

The Living Preaching to the Dead

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[0 : 0 0] As the boys and the girls head off, let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Our Lord, we come before you this day and we thank you once more for our time of worship together.

Help us this short time to bring our hearts and our minds to this place. We confess that even just now we come with many distracting worries and many distracting thoughts.

We come to this place and we find ourselves so easily moved away from what we are here to do. We are here today, Lord, before you, living and through God.

We're here before you, a God who sees us and who knows us. We're here before you, a God from whom nothing is hidden. We ask you then that for this time you prepare our hearts for worship.

Lord, prepare our minds to hear the glorious good news of the gospel. That there is hope and there is life for all who come to Jesus. That he will cast no one aside.

[1 : 0 7] He will reject no one who comes to him. Lord, that would be our hope today. That would be our truth today. Help us, Lord, then this short time together to lay aside the many concerns and cares of this world.

Lord, we come today confessing there are so many things which weigh us down. We pray just now for those here who are burdened with complicated personal burdens.

Family burdens, family worries, health worries, financial worries. Lord, you know the full extent of the worry and anxiety in this place today.

We pray just now for those who would long to be here. Those who would love to be here but who are not here as often as they wish to be for various reasons and for complicated reasons. Lord, you know their situations.

We ask you to draw alongside them too. I pray just now, Lord, for the empty seats here. For those who are never here. Those who have no understanding and those who have no care to come near this place.

[2 : 0 7] I pray just now for those who actively reject this place. Those who actively reject coming to worship you. Those who think we are foolish in what we do.

We pray for them. Your word tells us to pray for our enemies, Lord. We pray for those who are enemies of your goodness and enemies of your grace. Because we ourselves were once enemies of you.

We ourselves were once neglectful of all your goodness towards us. We ourselves once ran the opposite way away from you. But yet here we are today worshipping and glorifying and praising our risen Lord.

Help us, Lord, then to lay hold on every opportunity you give us. To be light. To be salt. To share the wonderful, life-giving good news.

To a world that is dying. Help us, Lord, to be faithful in sharing and pointing out the reality. Help us, Lord, then to be faithful.

[3 : 28] We ask for blessing in our family circles, our friendship circles, our wider community. Blessing as we seek to engage with the gospel work. Give us, we ask, gospel-sharing opportunities, evangelical opportunities.

Where we can, with words and action, we can show those around us the love of our Saviour. We can share the truth that there is one way to glory.

There is one way of salvation. There is one way to God. That is the Lord Jesus Christ and none other. Help us, Lord, to be bold in that proclamation. As we find ourselves proclaiming that truth to a world that is so against us, that is so against you.

To a society that hates you. And in that we see nothing has changed. We join with a long line of our brothers and sisters throughout the centuries who stood opposed to society.

Who stood opposed to the way things are done. And who proclaimed the risen Saviour, the hope of mankind. The risen Saviour, the Son of God. The only perfect one.

[4 : 37] The only King. The only true Saviour. We preach Him today without fear and without worry. We thank you just now that we do not have any fear at this stage and at this point in time of government attack.

We remember as always brothers and sisters who are not as fortunate in these matters as we are. Brothers and sisters we pray just now especially for in Central Asia. Who have indeed faced complicated situations this past few weeks.

For the churches there that have been shut down. The communities that have been scattered and imprisoned. Lord you would be glorified there. Give you praise that where nations, states, where governments try and suppress and destroy your gospel.

It is there we see your gospel flourishing all the more. Give you praise for that. And although earthly rulers can imprison and earthly rulers can kill.

There is nothing and no one that will stop your plans from being accomplished. The gospel will spread. Dead souls will be made alive.

[5 : 49] Dry bones will be rejuvenated again. And you will be glorified. Pray Lord for our own nation, our own government. Pray Lord for those who rule over us locally and nationally.

Pray once more for those in the council. Pray for those in Holyrood and those in Westminster. Pray Lord for the peace and need of the prosperity of our own nation. And once we pray Lord for peace and prosperity.

