

Ezekiel proclaims a message of hope, telling those who have been exiled or living with hardship that they will be fully restored by the Lord's Spirit.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel (37:1-14)

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the

Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act," says the LORD.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Psalm 130 *(8am spoken, 10am sung)*

- ¹ Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD;
LORD, hear my voice; *
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- ² If you, LORD, were to note what is done amiss, *
O Lord, who could stand?
- ³ For there is forgiveness with you; *
therefore you shall be feared.
- ⁴ I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; *
in his word is my hope.
- ⁵ My soul waits for the LORD,
more than watchmen for the morning, *
more than watchmen for the morning.
- ⁶ O Israel, wait for the LORD, *
for with the LORD there is mercy;
- ⁷ With him there is plenteous redemption, *
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

The apostle Paul explains the difference between what he calls living in the Spirit and living according to the flesh. Christians are in the Spirit, and the Spirit fills and motivates our lifestyle.

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (8:6-11)

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law-- indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.