

Ezekiel 37:1-14

37 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. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I 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." ⁷So 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. ⁸I 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. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, 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." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹Then 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.' ¹²Therefore 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. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I 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.

In this week after Easter we come to this reading from Ezekiel. The message of hope was given to the people of Israel, when all looked bleak come 2600 years ago.

Easter Sunday is the day when we celebrate that there is always hope with God. Death could not hold God, eternal death was defeated when Jesus came alive out of the tomb. With the start of the Church at Pentecost a new Israel was born,

Around the world the Church is still flourishing; in our own land the church of Christ, in its traditional sense, is struggling. In many places The bones may even look dry and lifeless. Is God's Church finished in Britain? If God is God the answer has to be no.

God speaks the word of life, but the bones have to listen and obey. The bones have to hear the word of the Lord. The bones have to be prepared to be put back together, have breath within them and live.

A few years ago whilst reflecting upon a coconut – some have heard a fuller reflection – I felt God saying that the church is like a coconut; at the heart is the purity of Christ and the water of life. The Institutional Church has become something like a ragged hard shell hiding the truth of that which is contained within. The only way for the purity to be revealed is for the church to be broken apart and once broken it cannot be put together again.

I leave that with you to reflect upon, alongside the passage from Ezekiel. Can the church in Britain live again; can the body of Christ bring life to our land?