

## \*Worship Resources

### **Lent 5 Year A,**

29<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

**Ezekiel 37:1-10 NIV /John 11:1- 45 NIV**

### **Prelude**

### **Welcome Guests / Announcements**

Greetings from Olympic View Community Church, temporarily located in my dining room. This morning, we recognize that we are all adjusting to a new reality, and that extends to the church as well. So this is our initial attempt at trying an online format to continue to provide a worship experience in these days of quarantine. As you are probably all aware, we have canceled our in-person worship for the time being as well as our facility. We will continue to monitor the situation and will modify those decisions as circumstances permit.

With that being said, let's take a deep breath, quiet our minds and hearts, as we light a candle to represent the Spirit among us.

Let us open our time together with a call to worship from the psalmist.

### **Unison Call to Worship Psalm 105:1-4**

**ALL: O give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name, Make known God's deeds among the peoples. Sing to God, sing praises to the Lord, Tell all of God's wonderful works. Glory in God's holy name, Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the strength of our God, And seek God's presence continually.**

## Invocation

### Please Join me in prayer

Creator God, You created the world out of chaos, and we confess that our world right now is in chaos. It is difficult for us right now to make sense out of what is happening. Illness and death have interrupted our lives. The world human beings created has turned upside down. But You are our constant, O God. You are our compass, O Christ. You are the wind that moves us, O Spirit. Guide us in this time, where we confess we need You more than ever, to be our foundation, to guide our way, and to move us into compassion and love. In the name of Christ, who journeys with us now and always, we pray. Amen.

This morning I'd like to share some music with you from the group, Selah, titled *You Raise Me Up*. It's a song many of us are probably familiar with, but really catches the essence of our scripture texts for this morning, this sense of being lost and forgotten, yet rescued and redeemed. Please take time to enjoy this selection and think about the lyrics.

### **Meditating on the Word [video] *You Raise Me Up Selah***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DorNUsi5LE>

### **Our first scripture this morning is from the book of the Prophet Ezekiel.**

#### **First Testament Reading: : Ezekiel 37:1-10 NIV**

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.

He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

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.' ”

So I prophesied as I was commanded. 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, but there was no breath in them.

Then he 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.

**In order to make the scripture more engaging, please enjoy this video illustration of the vivid imagery of this scripture.**

**Scripture Video** [video] *Ezekiel’s Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones*  
YouTube / Zoltran1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7vb1Fv097M>

## **A Time of Prayer**

So as we come to our normal time of sharing prayer together, we are faced with the challenge of not being in each other's presence to verbally share our joys and concerns together. From my conversations with some of you, I have included those concerns shared in our prayer today. If you have items you would like lifted in prayer, please leave a comment below, or email myself or the church office and I will make sure to include them next week, as well as send an email, unless directed otherwise.

## **Joys and Concerns**

This week, let's remember:

### **Tim Bisterfeldt's Mom, Carol**

Please keep Tim's mom Carol in your prayers as she recently tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. She is at home resting. Please pray for healing and strength for her.

### **Myrna's Granddaughter Tammy**

Tammy works in the medical field in the hospital in Edmonds, and faces possible reassignment to another hospital further away, possibly near downtown Seattle. Please pray that she is able to be reassigned closer to home to be closer to her children.

### **George DeBon**

George was recently hospitalized overnight due to a flare-up of a deep sleeping disorder that can cause a seizure like reaction. He is home and doing better, but please keep him and Betty in your prayers.

## **Pastoral Prayer**

### **Join me in prayer.**

Prince of Peace, we pray right now for peace in our hearts. We pray that we may take advantage of the world slowing down as a reminder that the sabbath was created for us, a time of rest. May we lay aside the longing of the world we created to be busy, to do all the things possible. May we lay aside the guilt that we are not doing enough for our work, for our families, for our children or for our elders in this time. May we instead embrace this new pace, and find peace. May we keep ourselves from others to reduce harm, to share our love by our actions of self-isolating to prevent the spread of disease.

Prince of Peace, our fears are real. We fear loss of income and jobs. We fear for our own health and safety, and the health and safety of loved ones. We fear what the future may bring. Help us to let go of fear as a force that holds us back, but help us to acknowledge our fear, to sit with it as with a troubled friend. Help us to give ourselves compassion and grace as You once showed Martha and Mary when their brother Lazarus died. Help us to hold on to the hope of resurrection in this life, a new life that may emerge from the circumstances we face now. Guide us into Your ways of peace, for all our hearts. Amen.

## Gospel Reading: John 11:1-45

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.)

So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light.

It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."

Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,

and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Then Thomas (also known as Didymus ) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,

and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;

and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”

When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.

Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.

When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

“Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days

Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

**This morning's gospel reading is a story most of us are probably familiar with. We'll experience it in the following video, which is aimed for a younger audience but I think relays the message well.**

**Gospel Video** *Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead* - Saddeback Kids  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dca8SSxXCmM>

## **Message - Dry Bones - Rev. Glenn A. Brumbaugh**

We all have experienced being lost at times in our lives, that sense of not seeing a clear path out of our current situation. Whether it's on a hike, driving in an unfamiliar locale, or losing track of friends or loved ones in a crowd, being lost can fill us with anxiety and fear. It's the loss of control, of not knowing the outcome and often feeling that there is nothing you can do to resolve the dilemma you find yourself in. I'm sure most of us are feeling lost right now. It seems like the rug has been pulled out from under us. Those routines that we count on to give our life a stable foundation are suddenly not available to us. Most of us can't go to work, to restaurants to eat or the coffee shop to hang out, and we can't gather together to worship and fellowship in our beloved church building. So many of the ways we interact as a community are suddenly gone, leaving us isolated, and feeling lost and alone. We try to find hope and a light at the end of the tunnel, yet all the facts have to offer is uncertainty and an outlook that is not so promising. So where do we turn? Where do we find hope in this time when so many feel lost and alone?