We also pray for guidance. Pray you would lead and guide those over us. Those you have given power in civil matters.

Lord we ask you to give them wisdom. And we confess that as a nation. We have gone far, far astray from what we have been called to be and to do.

We do pray Lord for the ongoing situation we find of legislation that has been put together. That will seek to disrupt and seek to destroy the clear gospel witness.

[6 : 52] Give us wisdom in how we react and how we deal with that. Give us wisdom Lord as a congregation. Give us wisdom as a denomination. In how we go forward in strange days and in dark days.

By being faithful to the risen saviour. Help us Lord to be careful and gentle in how we conduct ourselves. But at the same time to be firm and without moving in the truth that we hold on to.

We confess that we ourselves are often such poor examples. That we ourselves are often such poor witnesses as to the glorious gospel. We are truly at times just jars of clay.

Jars of dust. With which we have treasure inside. It's that treasure we point to. We point those around us to our saviour. A glorious risen saviour.

Pray or just now for family and for friends. Who as of yet do not know you. We ask you would bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. You would use us for that very purpose. As we pray Lord for our own local situation.

[8 : 03] We pray for the wider denomination situation in our islands. We pray for our vacant congregations. Pray just now for Shabbos. For North Uist. And for South Uist.

We ask Lord you bless them and be with them. And in our time of vacancy you would support them. And you would enable the gospel work to keep on going in these places. Remember just now the congregation we pray for.

Pray for Govan Free Church today especially. For the incredible work that you're doing in our midst. As we see nationalities. So many nationalities come to worship you.

So many opportunities to share the good news. Pray for them. We pray for a settled ministry there. For a full time minister. A full time pastor.

Who would serve them and lead them. And be with them. We ask that you'd encourage your people there. Also a member just now. Muriel McLeod. We thank you for her. Thank you for her steadfast love to you.

[9 : 03] And her steadfast love to the people of Cambodia. As she has made her life out there for many years now. As she has served your people there. And served your gospel cause there.

In ways we will never hear about or know. We ask you bless her. And give her peace. As she returns back to another three or four years. Of work out there.

You'd encourage her. And be with her. And know that she is remembered. And that she is cared for. Not just by us. But eternally by you. Thank you Lord for our congregation here.

We thank you for those who provide the supply. We thank you for our elders. For those who are willing to give off their time. To lead and to engage. We pray just now for those involved.

In all the various aspects of ministry or congregation. We pray just now for those involved in WFM. We thank you for them. Again who are giving off their time and energy. To keep that ministry going.

[10 : 00] And those involved in Sunday school. And those involved behind the scenes. In various ways. Those who are praying continually. For the gospel cause here. We do pray just now for our area. For the area from the Glen to Gary.

We pray Lord that the gospel will be known. That Christ will be magnified and glorified. In this place. Keep us serving you faithfully and humbly. Understanding that we are the means.

You have chosen. To make your name known to this place. You do not need us. But you have chosen to make use of us. Pray for gospel refreshing. And gospel renewal in this place.

Across the denominations. We pray Lord your name will be known. And glorified. In North Tulsa. Forgive us our sins. We come confessing sin before you today. This past week.

And this past day. And indeed this past hour. Or cleanse us from that. And we come clinging on. To the finished work. Of Jesus. In his name.

[11 : 00] And it's for his sake. We ask these many things. Amen. Amen. Let's turn to read in God's word. Turn to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel chapter 37. Ezekiel chapter 37.

Ezekiel chapter 37. Ezekiel chapter 37.

Ezekiel chapter 37. Ezekiel chapter 37. We can read the whole chapter. Let's hear the word of God. The hand of the Lord.

And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me.

[11 : 56] And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And he said to me. And can't he said to him.

O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live, 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.

So I prophesied as I was commanded, as I prophesied there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone, and when 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.

Then he said to me, Prophecy to the breath, prophecy 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.

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. Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.

