

"Anything Is Possible"

Portions contributed by [Kenneth Sauer](#).

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Philippians 4:4-13

Anxiety is the way of life for many of us...especially lately! I can talk about the anxiety that we are facing right now, or I can talk about the anxiety that we normally face in our day to day lives not during a pandemic. I will choose the latter of the two...for the most part.

You see, in a non-pandemic world, we have so much competition and pressure, so many others striving for the same dollar or rung on the ladder we are bound to think that there is something bad waiting for us around every corner. So our defenses are up and our blood-pressure soars.

Many of us are so afraid of failure that we seem destined to fail. Or, nothing is ever good enough, no matter how good it really is. So we stress...We fret...And we set-up a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. But you see, life doesn't have to be this way.

And the reason...because God is in control.

As Paul says, and we can say this too, **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."**

Now, how many of us truly believe that?

If we don't believe it, we would do well to learn to believe it!!! It will make all the difference in the world.

Now this confidence...this strength, does not come from ourselves. Rather it comes from a complete reliance on the power, love and goodness of God. As Paul says in Romans Chapter 8: **"If God is for us, who can be against us?"**...**"we are more than conquerors through**

him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

That is pretty powerful isn't it? As a matter of fact, there is nothing more powerful than the love of God. There is nothing that can conquer it! There is nothing that can defeat it. There is no foe that can even come close to it! God has proven God's love for us through Jesus Christ our Lord!!!

So what are we anxious about?

Anything is possible through the love of Christ!!! Anything is possible when we trust wholly and completely in God.

In our Old Testament Lesson from Ezekiel, we come upon the call of God in Ezekiel's life. Ezekiel was a young priest in training. And aren't we all **“priests in training”**? **“A royal priesthood”** as Peter puts it.

So Ezekiel is brought to this place which is called **“the Valley of the Dry Bones.”** And in this valley, there is nothing but death, and hopelessness. Many of us, if we were to come upon a scene like this, would just turn around and go home.

It's like setting out to be an evangelist in one of the most dangerous gang riddled slums. Or going to a neighborhood filled with CEO's and other executives, with a Bible and a call for all to repent and give all they have to the poor. It just isn't happening. It just isn't going to work.

I mean what's the point? It's a lost cause...isn't it?

But again, with God nothing and nobody is a lost cause!!! So the Lord brought Ezekiel out to the middle of a land of death. It was filled with bones. And Ezekiel writes, **“He led me back and forth among them,**

and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry.”

Then a remarkable thing happens. God asks Ezekiel a question. And this question may seem like a no-brainer. The answer to which is a scoff, a laugh, or a loud outburst of “of course not!”

God asks Ezekiel, **“Son of man, can these bones live?”**

You see, Ezekiel is in the middle of a war-zone, but the battle is over! The enemy appears to have won. All around him he sees unparalleled devastation and hopelessness!!! And Ezekiel’s answer to God’s question of **“can these bones live?”** is this; **“O Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”**

Wow!!! Right!

Not a laugh...Not a snort...Not a “are you kidding? Is this some kind of joke?”

But, instead, **“God You are in control of all things, and You can make them come to life. You are over all things. Even death itself!!!”**

I don’t think I have to ask this question, as I believe in today’s news...I know the answer; but what are some situations that are going on in your life, in your community that are comparable to a valley of dry and dead bones? What is bothering you? What is making you feel, today, hopeless? What are you about to, or what have you—given up for gone, for finished, over-with, or for dead?

How can you address such things in ways that will restore life and hope? Or, do we trust God enough to say, **“you alone know”?**

God instructed Ezekiel what to do. And He told Ezekiel **“I will make breath enter [the bones], and [the bones] will come to life.”**

So Ezekiel trusted in God. Ezekiel believed he could do all things through God, and that there is no such thing as a hopeless situation.

Do you remember hearing what happened next?

“There was a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone...and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them...”

The graves of the dead and lost were opened, and God brought them out of them.

When we are lost and cut off from the land of the living, God can **“open our graves.”** When we see neighborhoods and people who appear to be nothing but dry and dead bones, God can **“open the graves!”** When we feel dead ourselves, God can Resurrect us in Christ!!!

Newaygo United Methodist Church, there is nothing that God cannot do through us and for us...for this community and for this world!!!

