

**RESTORATION CULMINATES WHEN I PUT MY _____ FIRMLY IN
THE _____ OF GOD.**

Therefore prophesy, and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.” Ezekiel 37:12-14 (ESV)

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. Psalm 127:1 (NIV)

*“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
Matthew 19:26 (ESV)*

But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 (AFV)



Message Guide
December 5, 2021

Restoration from Life's Distressful Situations

Ezekiel 37:1-14

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Distress is an absolutely inevitable part of life, but dealing with it at high intensities can be overwhelming. When we are deeply distressed, it becomes difficult to see and act clearly because the thinking part of our brain actually gets hijacked by our emotions. As a result, things can get *very* big and *very* out of control *very* quickly if we are not *very* careful. Feelings of deep distress can perpetuate anger, confusion, hurt, disorientation, and disconnection from God and others. When these emotions override our thinking, they can trigger our most primitive reactions of fight or flight. Secular remedies for this kind of distress usually focus on ways that we might change our thoughts, behaviors, and even locations so that life feels better in the short term. However, this rarely—if ever—provides a real and lasting solution, and those distressful emotions will usually find their way back into our lives because we have only dealt with the symptoms of distress and not with the cause of the disease itself. Instead, as believers, the presence of real distress should lead us to ask questions about what we can do to alleviate the brokenness around us. *How might God want to use me to bring His hope and light to a distressful situation? How might He take my life and use it as a preview of the day when He will make all things right again?* A response to distress that leads us to this kind of serious reflection will not only help us find peace that surpasses human understanding, but it will also give us a real sense of purpose and direction in the midst of the storm.

Historical Context: 596 BC—The city of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah have fallen to the onslaught of Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of the Babylonian Empire. It was a time of great distress and disillusion for the people of God. Hope was fleeting, and the future looked dim and dark.

“Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost, we are indeed cut off.”
Ezekiel 17:11 (ESV)

And God said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”
Ezekiel 37:3a (ESV)

I replied, “Lord God, only you can answer that.”
Ezekiel 37:3b (CEV)

This is what the Lord God says to these bones: “I will cause breath to enter you so you will come to life. I will put muscles on you and flesh on you and cover you with skin. Then I will put breath in you so you will come to life.

Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 37:5-6 (NCV)

**RESTORATION BEGINS WHEN I _____ MY DISTRESSFUL
SITUATION TO THE _____ OF GOD.**

Then God said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’” Ezekiel 37:4 (NIV)

So I prophesied as I was commanded. Ezekiel 37:7a (ESV)

And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them . . . Ezekiel 37:7b-8a (NIV)

**RESTORATION CONTINUES WHEN I _____ MYSELF TO THE
_____ OF GOD.**

. . . but there was no breath in the bodies. Ezekiel 37:8b (GNT)

Then God said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. Ezekiel 37:9-10 (NIV)

In the Old Testament, the word for “breath” is also frequently translated “_____”.

Let your lives be guided by the Spirit, and then you will certainly not indulge the cravings of your lower nature. Galatians 5:16 (WNT)