[13 : 29] Behold, they say, our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost. We are indeed cut off. Therefore prophecy, 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.

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 word of the Lord came to me, Son of man, take a stick, and write on it, for Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him, then take another stick, and write on it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel associated with him, and join them one to another, into one stick, that may become one in your hand.

And when your people say to you, will you not tell us what you mean by these? Say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph, that is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel associated with him, and I will join with it, the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand.

When the sticks on which you write, are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land.

[15 : 13] And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.

They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols, and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions, but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules, and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived.

They and their children, and their children's children, shall dwell there forever. And David, my servant, shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them.

It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

[16 : 28] And the nations will know, but I am the Lord, who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore. Amen. Good praise to God for his holy, and his perfect word.

Let's again sing to God's praise, this time the book of Psalms, Scottish Psalter, sorry, Scottish Psalter, and Psalm 40. Scottish Psalter, and Psalm 40.

That psalm we know so well. Psalm of forgiveness. Psalm 40. Scottish Psalter, verses 1 down to verse 5.

I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear, a length to me, did incline my voice, and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit, and from the miry clay, and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

Psalm 40, verse 1 to 5. To God's praise. I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear, a length to me, hidden in time, my voice, and night to hear.

[18 : 03] He took me from a fearful pit, and from the mighty king, and on a rock he set my feet, and on a rock he set my way.

He put a new song in my mind, and on a rock he set my way.

He put a new song in my mind, and on a rock he set my way. He put a new song in my mind, and on a rock he set my way.

where or here are oh God bless you.

God bless you.

[20 : 33] God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. Let's turn back for a short time to the chapter we had, Ezekiel chapter 37. Ezekiel 37.

Looking at the whole chapter but focusing mostly verses 1 down to verse 5 or verse 6. Ezekiel 37. Take a look at our text, the first half of verse 3, that question.

And he said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? Son of man, can these bones live? Now, I'm very aware we come to a text we have, I'm sure, heard preached countless times.

Some of us, it's a very common text. As we said before, just because a text is common, it doesn't mean we shouldn't look at it again. God's word is God's word.

[21 : 38] The parts we know well and the parts we perhaps know less well. God's power is in his word regardless of our familiarity with it. God's word.

Having at least heard, at least tried to imagine for yourself what life could look like for you if we were to come to Jesus. Now, you've heard this cry, this plea, countless times.

Countless times. But here today, we've got such a vivid image of what God does in the life of his people when someone comes to him. Such a glorious image.

Quite a visceral image. Quite a clear image. At a time, it's quite a... You can almost see it in front of you. And that's how it's supposed to be. What does it look like for someone to literally be born again?

What does it look like to come from being dead to being alive? So, there's three very simple points for us. First of all, verses 1 down to verse 3, we see this impossible question.

[23 : 12] Verses 1 to verse 3, the impossible question. Then, verse 4, we see the impossible mission. And then, verses 5 and verse 6, the incredible reality.

First of all, the impossible question. Verses 1 down to verse 3. Again, this is a chapter that we've all known, I'm sure, for many years.

It's a popular one for Sunday school. At least when I was in Sunday school, we covered it a few times. There's songs about this chapter. There's children's songs about this chapter. There's other songs about this chapter.

This is a well-known image. But perhaps we are too familiar with it. So, for a short time, let's go through these verses and take ourselves and remind us to what's being shown to us here.

Ezekiel is here. And yet again, the Lord is giving him a vision, giving him a sight. A waking dream of sorts. And he is seeing this before him.

[24 : 18] You see that here. He's brought him out in his spirit. So, Ezekiel, he is here and he is seeing before him what he describes. For ourselves, we can imagine as he is seeing.

We can go and follow him on this journey for a short time together today. So, he is led in his spirit. He is brought before a valley. Place yourselves in a valley.

What valley comes to mind first for yourselves, I don't know. Maybe the valley in the glen there. For me, my mind goes back to Graver. And the glen in Graver is a big valley there.

