



## The Breath of Resurrection – Touchpoint for March 18, 2026

### Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NRSVUE) Breathe life

#### TOUCH POINT

37 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. 2 He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. 3 He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” 4 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath [a] to enter you, and you shall live. 6 I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath [b] in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: [c] Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, [d] and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” 10 I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

11 Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. 14 I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

It was during Covid that I was being treated for bladder cancer. My trips to the hospital for procedures required me to wait in a sterile, masked environment until I was called.

Family was not allowed in the hospital. I was left to my echoing thoughts and fears. During the time of Covid most hospital staff were in a separate wing from the out-patients needing surgical procedures. I stared out the window and watched them air vac the most severe covid cases.

I made several trips to the ER, and the isolation could have easily triggered my inner orphan. But what really helped me survive mentally was realizing this was the perfect environment to put everything I ever believed to the test. “Okay, buddy—‘spiritual director,’ ‘motivational speaker,’ ‘counselor,’ ‘pastor’—what have you got now?” All I had were my words: “God, I need you with me now.”

I was fortunate to have started reading the perfect book, which would become my companion during this time: *The Spirit of Life* by Jürgen Moltmann.

My entire adult life, I've been drawn to the study of spirit and soul. Late in life, I discovered that the study of the Spirit is actually a formal field—it even has a name. As a young man, I had fallen backward into pneumatology. I don't have the credentials of a pneumatologist, but I suppose I would qualify more as a “pneumatic”—someone full of compressed air and gas.

I am not an academic. I am not a walking biblical encyclopedia like so many pastors. I journey among and often counsel. You see spirit does not rely on academic knowledge. Visionaries are not born by using correct hermeneutics or perfecting their biblical analysis. Mystics do not evolve from presenting dissertations.

Don't get me wrong, I would have loved to have the training that ended with a completed degree. I rely on people like Jürgen Moltmann who did the work that affirms people like me.

In the hospital I understood why areas needed to be clear and why we all needed protection. During covid our hearts were aching for those who were in that other hospital wing fighting for their life. The care workers fighting for their own lives as well.

However, even in the desolate hallways of an outpatient wing during Covid Spirit lived and speak and comforted. Spirit is the very revelation of the compassion of God present even without the touch of another human being. There is no physical barrier or protocol that can impede the work of Spirit in our lives.

What I learned from mentor Jürgen was that flesh described in the Bible does not equal human sin or worldly decadence. Flesh is anything that is alive that will eventually die, and spirit is everything that is alive, that will never die.

Life is so incredibly precious that as long as it is viable in the flesh, it must be cared for, nurtured and preserved until it is no longer.

My paranoia about being in the hands of fellow human beings diminished as I realized doctors and nurses are co-laborers with the spirit of God, whether they know it or not. They do not keep somebody alive, nor cause them to die. They are simply co-laborers on the journey of doing everything they can to honor the life that is.

It helped me to trust those whose care I was in.

But what about death? When the efforts to preserve life have been exhausted—when all seems hopeless—I learned something profoundly important:

Breath remains.

Life remains. That which is alive will die, that which is spirit will never die. God is the only one who will have the final say when it comes to life and death. Not even the vision of dry bones lying in a field declared the end of the resurrecting nature of Spirit.

In recovery, in my third-floor apartment, I looked out over the desert landscape and saw all the beautiful “flesh” in nature—and the breath of Spirit that animates it. You and I have breath. The same breath of our ancestors. That which is spirit will never die. It communes with us even in the desolate places. Like it says in Ezekiel: the bones had no life—so breathe on them! Breathe on the unresponsive bones of the abused, the lifeless bones of the neglected, and the unconscious bones of the weary. This is liberation.

The Spirit of Christ is the liberator—bringing good news to the poor, setting at liberty those who are oppressed, and releasing the captives. God says to Ezekial breathe on those lifeless bones the breath of Spirit.

The God of mercy suffers with us in our suffering, as the cross reveals. And we share in the liberated Christ of the resurrection—freed from despair.

Resurrection Sunday is not a one-day event, it is as Jurgen Moltmann states, “Not just an intellectual assent to a historical fact, but an act of participation in God's ongoing creative act to transform the world.”

Regardless of what we see in the world, God's restorative power is never limited by human hopelessness and as long as we have breath, like Ezekial, we are invited to participate in God's creative new realities, even in the face of lifeless situations.

**Amen.**

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## **Lamb of God**

(Salt of the Sount)

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God (hear our prayer),  
Lamb of God, Grant us peace (hear us pray).  
This we pray.

## **Bible Passage**

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

## **Touchpoint**

(Where God's story touches our life story)

## **Come, O Lord, and Set Us Free**

(John L. Bell, The Wild Goose Collection)

Come, O Lord and set us free. Give/Bring your people peace.  
Come, O Lord and set us free. Come Lord Jesus, Come.  
1. And take our guilt away. Give us your pardon Lord.  
2. Free from our self-obsession. Free from each fond possession.  
3. Free to affirm each other...as sister and as brother  
Reshape the world you made. Let what your hand created...be always celebrated.

## **The Meal**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

(The Scottish Festival Singers)

## **Benediction**

### **Light of the World**

(George Salazar)