

## The Story: Chapter 17

### The Kingdoms' Fall

Pastor Kevin Donoho

August 6, 2023

#### **DURING THE STORY SERIES, REMIX CLASS SESSIONS WILL BE DIVIDED INTO TWO SEGMENTS:**

##### **1) THE STORY STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS CHOSEN BY THE LEADER.**

##### **2) THE FOLLOWING REMIX QUESTIONS:**

#### **Opening Discussion**

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

#### **Thought #1: What does exile feel like?**

Revisit the meaning of exile:

To banish or expel from one's country or home. This does not just apply to geography, but can also apply to finding yourself in a location in life that doesn't feel like home. It may also mean finding yourself in a place where the Kingdom values we desire to live by are not the norm, when the values of God's kingdom are different from the values around us.

Read Ezekiel 37:1-3

*"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. 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."*

God's people are in exile. They have lost their temple, their land, their hope.

And yet, even as Ezekiel walks through a valley full of bones, full of death, the Lord is with him. Pastor Kevin reminded us on Sunday that when we walk through a valley that looks and smells of death, God is still with us!

Recall a time, either past or present, when you were in a hard place. In what ways did this feel like exile (physically far from home, emotionally/mentally far from home, surrounded by values that don't match yours, etc.)? When have you felt alone or kicked out? During this time, in what ways did the enemy work to convince you that God had abandoned you? Share this with your group. Ezekiel reminds us that even when you are sitting in the valley of dry bones, you do not sit alone. During that hard time, how did God reveal to you or remind you that He was there with you?

Pastor Kevin also reminded us that it is ok to ask questions in hard places. Ezekiel 37:3 says "He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." When in exile, a place that feels far from home and far from comfortable, what questions do you have? What overwhelming feelings or thoughts do you have that you can bring to the Lord?

Remember, it is all right to lament in the valley. God wants to know your feelings. He created each of them and He already knows your heart.

What does it mean to pray a prayer of lament? To share your hurt, your hopelessness, your fears, and your worries with God? What benefit do you see in being brutally honest with God? Encourage your group to practice this in the coming weeks.

At times, you find yourself in exile because of decisions you've made or as a result of sin from the people around us. Pastor

Kevin reminded us that sin leaves a mess and God lovingly will walk with us to help us see the dried-up bones that we are stepping over.

Are there areas of sin that God is pointing out to you in this season? Dry bones He is showing you to draw you to confession and repentance? Consider sharing these with your group and inviting them into accountability for them.

### **Thought #2: Recognizing death creates the opportunity for new life!**

Read Ezekiel 37:4-6

*“Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”*

God is in the business of breathing life into all things. However, just as in the story of Jesus, resurrection is only possible after death. Even when we are alienated and far from home, God can breathe new life into situations and give us a new way of seeing the world we live in.

Are there things in your life that you need to recognize as dead? Situations or relationships that you’ve been trying to keep alive in your power? What obstacles do you face that prevent you from recognizing them as dead?

Recall a time when God breathed new life into a situation or a relationship. What did it look like for that hopeless or helpless thing to come back to life? How did the new life

look different than it had before? Take time to testify to God’s goodness and His resurrection power.

How do these stories encourage you now in your current season?

If you find yourself in the valley, know that you are not alone. God is right there with you. God has also placed you in this community for such a time as this. Lean into your group, allowing them to help you navigate this season. Remember, God cares about the dry bones and chooses to resurrect broken things because He loves us.

### **Parents,**

**This past Sunday was a family worship and that means our elementary students were a part of our worship service. Below you will find a few questions that may help you discuss and process this topic with your child.**

Pastor Kevin talked about dry bones on Sunday. When you hear “dry bones,” what do you think of?

When they talk about dry bones in the Bible, what do you think they mean? *(Examples: feeling sad, dealing with hard things, impossible, hopeless, helpless, no life, etc.)*

Can you think of a time you felt any of those things? Can you tell us about it?

Are there things or situations right now that feel hard/impossible/helpless/hopeless/ for you?

Pastor Kevin talked about how Ezekiel saw dry bones come back to life. That God restored them and breathed new life into them. When you hear this, what do you