But imagine that valley. It's dry. It hasn't seen sun. It hasn't seen rain, I should say. It's only seen sun for century after century. Dried up. Dusty valley. And in this valley there is strewn bones.

Just piles of bones. Skulls and rib cages and femurs. You can see it all. There's piles. And away from the piles there's more stones.

[25 : 20] But there's no flesh. There's no muscle. There's nothing left in these bones. They've long since been picked clean. Long since dried out in the sun. We'll see that later on. A full valley.

Full of bones. That's the image we have here. As we come to this, the image is clear for us. I won't speak in illustrations today because the scripture is clear.

What we have presented here for us is our natural state. Again and again it's made clear to us, this is the natural state of man and woman.

This is who we are. This is what we are naturally. We are a valley of bones. We said this before but say it again. Quite often you'll see the illustration being used that before someone becomes a Christian, they are struggling.

They're in a sea and they're wading and they're bobbing up and down and they're struggling to get a breath. No. Before someone's a Christian, the Bible's very clear. They're dead.

[26 : 30] They're not struggling. They're not wading, treading water. They're at the bottom. We're long since gone. We are dead. Totally dead.

This is us naturally. And the hard truth, and it's hard for my holiday and to launch into this, but the hard truth is, this valley of bones, we don't have to try too hard to imagine it because it's what we see around us just now.

North Tolstair is beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. We love living here. We love spending time here. We love spending time here, not just for yourselves, but also just for being here.

It's a glorious place. It's a beautiful place. We all know that. We're down in Gary the other day and the camper vans have started already. Tourists love this place. You can see why. It is beautiful.

It is glorious. But at the same time, North Tolstair is full, biblically speaking, spiritually speaking. It is full of death, full of dead bones, full of dry bones.

- [27 : 45] It is full of people who are dead spiritually, who have no hope, who have no life in them spiritually. Friends, we love you and we're so glad you're here, genuinely glad you're here. Every week you come, it's an encouragement to us. We praise the Lord for you being here. But every week you're here without coming to Jesus. You are alive in so many ways. You serve your family well.
- You serve your community well. You are known and you are loved and you are cared for. But at the same time, spiritually, you are dead. In many ways you are alive.
- In many ways you are incredible. But spiritually, you are dead. Spiritually, there is nothing like we can be done for you by yourself.
- You're just dry bones. Ephesians 2. We looked at this verse before. Ephesians 2 gives us for us. Ephesians 2 tells us, speaking of the Christians before our Christians.
- [28 : 46] And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked. Following the course of this world. Following the prince of the power of the air.
- For Christians here, we know what it's like to be a non-Christian. We remember back to before we were saved. And we ourselves admit that back then we were dead.
- We were alive in many ways. We were engaged in the world in many ways. We did good things. We served one another. We loved our community. We loved our families. We worked hard.
- X, Y and Z. All good things. But spiritually dead. Spiritually hopeless. Spiritually helpless. Dry bones in this valley. No life.
- No vitality. Gone. And note the bones. They're not just bones. Look how they're described.
- [29 : 39] Again, nothing in God's word is wasted. And behold, at the end of verse 2. Behold the bones. They were very dry. Very dry.
- They've been dry for years. They've been here for years. There is no hope. These are our bones that become brittle in the sun.
- Really, they're turning back to dust. If you were to grab these bones and hold them, they return to dust in your hands. They are completely gone.
- This is not just an awful mass graveyard. This is an ancient mass graveyard. There is no life here. There has been life here for many, many years.
- In other words, there is nothing that can be done. Hence why we have this impossible question of verse 3. The Lord says to Ezekiel, Son of man, can these bones live?
- [30 : 38] This is the impossible question. This is the implausible question that poor Ezekiel is asked. And this question is essential.
- It is the central point to our message today. Can these bones live? Can these bones live? Now, in every way possible, the answer is no.
- Humanly speaking, in every way possible, the answer is no. The question is, can these bones be alive again? These dry, turning to dust, sun-bleached bones?
- No. No. No. There is no hope that this pile of bones can ever live again. Of course there's not.
- There's nothing you can do. You can put them together again and try and make them look alive again. It's just bones. Death. Gone. No hope.
- [31 : 37] It's impossible. And we ourselves would say, of course not. Of course these bones can't live again. It's a pile of bones. It's a valley full of bones. There's nothing can be done.
- We're far too late to help. But we turn to what the prophet, what Ezekiel, says back to God. And we see his answer.

Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, you know. O Lord God, you know.

In other words, Ezekiel's very much aware there's nothing he can do. Nothing he can do to make the dead alive. But he says to God, you know. I can't change these dead bones back into living bones again.

I can't bring life back to deadness. I can't bring hope where there's no hope for centuries. But Lord, you know.

[32 : 41] Lord, you can do something here. But I cannot. That brings us to verse 4. We see the impossible mission. Brothers and sisters, this is where we come in now for a second.

Verse 4. Talking to the bones.

Talking to the bones. The Lord calls Ezekiel to talk to bones. Spurgeon was once asked what preaching, how he would define preaching.

And Spurgeon defined preaching as the living talking to the dead. You think, that sounds a bit harsh. That sounds a bit much, Spurgeon.

You probably shouldn't say that. It's going to offend someone. But Spurgeon gets it from scripture. It's the living talking to the dead. That is what we're doing. It is an impossible mission.

[33 : 45] What a waste of time. What a waste of Ezekiel's life. To talk to bones.

How just. What nonsense. What a waste of breath. What a waste of words. Why is he being told to talk to some bones? What can his words do to make bones come alive?

Well, nothing. That's the whole point, isn't it? It's the whole point of verse 4. Speak to these bones. Prophecy of these bones. And say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, when we preach the gospel. Brothers and sisters, when we engage in evangelism. When we share the good news to our friends and our family.

We are preaching. We are prophesying. We are sharing the word of God to bones. To those who are spiritually dead. And on one hand, you might catch yourself thinking, what's the point?

[34 : 56] I've been praying for this person for 10 years, for 30 years, for 50 plus years. I've been sharing the gospel to my children, to my parents, to my siblings, to my community for all these years.

And yet, we are just dead. There is no point to this. Be reminded. Be reminded from the words here of the Lord to Ezekiel.

Whose words are we sharing? It's not our words. Friends, don't think for a second. Don't please think for a second that I somehow think that if I craft a good enough sermon, I can come and save this congregation.

Save our community. But with my sermon. Words on a few bits of an A4 bit of page. That saves no one. Saves no one. God's word does the work.

God's word does the life-giving, life-saving work. Brothers and sisters, it's his word we bring. You think, what's the point?

[35 : 59] We've been doing this work in Tolstain now for years. The gospel is going up for years, and yet there is no change. I've been sharing the gospel for years, and yet there is no change. Yet I still find myself speaking to bones.

Speaking to those who are dead. Yes. That is your mission. That is your calling. Yours and mine with you. We are to prophesy. We are to preach over these bones.

But what is the thing we're saying to them? What is our call? What is our proclamation to the dry bones? Hear the word of the Lord.

Hear the word of the Lord. We are saying, don't listen to me. Don't even look at my example. I am a flawed sinner who will get things wrong.

And that's true for your minister, as it is for the brothers and sisters here. Don't look to us. We try and follow Jesus. We try and serve him well. But we will fail.

[36 : 57] And we will let you down. And that is true. To our shame, that is true. But listen, not to us, but listen to the one we're talking about. Listen to the words of God.

What does God say to the dry bones? Brothers and sisters, what are we called to share to the dry bones who live with us?

Who we love, who we care for? What is our message to them? Verses 5 and verse 6. Thus says the Lord God to these bones. Behold, I will cause breath to enter you.

And you shall live. 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. This is the incredible reality of these verses. Brothers, behold.

[37 : 56] Behold. In other words, just look. Just look. As you share the word of the Lord. As you give the hope of Jesus.

