

DRY BONES

TODAY'S READING

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. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "Oh Lord God, you know." (Ezekiel 37:1-3)

REFLECTION

The setting for this scripture is one of despair and hopelessness. The people of Israel have been defeated, and now they are scattered across the ancient Near East. The Israelites feel as though they are dead and buried. Families are separated. Politicians disagree about what to do and who to trust. Life as they have known it is dismantled and faith in restoration has disappeared. In the midst of this upheaval, God takes the prophet Ezekiel to a valley where old, dry bones are plentiful and lay whitening in the sun. God asks Ezekiel if life can once again come from these bones. Ezekiel tells the Lord, "I don't know, but I believe you do."

As I was preparing this devotion, I consulted, "Disciplines, A Book of Daily Devotions," published by The Upper Room. The publication date of this book says 2019, and I am sure the devotions were written long before that. And yet, I am struck by the timeliness of these sentences:

Today in own lives, these days feel like death- when life is scattered by unforeseen events, when faith can't find its breath amid the chaos, when the way forward seems impossible between a rock and a hard place. (page 110)

Right now, we are all struggling with illness, fear, separation, uncertainty, and doubt. Our lives may be irreparably changed, but we need not despair. Let us embrace the words of Ezekiel and remember that our God not only envisions all possibilities, but is also the one who brings about all that is good.

When nothing seems certain but chaos, when life has lost its footing and faith has lost its imagination, we can confess that our future can still hold something good, even if we do not know what it is. God knows. (page 110)

TODAY'S PRAYER

Dear God, when I doubt, despair, and fear, breathe new life into possibilities I do not know. Amen.

(Submitted by Cindy Banek)