

This week the sermon comes from our District Superintendent, Rev. Danny Kesner. Danny gave this gift so all the pastors in Charlottesville would have a Sunday off from preaching. I hope you enjoy this as much as I did!

~ Pastor Jessie

Let us pray. Gracious God, we so can relate to that pile of dry bones. For when we are honest, we too know the realities of a life that is dry and not lived out to its fullest. Now in these next few moments, as we learn about this valley of bones, help us to listen for the rattle of new life and new hope in you. We pray through the Risen One, known as Jesus the Christ. Amen.

What a mess! Little four-year Sally was only left alone for one minute while her dad finished wiping down the table from breakfast. And it only took one minute for Sally to cause some havoc.

Look Daddy, I cleaned some of my toys in the toilet. Kids are known for making messes. And truth be told we too as adults, can make and get into some pretty big messes ourselves. Remember that first credit card and you could buy whatever you want-charge it.

The **average credit card** holder has at least four **cards**. On **average**, each household with a **credit card** carries \$8,398 in **credit card debt**.

Some of us know the realities of being unfaithful; or breaking the law; having an addiction. Some know the mess that occurs when you are a workaholic or spend more time at the ball field than at home.

Messes are kind of a part of life. As we know the reality of isolation and staying at home and going out as little as possible due to the Coronavirus- for some it is a mess and others have made it kind of fun.

The Psalmist in our reading this morning says, “God, show me the way I should go... Rescue me from my enemies” and I would say God rescue us from our messes. “Teach us your will, for you are God.” God is in the business of teaching and rescuing God’s people.

Ezekiel lived during the time when there was international upheaval. The government was falling apart and Ezekiel found himself being exiled to Babylon. What a mess. He received a divine call and now the Prophet Ezekiel spoke words of judgement; despair and that the Jerusalem would fall. Once the temple fell, his message was one of hope for God’s people.

Chapter 37, the valley of the dry bones, is where we hear about hope; new life for God’s people; as the prophet shares what he sees.

What a mess I see God, said Ezekiel. God places him in the middle of this valley and it is full of dry bones. He walks back and forth with God. Just imagine the scene. Thousands of bones are spread out across the valley. Here is a skull, there is a thighbone, here are some jaw bones, over here is a pile of finger bones. The bones are in bad shape. They are scattered, disordered, and dry. A mess of death and despair.

God shares with me his prophet Ezekiel, Prophecy to this mess of dry bones. “Dry bones hear the word of the Lord!” And we read in scripture, “there was a noise, a rattling sound and the bones came together, bone to bone. Ezekiel looked and the tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them.

Ezekiel prophesied again and breath came into them; they came to life and stood up on their feet-a vast army.” God connected these bones and breathed new life into them and God can breathe new life into us as well.

Friends when you are in a mess; when your hope is gone; when you feel cut off from the world and from your daily routine; when you see nothing but death and a valley of dry bones; be still and listen; do you hear it; the rattling and commotion; the words spoken from our covenant God-

Be still and know that I am God. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love.

I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die. May God re-connect and restore us all so that we may be His Body in a world that needs hope and love. Teach us your ways O Loving God. Amen.