

# God Pursues Us with New Life

## Summary and Goal

The Lord brought His prophet Ezekiel to a valley full of dry bones to show him the hopelessness of life in exile—but also the power of God to raise the dead and restore His people. The vision gave hope to the people in Ezekiel’s day that God would bring them back to their land. It also gives us hope by reminding us that the Word of God has resurrection power that makes us alive and restores our relationship to God.

### ***Main Passage***

Ezekiel 37:1-14

### ***Session Outline***

1. God’s people are spiritually dead and scattered in exile (Ezek. 37:1-3).
2. God’s Word is powerful enough to bring life out of death (Ezek. 37:4-10).
3. God’s love and power are displayed in restoring His people (Ezek. 37:11-14).

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### ***Theological Theme***

The only hope for those who are spiritually dead is God’s resurrection power.

### ***Christ Connection***

God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones, which reminds us what we are like in our sinful condition. God gave Ezekiel a vision of the power of God bringing life out of death, a power on display most fully in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

### ***Missional Application***

God promised to raise and restore His people, a vast army who will know God and make Him known.

## Session Plan

# God Pursues Us with New Life

### ? For Further Discussion

The desert and beach both consist largely of sand. Why do people tend to frequent the latter more than the former?

What is the major difference between the two locations?

### Point 1 Option

Ask groups of 2-3 to discuss the following questions (consider writing them on a board or sheet of paper for groups to have; also available on the DVD in *The Gospel Project for Adults: Leader Pack*):

- Where do you see desolation as you look back on your life before coming to Christ?
- Where do you most vividly see resurrection where there were once dry bones in your life?

After a couple of minutes, reconvene and allow a brief time to share responses, but don't require any.

## Introduction

Use the information about the Atacama Desert to help your group visualize a land of desolation (*you might consider ways to show real images of this desert*).

Connect this image to Ezekiel's vision (leader p. 154; PSG p. 119).

- ? What is the most desolate place you've ever been?
- ? Why might God choose such a setting for Ezekiel's vision?

Say that Ezekiel's vision was a message of hope for the Jews in exile (leader p. 154). Then summarize the session (leader p. 154; PSG p. 120).

## 1. God's people are spiritually dead and scattered in exile (Ezek. 37:1-3).

Set the context for Ezekiel's vision, and then read Ezekiel 37:1-3. Tell how the lifeless valley was a symbol of their nation (leader p. 155; PSG p. 120).

- ? In what ways does Israel's exile and the picture of this desolate valley resemble the original exile of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden? In what ways is it different?

Next, explain how this valley of desolation illustrates our dangerous condition prior to faith in Christ—dead in our sin, separated from God (leader pp. 155-156; PSG p. 121).

- ? What value is there in recognizing the danger you were in before you became a Christian?
- ? How does knowing that danger change the way you look at the gospel?

Call attention to the Lord's question "Can these bones live?" and Ezekiel's response (leader p. 156; PSG p. 122).

- ? Why do you think Ezekiel responded the way he did to God's question?

## 2. God's Word is powerful enough to bring life out of death (Ezek. 37:4-10).

Read Ezekiel 37:4-10. Highlight the power of God's word to create, and to restore life (leader p. 157; PSG pp. 122-123).

- Why is it important that Ezekiel spoke the word of God over the dry bones before they started to live?

Explain what the vision represented—the restoration of the people of God. But this hope extends to us as well through Jesus Christ. We are made alive through hearing and believing the Word of God (leader pp. 157-158; PSG p. 123).

Emphasize that Christianity is a resurrection faith. Also point out that God works through people sharing the good news of the gospel to bring spiritually dead people to life (leader pp. 158-159; PSG p. 124).

- How does it change our perspective on the gospel by seeing ourselves as coming alive at the Word of God?

## 3. God's love and power are displayed in restoring His people (Ezek. 37:11-14).

Ask a volunteer to read Ezekiel 37:11-14. Comment on the state of mind of God's people as they existed in exile (leader p. 159; PSG p. 125).

- How would this vision have given Ezekiel's people hope?

Show how God's promise and fulfillment of judgment for the people's idolatry served as evidence of His faithfulness, and this provided hope for their current situation in light of the promise of Ezekiel's vision (leader p. 160; PSG pp. 125-126). *Also use Pack Item 7: The New Covenant to show the promise of the Spirit here as a connection to the new covenant.*

- In what ways does God's promise to restore Israel give us confidence in God's faithfulness?

