

- How does the concept of being 'in the world but not of it' challenge our daily decisions and priorities as citizens of God's kingdom living in our current community?
- In what ways might our church be prioritizing our own comfort and familiar programs over meeting the actual needs of people in our community today?
- What does it mean for a church to depend on the breath of God rather than organizational structure, and how can we discern the difference in our own congregation?
- Ezekiel witnessed dry bones coming together with tendons and flesh but remaining lifeless until God's Spirit entered them. What are examples of 'organized but lifeless' activities in our spiritual lives or church?
- How can we honestly assess whether our church's vision is still aligned with the needs of our community, or if we are maintaining programs that primarily serve our nostalgia?
- What specific ways has our understanding of missions and outreach changed from previous generations, and how should that affect our current ministry approach?
- The sermon suggests churches have life cycles that require reinvestment in vision at peak moments. How do we recognize when we are at that critical point of needing to reimagine our purpose?
- If the church exists primarily for those who are not yet members, what practical changes would that perspective require in how we allocate our time, resources, and energy?
- How does the image of becoming an army after receiving God's breath challenge our view of church as primarily a place of personal spiritual comfort?
- In what areas of your personal faith might you be experiencing a season of drought, and how does God's question 'Can these bones live?' speak to your situation?

5-Day Devotional: Breathing New Life

Day 1: The Valley of Dry Bones

Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Devotional: Ezekiel stood among bones that had become "very dry"—gradually, over time. Churches and individuals alike can drift into spiritual dryness when we lose sight of our purpose beyond ourselves. God asked Ezekiel a penetrating question: "Can these bones live?" The prophet wisely responded, "Lord, you alone know." Today, examine areas of your spiritual life that may have grown dry. Have you become more focused on comfort than mission? God specializes in resurrection. He doesn't just restore what was—He creates something new and purposeful. The bones became an army, not just bodies. God's restoration always includes renewed purpose. Where have you settled for maintenance when God is calling you to mission?

Day 2: Citizens in Exile

Reading: John 17:13-19; Psalm 137:1-6

Devotional: We live in the tension of being "in the world but not of the world." Like Israel in Babylon, we are citizens of God's kingdom while residing in a land that doesn't share our values. This creates discomfort—and that's intentional. Jesus didn't pray for us to be removed from the world, but to be protected while serving it. The temptation is to create comfortable Christian bubbles where everything feels familiar and safe. But Jesus left the ultimate comfort of heaven to serve us. Our calling mirrors His: to leave our comfort zones and engage the community around us. How are you living as a kingdom citizen today? Are you building walls of comfort or bridges of compassion? God has strategically placed you where you are—not for isolation, but for incarnation.

Day 3: Organization Without Animation

Reading: Revelation 2:1-7; Acts 2:42-47

Devotional: The church at Ephesus was busy, doctrinally sound, and hardworking—yet Jesus said they had abandoned their first love. In Ezekiel's vision, bones came together with tendons and flesh, but without breath, nothing happened. We can mistake busyness for spiritual vitality. Programs, schedules, and activities can create the appearance of life while missing the essential element: God's Spirit animating everything we do. The early church devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer—but what made them powerful was the Spirit's presence. Examine your spiritual activities today. Are you going through motions or being moved by God's Spirit? Is your calendar full but your heart empty? Only the Spirit gives life. Stop and invite God's breath into your routines, transforming duty into devotion.

Day 4: Vision for the Next Generation

Reading: Habakkuk 2:1-3; Acts 2:17-21

Devotional: Every generation faces the challenge of communicating timeless truth in timely ways. The gospel never changes, but the world around us constantly does. What ministered powerfully to one generation may not connect with the next—and that's okay. God isn't asking us to preserve our preferences; He's calling us to reach people. Vision requires honest assessment: Who has God called us to serve? What are their actual needs? This demands humility and flexibility. The Royal Ambassadors and specific hymnals served their time well, but clinging to them today misses today's mission field. God is always doing something new while remaining eternally the same. Are you willing to release comfortable methods to embrace effective mission? Ask God for fresh vision to see your community as He sees it—and courage to meet needs rather than nostalgia.

Day 5: An Army With Purpose

Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10; 2 Timothy 2:1-7

Devotional: The resurrected bones didn't just stand around looking impressive—they became an army. God's restoration always includes renewed purpose. You weren't saved merely to enjoy salvation; you were saved to serve. Paul reminds us we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works prepared in advance. Like a sailboat perfectly constructed but useless without wind, we need God's Spirit to propel us into mission. The church exists primarily for those who aren't yet members—to seek and save the lost as Jesus did. This requires constant dependence on God's Spirit, not our own strength or strategies. What is God calling you to do today? Where is He positioning you to serve? You are not here by accident. Surrender fully, trust completely, and watch God breathe life through you into your world.

Reflection Question for the Week: In what areas of your life have you prioritized personal comfort over kingdom purpose? How is God calling you to embrace change and renewed vision?