

## Tuesday of Lent V - Ezekiel 37:1-14

<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." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy 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, "Prophecy 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.

<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."

*The native religion of the Ukele tribe in Nigeria had no hope in the resurrection of the dead. They believed the dead might someday be reincarnated into a newborn baby within the same extended family. One of my Ukele Christian friends, Samuel, and his wife had a baby son. They named him Matthew (my middle name) after me. Matthew died before the age of two. Many of Samuel's relatives and neighbors said, "Don't worry he will come back someday in someone else." As we grieved the loss of his son he said, "It is so sad that these people do not believe in Jesus and the Resurrection. They have no hope. But I believe Matthew will be raised from the dead. I wish they had that hope also."*

*Ezekiel gives cause to hope in the midst of suffering. The people of Israel at the time felt like they had lost all hope. They felt they were dried up husks and cut off from God. The Babylonians had come and taken them from their homes, killed many and enslaved the rest. They were miserable. But Ezekiel calls them and us to hope in God who, with a Word, calls forth living people from death. Samuel and his wife, both had every reasonable excuse to be angry and despair. But they found hope. That same God who, brings life and hope out of death and despair through the resurrection of Jesus is present in your life today. He does not leave us to the grave. There is a good chance you are stuck at home, unable to leave your house except to get food or necessary items. That is the government's order. These times feel strange and surely are unprecedented in our lives. But they never exceed God's ability to save. Hope in Him.*

*God be with you until we meet again. In Jesus' love and mercy, Pastor Wulf*