the disciples suffered delays, persecution, insults, setbacks in their ministry, disappointments from fellow workers..... So, we must realize that we will have some defeats in this spiritual fight we are in.

**BUT WHEN YOU LOSE A BATTLE DON'T LET THE ENEMY
STEAL YOUR VOICE.**

**AS GOD'S PEOPLE I FEEL LIKE WE HAVE LOST OUR VOICE.
SOME OF US HAVE BEEN THROUGH DRY SEASONS.
SOME OF US HAVE FELT DEFEATED, EXHAUSTED, OVERWHELMED AND EVEN
HOPELESS.
WE ARE BATTLE WEARY.
THE ENEMY HAS MADE US FEEL DEFEATED AND WE
HAVE LOST OUR VOICE.**

**BUT WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE WORDS LET GOD
GIVE THEM TO YOU.**

God asked Ezekiel, in vs. 3...*"Can these bones live?"*

He didn't say, "Yes, God, I believe they can." He said, "*I don't know, only you know that. I really can't answer that God.*" Ezekiel didn't have an answer. All he could say was... "*God only you know!*"

But God said to Ezekiel if you don't have the words to say then let me tell you what to say.....

Vs. 4-7 Then he said to me, "Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! ⁵ This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! ⁶ 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.' "

⁷ So I spoke this message, just as he told me.

**WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE LOST THE BATTLE?
WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER?**

**WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE SATAN HAS WON AND YOU HAVE
BEEN DEFEATED?**

**WHAT DO YOU DO YOU DO WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE WORDS TO PRAY?
YOU SPEAK THE WORD OF THE LORD.**

2. TAKE YOUR VOICE BACK AND BEGIN TO SPEAK

Vs. 7 the Lord told Ezekiel...."speak a prophetic message...."

To prophesy is - to speak forth the word of the Lord.

I am prophesying to you right now. I am speaking forth to your ears God's Word. His Word contains power! His Word contains His purpose. His Word contains His Will. His Word Contains His truth. His Word is Spirit going forth in action.

Ephesians 6:17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**THE ENEMY HAS ROBBED THE CHURCH OF OUR
WEAPON - THE WORD OF OUR GOD IN OUR MOUTH.
IT IS THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT THAT WE DEFEAT
THE ENEMY WITH.**

WE MUST TAKE OUR VOICE BACK AND BEGIN TO SPEAK LIFE.

You may be saying, "Wait, I'm not a prophet." "I'm not like Ezekiel. But you are your own personal prophet! If you don't speak life into the situation who is going to?

>Can you be the prophet in your family, in your house?

- >Can you be the prophet for your children?
- >Can you be the prophet for your friends?
- >Can you be a prophet to this hopeless and dying world?

ALL IT TAKES IS ONE VOICE SPEAKING THE WORD OF THE LORD -ALL IT TAKES IS ONE.

WILL YOU BE THE ONE?

- >All it took was the voice of the Lord to raise Lazarus from the grave.
- >All it took was the voice of the Lord to still the waves and calm the sea.
- >All it took was the voice of the Lord to make the leper completely clean.
- >All it took was the voice of the Lord to bring a beloved daughter back to life.

**SO WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE LOST A BATTLE?
YOU DON'T WALK AWAY - YOU DON'T TRY TO FORGET IT.
YOU DON'T GIVE IN TO DEPRESSION
AND YOU DON'T GIVE UP.**

**NO YOU STAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT WAR ZONE
AND PROPHECY.**

WHY?.....

3. GOD'S WORD BRINGS LIFE

Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."
e to whom we are accountable

**GOD'S WORD BRINGS CHANGE
GOD'S WORD BRING LIFE
GOD'S WORD BRINGS HEALING AND RESTORATION.
GOD WORD BRINGS RESURRECTION.**

4. COMPLAINING HAS NO LIFE

Proverbs 18:21 *The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

Complaining is part of our sinful condition. We grumble about long lines, prices, people, the weather, our government, and so much more.

When things don't go as expected, or God still hasn't answered that prayer. Or you have stood in faith and you have fought in faith and yet it looks like you have lost. We lose hope and it comes easy to tell others about how bad things are. It's easy to grumble and complain.

James 3:7-12 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. ¹⁰ And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!

¹¹ Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water?