## Conclusion

Say that God is faithful to His Word and to His people, even in His discipline of them. The fulfillment of life from death has come upon us in Christ, and we have God's message and power to share about Him so even more can be resurrected in faith (leader p. 160; PSG p. 126). *Apply the truths of this session with "His Mission, Your Mission" (PSG p. 127).*

## ? For Further Discussion

What is the connection between our resurrected hearts and our lips that proclaim the good news of Jesus?

## Point 2 Option

Read the "Essential Christian Doctrine" *Resurrection* (leader p. 158; PSG p. 124), and ask the following questions:

- Why do you think it matters that the resurrection is a doctrine found not just in the New Testament but in the Old Testament as well?
- Why does salvation necessarily entail both spiritual and physical resurrection?
- How can our future resurrection free us from our present fears and concerns?

**Christ Connection:** God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones, which reminds us what we are like in our sinful condition. God gave Ezekiel a vision of the power of God bringing life out of death, a power on display most fully in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

**Missional Application:** God promised to raise and restore His people, a vast army who will know God and make Him known.

## Expanded Session Content

# God Pursues Us with New Life



### Voices from Church History

“Let us look to Him who will at last open our graves, and bring us forth to judgment, that He may now deliver us from sin, and put his Spirit within us, and keep us by his power, through faith, unto salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

## Introduction

The Atacama Desert, which spans the countries of Chile, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina in South America, is a considerably desolate place. The average rainfall in this 40,000-square-mile region is 15 millimeters per year (a little more than half an inch!). Because of the climate, the soil has actually been compared to that of the Planet Mars. There is no thriving wildlife. There are no lush forests. There are few signs of anything living at all. Absolute desolation. If a living thing stayed there for very long, you can bet that it would not remain a living thing.

Can you imagine spending much time in a place like that? If you can get a picture of that in your mind, then you’re moving toward picturing the scene in the prophet Ezekiel’s vision recorded in Ezekiel 37.

- ❓ What is the most desolate place you’ve ever been?
- ❓ Why might God choose such a setting for Ezekiel’s vision?

The Book of Ezekiel is filled with strange visions recorded by the prophet. These visions were meant to shed light on the past and also point toward the future of God’s people. It was this look into the future that the people of Ezekiel’s day desperately needed. As we saw in the previous session, Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land and laid waste to Jerusalem and the temple of God. He then deported some 10,000 Jews to live in Babylon. Life as they knew it was over. It was like living in a valley of dry bones, with no hope of life or a future. But with God, there is always hope.

## Session Summary

In this session, we encounter a scene from Ezekiel that is full of both despair and hope. The Lord brought His prophet to a valley full of dry bones to show him the hopelessness of life in exile—but also the power of God to raise the dead and restore His people. The vision gave hope to the people in Ezekiel’s day that God would bring them back to their land. It also gives us hope by reminding us that the Word of God has resurrection power that makes us alive and restores our relationship to God.

## 1. God's people are spiritually dead and scattered in exile (Ezek. 37:1-3).

The warnings had been there. The people had fallen into continuous and unrepentant idolatry. Prophets such as Habakkuk and Isaiah and Jeremiah had talked about the danger that was coming. A few rulers had tried earnestly to turn the people's minds and hearts back to God. Rulers such as Hezekiah and Josiah sought to purge the land of idolatry, but in the end, the idolatry won out.


In the year 586 B.C., the Babylonians came and ransacked God's chosen people. They destroyed the temple and took captive the Jews. The land was gone. The temple was gone. The priesthood was gone. The monarchy was gone. Every mark of favor that the Lord had given to His people was removed.

In this dire situation, God called Ezekiel to prophesy. Ezekiel was 30 years old, and only five years had passed from the time Ezekiel was deported along with his people to Babylon. The setting of the vision recorded in Ezekiel 37 is vividly descriptive of the state of the people during that time:

*<sup>1</sup> The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."*

This valley was a picture of death and desolation. Not only was it filled with bones, these bones were "very dry," completely devoid of life of any kind. We could not imagine a more hopeless scene before us.

To the people of God living in exile, with their former way of life destroyed, this scene was eerily reminiscent of their current existence. Like this valley, the physical and spiritual life of God's people was lifeless. For years, the people's commitment to the Lord had been in decay. In a sense, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem was simply the inevitable end to generations of idolatry. Their city, their homeland, and their temple now resembled the state of their hearts.

 In what ways does Israel's exile and the picture of this desolate valley resemble the original exile of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden? In what ways is it different?