You just watch. You just look on. And see the Lord will do his work. Congregation, brothers and sisters. The Lord will do his work in North Tolstown. We think we're doing this for years.

We've been slogging away here for years. Behold, the Lord is working. The Lord is doing his work. Again, back to Spurgeon. He was challenging a young minister.

I was reading this last week. He's challenged me. And I hope it challenges you too, brothers and sisters. He was challenging a young minister. The minister came to Spurgeon saying, Preacher, I'm seeing no conversions.

I'm seeing no enlivening of God's people. I'm seeing no work taking place in my congregation. And Spurgeon, as always, is quick.

[38 : 55] And he says, do you believe it will happen? The man goes, yes, of course I do. He goes, Spurgeon, again, says the same question.

Do you actually believe it will take place? So often we pray the Lord will save someone. We pray the Lord will work in North Tolstown. But do we actually believe it's possible?

I'm not saying the Lord's work is dependent on our level of faith. But at the same time, we are saying that we have to trust that God is able. As you pray for your family, pray for your siblings, perhaps parents or children, close friends.

As you pray for them, are you truly believing the Lord is not just able, but that he is willing and will do this? As you pray for the salvation of those in North Tolstown, do you believe the Lord will save?

The details and the exact mechanics of it all, it's in his hands. But are we praying whilst believing? It's a challenge for us. Behold, it will happen.

[40 : 02] This is the good news. Behold, I, I. God alone will do this work. Not minister, not ministries, not elders, not deacons, not even ourselves as Christians.

We are called to take part in the work, but it is his work. Behold, I. Behold, he is doing the work. What will he do?

He will cover with skin and sinews. He will make those who are dead. He will make them whole again. We're made to know God.

We're made to worship God. Until we know him and worship him, we're not living lives to our fullest potential. Not living lives as we're meant to live them. And God says, come to me.

Come and find salvation in me. Come and find life in me. And I will make you whole again. And also note what happens. He will put breath in you.

[41 : 02] I will put breath in you. And you shall live. That is the gospel proclamation. You might think, I don't know, you might think you're too far gone.

You might think, I've come to church for so many years. Is it worth me even trying now? I've heard so many preachers, so many ministers give the same basic sermons.

Is it worth listening now? Perhaps you think, well, I'm a hypocrite. I'm this, I'm that. I'm too far that way, too far that way. Whatever excuse you are using and have used perhaps for years.

You think, am I too far gone? Am I too dead? And think back to the start, to this valley of dry, dead, crumbling bones. If God can bring life to that valley, then friends, your life, your story is nothing for his power.

His eternal power is able to transform, as it were, a valley of bones. And then your one life, your one story, it is nothing for his power.

[42 : 11] He can transform you. He can change you to the finished work of Jesus. Jesus, all been purchased for you, if only you would come and cry out for it. I will put breath in you, and you shall live.

And finally, you shall know that I am the Lord. This is the hope, this is the promise offered today. Not just a new life, but a new life where you know your creator.

Not in a mental way only. Not in a distant way. No. You will know God.

You will know him personally. That is the gospel. Come and know Jesus. As you know him, you believe in a God, you trust in a God who knows you.

As you love him, you love a God who loves you. As you seek after him, you look after us, seek after a God who sought you out. Come and know him as God.

[43 : 26] Come and know a true and personal relationship with Jesus. The question is, do you want this? Do you recognize yourself as aware to be in this valley?

And you say, yeah, I am dry. I am so dry. I am so done with all. I am so tired of searching and finding no life anywhere.

And you say, well, maybe it is too late for me. Maybe the Lord has given up on me. Maybe I have listened to far too many sermons. And maybe my time has passed.

Maybe I am not one of the elect. Maybe I am not really his. For all the arguments that you and the evil one can put in your way. You are here just now hearing the gospel.

You are here just now hearing God's word. That is the evidence it is not too late for you. You are here with breath in your lungs. You are here once more hearing the gospel.

