

Friends of the Chapel Weekly Scripture Study

Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2026

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 37:1–14

English Standard Version Scripture Text

^dThe hand of the LORD was upon me, and ^ehe brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley;¹ it was full of bones. ² 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. ³ And he said to me, ^f“Son of man, ^gcan these bones live?” And ^hI answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴ Then he said to me, ⁱ“Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, ^jO dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause ^kbreath² to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ ^lAnd I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and ^mcover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, ⁿand you shall know that I am the LORD.”

⁷ So I prophesied ^oas I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, ^pa rattling,³ and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But ^qthere was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, ^r“Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, ^sson of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from ^tthe four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ So I prophesied ^uas he commanded me, and ^vthe breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

¹¹ Then he said to me, ^w“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and ^xour hope is lost; ^ywe are indeed cut off.’ ¹² Therefore ^zprophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, ^{aa}I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And ^{ab}I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And ^{ac}you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And ^{ad}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; ^{ae}I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

Historical Context

Ezekiel 37 presents the vision of the valley of dry bones during the Babylonian exile. Israel perceives itself as cut off and without hope. Through prophetic proclamation, the LORD demonstrates His power to restore life and renew covenant promise.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verses 1–2 – The Spirit brings Ezekiel to a valley of very dry bones, symbolizing utter hopelessness.

Verse 3 – The LORD’s question emphasizes divine sovereignty over death.

Verses 4–6 – The prophet speaks God’s word; life comes through breath (ruach).

Verses 7–8 – The bones assemble physically but lack breath, highlighting the necessity of the Spirit.

Verses 9–10 – The breath enters; the army stands alive, depicting restoration.

Verses 11–14 – The vision interpreted: God promises to open graves and restore His people by His Spirit.

Theological Themes

- Resurrection imagery
- The power of God’s Word and Spirit
- Restoration from exile
- Hope amid apparent death

Epistle Reading

Romans 8:1–11

English Standard Version Scripture Text

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.¹ ²For the law of ^hthe Spirit of life ⁱhas set you² free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³For ^jGod has done what the law, ^kweakened by the flesh, ^lcould not do. ^mBy sending his own Son ⁿin the likeness of sinful flesh and ^ofor sin,³ he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that ^pthe righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, ^qwho walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For ^rthose who live according to the flesh set their minds on ^sthe things of the flesh, but those who

live according to the Spirit set their minds on ^uthe things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set ^uthe mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is ^vhostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; ^windeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact ^xthe Spirit of God dwells in you. ^y Anyone who does not have ^zthe Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of ^ahim who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus⁴ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies ^bthrough his Spirit who dwells in you.

Historical Context

Romans 8 follows Paul's struggle with sin in Romans 7 and announces triumphant assurance. There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Life in the Spirit replaces life in the flesh, anticipating resurrection and renewal.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verse 1 – No condemnation exists for those united to Christ.

Verses 2–4 – The law of the Spirit liberates from the law of sin and death.

Verses 5–8 – The mind set on the flesh leads to death; the mind set on the Spirit leads to life and peace.

Verse 9 – Believers are indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Verses 10–11 – Though the body is mortal, the Spirit grants life and promises resurrection.

Theological Themes

- Justification and assurance
- Life in the Spirit
- Freedom from condemnation
- Resurrection hope

Concluding Reflection

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the Church stands before the valley of dry bones and hears the promise of life. Ezekiel proclaims that God's Spirit brings resurrection to what seems beyond hope. Paul declares that there is no condemnation for those in Christ and that the Spirit grants life even now. As Lent draws toward Holy Week, these readings prepare us to behold the victory of life over death.

Thoughts to Consider – 03/22/26

- 1. Ezekiel is brought to a valley of very dry bones.**
What does this imagery communicate about Israel's condition? Where do we see similar "dry bone" moments in personal or communal life?
- 2. The LORD asks, "Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezek. 37:3).**
Why does God pose this question? What does Ezekiel's response reveal about faith and humility?
- 3. The bones assemble before receiving breath (ruach).**
What does this teach about the relationship between structure and Spirit?
How might this apply to the life of the Church?
- 4. Romans 8 begins with "There is therefore now no condemnation."**
How does this declaration transform a believer's identity and daily spiritual posture?
- 5. Paul contrasts life in the flesh with life in the Spirit.**
What practical evidence distinguishes these two ways of living? How does resurrection hope shape present obedience?