This valley of desolation represented Israel in exile. It also reminds us of what our hearts are like before we trust in Christ. We are in exile from God our Creator, dead in our sin, separated from Him:

### Further Commentary

"As an Israelite trained in the priesthood, Ezekiel knew the importance of treating a human corpse properly. This vast array of skeletons left unburied ('it was full of bones') reminded Ezekiel of the execution of the judgment curses for disobedience (Deut. 28:26). Bones that were 'very dry' indicated that death had taken place long ago. Hence, life was obviously beyond resuscitation (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; but see 2 Kings 13:21). Dry bones are a metaphor for a downcast spirit in other biblical passages (Prov. 15:30; 17:22). Ezekiel was aware that God had the power to raise people from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:1-2). But these bones were dry, meaning that the flesh had decayed. This seemed to make resuscitation impossible ('can these bones live?')." <sup>2</sup>

—Mark F. Rooker,  
HCSB Study Bible

### Voices from the Church

"God's people knew His promises. But the destruction of evil, the blessing of God on people from all nations, and the joys of the Davidic kingdom seemed like another world from the daily grind of God's people, who struggled to sing the Lord's song in a strange land."<sup>3</sup>

—Colin Smith

## Voices from Church History

“This vision may be looked upon as descriptive of a state of lukewarmness and spiritual lethargy in a Church when the question may be sorrowfully asked—‘Can these bones live?’”<sup>4</sup>

—Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

## Further Commentary

“When the ‘breath’ of life is breathed into a body, it comes alive (see Ps. 119:25; John 6:63). The ‘four winds’ probably indicate the full power of the entering ‘breath’ since the winds come from every direction. The picture reminds us of the creation event, where the Spirit of God hovered over the raw elements of the world, transforming it into a habitable earth (Gen. 1:2). The two-stage process of forming the physical body and filling it with the breath of life is patterned after the creation of Adam in Genesis 2:7. The use of the same verb (Heb. *naphach*) for ‘breathe into these slain’ (37:9) and ‘breathed into his nostrils’ (Gen. 2:7) makes this correlation certain. In both cases the bodies did not come to life until they received an infusion of the Spirit (the words for ‘wind,’ ‘breath,’ and ‘spirit’ are identical in Hebrew and Greek).”<sup>5</sup>

—Mark F. Rooker, *HCSB Study Bible*

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Eph. 2:1-3)

Notice the specific word the Bible used to describe the human condition: *dead*. If that word doesn’t speak to the severity and desperation of our situation, then surely nothing does. In fact, this word moves our situation well past desperate and into the territory of hopeless.

Of course, we don’t realize just how bad the situation is when we are in it. Some even point to this lack of realization as evidence of the absence of such danger, thinking: *I don’t feel like I’m in danger. My life seems to be going just fine*. But the lack of awareness of our hopeless reality doesn’t make the situation any less dangerous; in fact, it makes it more so.

- ❓ What value is there in recognizing the danger you were in before you became a Christian?
- ❓ How does knowing that danger change the way you look at the gospel?

The picture of Israel’s condition in exile was dire. No strength. No power. No hope. Like Israel, we too have been exiled away from God on account of our sin. And there is a sense in which all human beings—apart from Christ—are like the valley of dry bones.

The Lord asked Ezekiel a simple question when confronted with this scene: “Can these bones live?” When Ezekiel saw the picture of death, he knew the only way the bones could live was if God did something miraculous. No matter how much those bones might have wanted to live, they were powerless to change their situation. Can these dry bones live? You alone know, Lord. And you alone can do it.

- ❓ Why do you think Ezekiel responded the way he did to God’s question?

## 2. God’s Word is powerful enough to bring life out of death (Ezek. 37:4-10).

The people of Israel were living in the middle of physical and spiritual desolation. But even in an atmosphere of death, God can bring life:



<sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon 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.”

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

It is significant that life came into the valley as a result of the word of the Lord. God’s word is filled with power. At the very beginning of time, it was the word of God that brought something out of nothing. Everything that is—everything we see—is a result of God’s creative word.

Ezekiel’s people had failed to heed the word of God when it came to them through the prophets. Here, though, Ezekiel saw the power of God’s word to restore life.

**?** Why is it important that Ezekiel spoke the word of God over the dry bones before they started to live?

Can you imagine how the scene began to change? First was the noise. Only a slight rumble initially, but the rumble grew to a roar. There was the clacking of bone on bone as these once-dry bones suddenly began to form into recognizable shapes. Then there was the slapping of skin as the newly formed skeletons were covered. And then came the breath of life, blowing like the wind into the valley.