¹² Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

EXAMPLE:

In the book of Numbers, the Israelites murmured and complained against God until they so exasperated Him that He threatened to destroy them. After all the miracles the children of Israel had seen God do in Egypt, including the parting of the Red Sea.

- > They repeatedly complained about food and water
- > When they had manna from heaven, they complained they had no meat.
- > They grumbled and rebelled against Moses' leadership.
- > Aaron and Miriam, Moses' own brother and sister, complained about Moses' wife

Although the children in the wilderness' complaint was targeted toward their leaders, Moses informed them that they were actually murmuring against God.....

Exodus 6:8 "You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord".

Regardless of who or what we complain about, ultimately we complain against God because He is the one in control. He is the one who provides for us and gives us what He wants us to have. He is the one in charge of our circumstances.

- > A complaining spirit reveals a lack of trust in God.
- > Complaining is openly confessing that God has no power.
- > God does not keep his promises.
- > Complaining says that God is not in control.
- > That God does not care.
- > That God does not have a way out.
- > That God does not see you.
- > And complaining is destructive and feeds the death that is around you.

**SO, WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE LOST THE BATTLE?
YOU SPEAK THE WORD OF THE LORD.
ONLY HIS WORDS OF LIFE CAN BRING LIFE TO DEATH.**

ONLY HIS WORDS CAN REVERSE THEIR DESTRUCTION.

TWO THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU BEGIN TO SPEAK THE WORD OF THE LORD:

1) SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SPEAK BEFORE YOU BELIEVE

Just like Ezekiel had no answer when God asked if the bones could live. He had no hope or expectation that the bones could be brought back to life. He had no faith, but he spoke God's words and life came to death.

And as you speak, God's words then His Words of life strengthen your own faith. They fall on your heart like seed and bring forth a renewed faith.

2) SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SPEAK MORE THAN ONCE

Just like restoration was a process of the dry bones, so it is when you begin to speak.

God told Ezekiel to speak not just once, not just twice, but three times for the full completion of God's restoration of the dry bones.

SOMETIMES GOD'S POWER IS DISPLAYED IN STAGES.

**SO WE MUST CONTINUE TO SPEAK NOT JUST ONCE, BUT AGAIN AND AGAIN
SO THE POWER OF THE LORD CAN COMPLETE THE WORK IT HAS BEGUN!**

CLOSING:

ILLUSTRATION:

(Tell context of scripture)

2 Kings 13:14-19 When Elisha was in his last illness, King Jehoash of Israel visited him and wept over him. "My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!" he cried.

¹⁵ Elisha told him, "Get a bow and some arrows." And the king did as he was told. ¹⁶ Elisha told him, "Put your hand on the bow," and Elisha laid his own hands on the king's hands.

¹⁷ Then he commanded, "Open that eastern window," and he opened it. Then he said, "Shoot!" So he shot an arrow. Elisha proclaimed, "This is the Lord's arrow, an arrow of victory over Aram, for you will completely conquer the Arameans at Aphek."

¹⁸ Then he said, "Now pick up the other arrows and strike them against the ground." So the king picked them up and struck the ground three times. ¹⁹ But the man of God was angry with him. "You should have struck the ground five or six times!" he exclaimed. "Then you would have beaten Aram until it was entirely destroyed. Now you will be victorious only three times."

Elisha told Jehoash to *“strike the ground.”* He wasn’t asking him to pound arrows against the ground. He wanted him to shoot into the air through that same window so that the arrows hit the ground. The arrows represented Israel’s victories against the Syrians.

NONE:

“It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow or cast a spear into the country which an army intended to invade... The dart, spear, or arrow thrown, was an emblem of WAR.

“The window was opened eastward toward Syria

Jehoash shot three times and stopped!

>Was he thinking about how foolish it seems to target no enemy that he could see and shoot forth arrows into the air?

> Did it seem futile?

>Did he feel like it was a waste of his energy and time?

Whatever the reason, Jehoash stopped short.

CLOSING:

I believe that the arrow of the Lord’s victory arrow has been shot into the enemy’s camp and the Holy Spirit is asking the Church once again to pick up arrows and shoot striking the ground of the enemy!

Not once, twice or even three times but the full amount needed so that the enemy will be completely defeated and God’s will be done. We are shooting forth arrows and striking the ground of the enemy as we speak and declaring God’s Word and God’s Will!