[44 : 26] Once more hearing the call for you to come and join us in worshipping our saviour. That is the evidence the Lord is not done with you. If he was done with you, you wouldn't be here.

You wouldn't be here. Simple as that. You aren't here as routine. Perhaps in one way you are. You have come here every Sunday and we praise the Lord for that. But you are here because he has brought you here week after week to hear his word.

When you preach, when you stand up here and if you haven't been up here, feel free to one day to sneak up if you are ever in the church.

Sneak up here and have a peek. You are allowed to come up here. It is not holy ground. And see how high up it feels up here. Very high. And I don't say this to worry you.

And I don't know about yourselves. But when I was younger, especially in Graver, there are central beams in Graver. You could hide behind them. He won't see me. I can see your faces. I can see every one of you.

[45 : 28] I say that to encourage you. If I can see you, if I am getting to know you as time goes on, how much more does the Lord see you?

How much more does the Lord know you? When I see, and I look at the congregation, I see, yes, dry bones. I see those who as of yet don't know Jesus. But sitting beside you and in front of you and behind you are living, newly born, beautiful people in God's image.

Those who Jesus has called his own. Those who cried out to him. So you might be here tonight as a dry valley of bones. But right here, just now beside you and in front of you, behind you and with you.

Those who have received life from God. If there's hope for them, there's hope for you. You're no different to them. No different at all. We're no more special than you are. Come.

Come and live. Stop existing in the dryness, in the heat, in the crumbling reality of having no saviour and no help and no hope.

[46 : 35] And come and know Jesus. Come and find hope. Come and be built up to a living body. Come and love the one who has given himself for you.

If only you would come and receive that new life. Be born again. No longer a valley of dry bones. But instead, a valley watered by the streams of his mercy and the streams of his love.

Spare our heads in a word of prayer. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of your word. Once more, we ask you to bless your word to us. Bless it, Lord, to our encouragement. Pitch now for any here who as of yet don't know Jesus.

That you would encourage them this day. Once more, to come and to find their place before him. To come and to find what it is to have life breathed into our bones.

To have those sinews and those muscles and that newborn and reborn flesh and heart and soul in them. To come and know and come and love and come and serve.

[47 : 42] Lord, that you would make that through for those here today. Thank you, Lord, for those of us who have known and who know that new life. You have breathed life into us. You called us from a valley of bones and you gave us that new body.

That new mind. That new creation. Give you praise for that. Pitch now for those who are missing from our number today. Those away on holiday and those who are away for various reasons.

Lord, we ask you to bless them. Bless them and take them home in safety, we ask. Pray just now once more for all that goes on. For your name's sake in this place. Every place in our island where your name is worshipped and glorified.

Across the denominations today. Lord, that from the valley of dry bones we would see much life. Let's call these things in and through. And for Jesus' name's sake.

Amen. Let's conclude for now. From Scottish Psalter and Psalm 103. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 103.

[48 : 47] Again, a psalm of God's forgiveness. Psalm 103. We can sing from verses 1 down to verse 5.

Let's read verse 3 together. Psalm 103. We'll sing verses 1 down to verse 5. Let's read verse 3 together. This is the hope of coming to Jesus. Come to Jesus and know this for yourself.

Psalm 103 verses 1 to 5. To God's praise. O thou my song, bless God, the Lord, and the Father, he is, hisqueous everyone on his belt, o'er, and the Father armor roe.

O my soul, the Lord my God, can not forget your fear.

Of all his gracious benefits, he hath based on me.

[50 : 39] Of all his gracious, he hath based on me.

O thy gifts, his gifts, all and his, the King and the King.

O God, we gain thy life, Father, to death is gone, O God.

O God, we gain thy name, O God. O God, we gain thy name, O God.

O God, we gain thy name, O God. O God, we gain thy name, O God.

[52 : 00] O God, we gain thy name, O God. O God, we gain thy gifts, renew this time new.

Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, both you now and forevermore.

Amen.