Our scriptures this week really speak to being lost and finding hope. Ezekiel was a prophet writing for the Jewish people in exile. People who had lost everything that had defined their lives. They lost their temple, the place where they interacted with their God, their homes, and the very land that they called home. Exiled far away, they knew what it was to feel lost and abandoned. Every constant and routine that they had counted on to give their lives a stable foundation was suddenly ripped away. The Israelites yearned to return home to the lives they had left, yet realized that they may never see that land and life again. They could identify with those dry bones in the desert. They knew what it felt like to be dried out and bleached of all color, the very marrow that sustained them seemed long gone. Like those bones, they felt lost in the wilderness and forgotten. So too, do Mary and Martha in the story of Lazarus this morning. Jesus was close to them. He spent time there and they considered him not only a wise teacher and Messiah, but also someone they loved and who loved them.



Yet when their beloved brother Lazarus became seriously ill, Jesus didn't seem to respond to their plight. They knew him well, and had seen him heal others many times. After all, that was one of his main gigs, healing folks and making them well, both physically and spiritually. Yet here was someone Jesus supposedly loved and was close to dying, and nothing. There was no rush to his side, no miracle from afar. They too found themselves feeling lost and abandoned. They couldn't understand why Jesus seemed unconcerned, why he was apparently kicking them to the curb. Yet was that really the case? In both these examples, were they abandoned and forgotten? In both cases, the scripture is pretty clear. They were not forgotten. God hadn't given up on them. In fact the argument could be made that they had given up on God. In their desperation and loneliness they felt abandoned. Yet God was present. God had a solution, salvation from their despair.

Too often we think that because we have faith, that means we will never struggle, that we will never face those times of being lost, of feeling alone and abandoned. Yet, that is part of our lives in this broken world. We will have those "dry bones" times, those periods when we feel like dried out and bleached bones in the desert. Those times when we feel lost and alone, abandoned without hope. But we are not alone. We are forever forefront in the mind of God. When we feel truly lost and alone, it is often only God who is left there with us. It could be argued that we are never closer to God than in those "dry bones" times. In some ways, it is very appropriate that we should be going through such trying times as the season of Lent reaches its climax. What better time to reflect not only on the trying time in which we all are struggling, but also on the many other "dry bones" times of our lives? When we look back, we can recognize the sense of isolation and hopelessness. But we can also see the promise. We were redeemed, we did pull through those times in our past and found light on the other side. God is always with us and will pull us through.

In our stories today, the Jews did return home; Lazarus did rise from the dead. There is hope that God will provide for us as well. Times that are tough do get better. But

our bones will stay dry if we lose faith, if we let that hope slip by. We should also remember that just as Christ brought the promise of renewal to Lazarus, we as the body of Christ should offer hope and comfort to each other. This is our chance to show what being Christ's disciple is all about. In our story today, the original disciples put their faith in him, regardless of the danger or cost, and recognized the hope and promise found there. Likewise, we can be the hope and promise for those in our community who struggle. We can reach out through the phone and internet and give comfort to each other, to be Christ's comforting presence to each other. And when this virus finally begins to wane, many will still find themselves in "dry bones" times. I hope and pray we can continue to find ways to be that beacon of love and support we are called to be. As we continue to walk through this desert together, may we not lose sight of the community we are called to be, and may the Spirit shine through us to give comfort to a "dry bones" world. Amen.

## **A Call to Serve**

This morning let us reflect on how we can offer hope to those, including ourselves, who may be feeling lost and alone now. How can we offer support, and be the church we are called to be. I would certainly encourage financial giving to our ministry through the link in the description, but what are other ways through our conversation, prayer, and actions can we make those around us feel part of a beloved community? As we listen to the following song, *There is a Hope* by Stuart Townend, let us give thought to how we can be Christ's body in the world we find ourselves in today.

## **A Time for Reflection**

**Reflection on the Word [video]** *There is Hope -Stewart Townend*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyMWBx6vvJo>

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

## **Join me in prayer.**

O God,  
accept and bless these gifts which we offer in response  
to the gracious gift of your life-giving Spirit to us.  
May these gifts and our lives be used to flesh out  
your love and justice, mercy and peace  
as they are revealed in and through Jesus,  
your Son and our Saviour, and shared through his body, the church in this world.  
Amen

## **Blessing/Assurance (from Lamentations 3:22-25)**

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God's mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning; great is God's faithfulness. My soul speaks: "The Lord is my portion, therefore, I will hope in God." The Lord is good to those who wait, to the soul that seeks God. In this time of waiting, may we know God's presence and faithfulness endure forever. May our soul speak for us, in putting our hope and trust in God. We are forgiven, loved, and restored. Amen.