## Further Commentary

“Any suggestion that there could ever again be life in the bones would appear preposterous. Yet as Ezekiel surveyed the scene in the valley of bones, he heard a question, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ (v. 3). The prophet’s answer was restrained and filled with his awareness of human helplessness in the face of death (cf. 24:15-27, the death of his wife) but also respect for the mystery of God’s power. He knew that if the bones could live it was a matter only God knew and that the giving of life was a deed only God could perform (v. 3). Thus when God told him to preach to the dead, dry bones, he obeyed despite its apparent absurdity (cf. John 11:43). The message he was to deliver was a simple one, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!’ (Ezek. 37:4). That word consisted of a promise to give breath, life, tendons, flesh, and skin to these bones so they would know that he is Yahweh (vv. 5-6).”<sup>6</sup>

—Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr.



## Voices from Church History

“Faith has the prerogative of seeing possibilities of life in what looks to sense hopeless death.”<sup>6</sup>

—Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910)



## Voices from Church History

“It is a prerogative of God to raise the dead.”<sup>9</sup>

—Ambrose (circa 339-397)

## 99 Essential Christian Doctrines

### 96. Resurrection

Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it will take place at the future return of Christ. Because Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be similar in nature, meaning it will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.

What did this vision represent? Christian George explains:

Ezekiel’s vision of restoration reflected the ancient prophecy—that at the end of Israel’s exile, God’s people would once again see the promised salvation of the Lord. The name of the Lord would once again be glorified. It was a precious promise—the hope of every heart—that the kingdom that had fallen into captivity would one day be unified again beneath the arms of a protective Shepherd...A day would come when God’s people would be allowed to return to their homeland and practice their religion with freedom.<sup>7</sup>

The hope of restoration does not belong only to the exiles living in Babylon. We claim the same hope of experiencing restoration—the restoration that comes through Jesus Christ. How are we made alive?

In the New Testament, Paul said that it’s through hearing and believing the Word of God that we are spiritually resurrected: “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

We hear the word of the gospel spoken, and something begins to happen inside of us. Our hearts, long petrified into stone because of our sin, suddenly begin to soften until we too are standing anew before God.

Jesus reminded us that “the wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Christianity is about resurrection—first with Jesus and then with all those who believe in Him. When we believe the gospel, the Holy Spirit blows into our lives and gives us spiritual breath. Like the valley of dry bones, once hopeless and dead, we find that through the powerful Word of God, we too can live again.

God’s Word is powerful enough to bring life out of death. But notice that God didn’t speak directly to the bones; instead, He commanded Ezekiel to do it. Ezekiel, then, became the mechanism that God used to bring life from death. The prophet, in turn, had the amazing privilege of seeing it happen before his very eyes.


We can have a similar experience when we freely share the good news of the gospel. Like the prophet speaking over a valley of dry bones, we have been commanded to speak the words of life to those who are dead in sin. We know, looking out at the landscape before us, that on our own we can do nothing to change the scene of desolation and death. But we are not speaking on our own; rather, we are speaking the very words of God. In turn, we have the amazing privilege of seeing God powerfully resurrect those who believe the message of the gospel.

God has given us the Word; we must be willing to speak it. Paul reminded us of this necessity:



How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ (Rom. 10:14-15)

What will happen when we speak the Word of the Lord? God alone knows. We are called to be faithful in proclaiming the hope of the gospel, trusting that anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord can be rescued from the exile of sin and death and be saved.

 How does it change our perspective on the gospel by seeing ourselves as coming alive at the Word of God?

### 3. God’s love and power are displayed in restoring His people (Ezek. 37:11-14).

Before Ezekiel’s very eyes, the scene was completely transformed. It had gone from desolated to populated. It had gone from the embodiment of death to teeming with life. The valley once full of dry bones had been transformed into a vast army, a people whose resurrection was clear evidence of God’s love and power. So would it be with the house of Israel, currently exiled to a foreign nation:

*<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> 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.”*

No doubt the nation, or what was left of it, felt like a valley of dry bones. They no longer had their homeland. Their capital city had been destroyed. Worst of all, the temple—the sign of God’s abiding presence—was gone. Though the nation was in shambles physically, can you imagine the questions the people must have been asking of a spiritual nature?

They must have wondered if God had abandoned His promise. Perhaps He had. Maybe He had withdrawn His presence once and for all, and there would be no reprieve this time. Maybe there would be no deliverer as there had been in the days of Moses.

 How would this vision have given Ezekiel’s people hope?