Now, in Philippians, Paul writes, **“whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”**

How many of you remember those colorful designs which were popular a number of years ago, where if you look at them in a particular way, 3-D pictures emerge from seemingly abstract fields of color? What you see on those pages is magically changed by the way you look at them. This is how it works with Christ.

When we trust in Christ, when we think about and meditate on the things of God...when we look for the good in things rather than the negative...the Holy Spirit transforms situations, and we see life where there appears to be only death. We see possibilities where we once saw nothing but hopelessness, dry bones, if you will.

Because you see, Jesus has a way of looking at people that brings them to life. And God bestows that gift upon any of us, who trust God's sovereignty and ability to bring life out of death, Resurrection from the dead.

There are so many countless conversion stories, where a Christian has taken someone under their wing, or has given them life by seeing what they can be in Christ rather than where they are at the moment.

Delinquents have been turned into preachers because of people of God who saw the spark of the Divine; the hand of the Creator and the possibilities of Resurrection in them. Because, there is no such thing as a hopeless situation, and there is no such thing as a hopeless human being.

When the Apostle Paul wrote Philippians he was in prison. Things were not all hunky dory for him. He had aches...he had pains. And he didn't know whether he was going to get out of that horrible place alive.

Paul suffered so many hardships and faced terrible dangers that most of us can't even imagine. But his testimony rings down through history to our own day!!!

Now, Paul wasn't a superhero. No! Paul was a very human Christian, facing these difficulties and troubles and having to learn the hard way how to cope with them. There were no instant or easy solutions for Paul.

All he had was the steady schoolwork God had given him, of finding out the secret of having plenty or having nothing...and being content with either!!! And for any of us who are willing to go to the same school and learn the same lessons—this contentment and victory in life is real and available.

Paul was content because Paul was living the Resurrected life. He didn't need luxury. He didn't need money. He didn't need to be in the best physical condition to be at peace.

All he needed was Christ. And that is all we need as well!!!

Now, this week as I was preparing this message, I received an email from Stan and Jan Fisher. They received this email from their niece in Iowa, who received it from her friend, [Jessica Casarez](#). This is what Jessica sent out.

"Yesterday I saw a headline about the Corona virus. For some reason the headline jumped out at me. I knew the Lord was speaking to me so I was still for a moment and just looked at the headline:

"COVID19 death rates increase."

I don't write that to spark fear. I just know that in that moment the Lord was trying to speak to me.

I grabbed my Bible next to me and saw it was bookmarked to 2 Corinthians. I looked at the headline again and this is how it jumped out at me:

CO VID 19.

I thought well maybe the CO is talking about the book of Corinthians. So I opened up my bible to 2 Corinthians. I looked up the verse 1:9. And when I saw it, I couldn't believe it!

This is what it says:

"Indeed we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."

Man!! Did you get that?

How many of you have been relying on yourselves? Have you been relying on your ability to stock up on food? On your ability to provide for your family?

How many of you have started to leave God out of the equation a bit more out of fear and worry?

God is using this to show us not to rely on ourselves but to rely on Him!

His power!

His provision!

His promises!

God is using this to break off pride and fear and to instill complete trust in Him!

But wait.... there is more!

The word "vid" is in the very middle. I decided to look up the meaning of it. Guess what it means?

It means to see.

What if God is asking us to SEE that He is still in the midst of this? He hasn't forsaken us. His promises are still YES and Amen!

As scary as the world may appear to look right now, I encourage all of you to release your fears to Him. Don't rely on your power and your ability to get by.

Seek Him wholeheartedly.

The word corona has a definition of a crown. But it also has another meaning that says "**what surrounds you.**"

If you look at what surrounds us today, it may look like it is not pretty. Lack of supplies, long lines, scared people, closed buildings, etc. But let's not lose focus that in the midst of this, God is here. And He will

never leave us. He surrounds us like a shield. He surrounds us with His glory.

"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the glory that will never fade away."

1 Peter 5:4"

I believe that this church can set as its mission, and fulfill that mission, to be the church for this community. I believe many, many persons are going to come to know Christ through the witness and friendship of all of you!

I see lives being changed. I see dry bones taking on flesh. I can almost hear the **"rattling sound"** as the bones come together. I see the mundane and unexciting being transformed into the extraordinary and life changing.

We have been given the **"secret."** It's not rocket science. And we don't have to do it alone...as a matter of fact, we can't do it alone!!! All we have to do is trust completely and fully, in God, and we too **"can do everything through [Christ] who gives [us] strength."** Amen!!!