### Further Commentary

“Only God can produce life for those who are physically and/or spiritually dead ([Ezek.] 37:3). Nothing but a miracle will resurrect the dead (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:1-58). The Sovereign Lord, however, said, ‘I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them,’ signifying all their places of exile (the ‘nations’ and ‘all the countries’ of 36:24). Stress was given in this promise to the revival of the nation as a manifestation of divine, not human, power (vv. 12-14)...If the prophet remained faithful to his call and proclaimed the word of God, the ultimate consequence would be a life-transforming experience that would result in a national resurrection. There is no finer illustration of the life-changing power of the preached word than what the prophet saw in his vision. It has the power to transform those who are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-22) and make them new, living creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). God has always used the ‘foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe’ (1 Cor. 1:21). The enabling power of the Holy Spirit also is portrayed in this passage. The Spirit empowered the dead, dry bones and gave them life and animation. This was Paul’s testimony. He was unable to live the life of a believer (Rom. 7:13-25), faithful to the commands of God, without the enabling power of God’s Spirit (Rom. 8:1-17).”<sup>10</sup>

—Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr.



## Voices from Church History

“Of all the bones of all those numerous slain, not one was missing, not one missed its way, not one missed its place, but each knew and found its fellow. Thus in the resurrection of the dead, the scattered atoms shall be arranged in their proper place and order, and every bone come to his bone, by the same wisdom and power by which they were first formed in the womb of her that is with child.”<sup>11</sup>

—John Wesley (1703-1791)



## Voices from Church History

“The root of all good works is the hope of the Resurrection; for the expectation of the recompense nerves the soul to good works.”<sup>12</sup>

—Cyril of Jerusalem (circa 310-386)

One of the things this vision told the people was that God keeps His promises. He had promised that someday His patience would run out. Centuries earlier, recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy, He had promised that if His people fell into idolatry, then He would act decisively (Deut. 28:32-33).

In a strange way, the exile was not just evidence of God’s judgment; it was evidence of His faithfulness. If God had not kept His promise of judgment, then perhaps He would not keep His other promises either. But because God kept His Word, doing exactly what He said He would do, the people could look to this vision and know that God still keeps His promises. Here, He renewed His promise that the exile was not the end.

He had not abandoned them; in fact, He would bring them back. There was no promise for ease or comfort or even that the exile would be short-lived, but there was a promise that after a time, the dry bones would live again, and they would live in the land that God had promised to their father Abraham. If God was powerful enough to bring about judgment, powerful enough to bring dry bones to life, then He was certainly powerful enough to bring them back again in restoration.



In what ways does God’s promise to restore Israel give us confidence in God’s faithfulness?

## Conclusion

God raised up the Assyrian and Babylonian armies because Israel and Judah had refused to obey God in faithfulness. They had turned to the gods of pagan nations and had spurned the prophets’ warnings. But even in the midst of their exile—God’s discipline of His people—we see God faithful to keep a remnant of Abraham’s children. He continued to be faithful to His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, and David.

“God the Pursuer” would even enter the valley of dry bones—the valley of death and spiritual desolation—and bring new life to His chosen people. By sending His Son to the valley of death, God made the way for an army of people to be raised to new life, commissioned with His gospel, and empowered for His mission. The kingdom of resurrection power would triumph even over the grave.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** God showed Ezekiel a valley of dry bones, which reminds us what we are like in our sinful condition. God gave Ezekiel a vision of the power of God bringing life out of death, a power on display most fully in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

## Additional Resources

# God Pursues Us with New Life



Get expert insights on weekly studies through Ministry Grid at [MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject](http://MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject).  
Grow with other group leaders at the Group Ministry blog at [LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry](http://LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry).

## Study Material

- “Ezekiel: Life from God”—Chapter 23 from *How to Read the Bible Through the Jesus Lens* by Michael Williams
- “Speaking to Bones”—Article by Jill Carattini; find a link to this article at [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](http://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources)
- Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles, including “Ezekiel: His Call and Message,” can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at [LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator](http://LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator). Look for Bundles: The Gospel Project.

## Sermon Podcast

Clint Pressley: “Can These Dry Bones Live?”

Find a link to this at [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](http://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources)

## Tip of the Week

### Depend on God

“It’s intimidating to be a church group leader. For a question regarding a biblical text, you’re the de facto authority. It is largely in your hands whether the time is well spent or wasted. You stand before a group of people and help move them forward in their Christian walk. And then one day, you will stand before God and re-evaluate together how it all went (Heb. 13:17; Jas. 3:1). Nervousness is healthy because it’s just a reflection of what you (and probably your group) know to be true—you aren’t smart enough, entertaining enough, or talented enough to bring about real spiritual change. That’s actually good news, if you let it be. It can move you to paralysis and endless second-guessing or move you to deeper dependence and faith.”<sup>13</sup>

## References

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