

## NEWSLETTER

JULY - 2023

## TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

### SPEAKERS

**July 2: Ken Storm, Holy Communion**

**July 9: Mark Sunnarborg**

**July 16: Ken Storm**

**July 23: Bruce Sarkela**

**July 30: Paul Coponen**

**Sunday Service:** 11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday Bible Study:**  
7:00 p.m.

### CONTACT

**Website:**

[www.tapiolachurch.org](http://www.tapiolachurch.org)

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### Dry Bones

“... *Son of man, can these bones live?*” - Ezekiel 37:3

It was while Ezekiel dreamed of a valley strewn with human bones that God asked him if those bones could ever live again. Of course, that would be physically impossible seeing that *“they were very dry”* (Ezek 37:2), yet, he deferred to God saying, *“O Lord God, thou knowest”* (Ezek 37:3). God then asked him to preach a simple message to those bones saying, *“O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord”* (Ezek 37:4). Again, preaching would be futile seeing that the bones were dead and were unable to hear him, but he obeyed God and preached as he was commanded to do, not knowing the outcome. Miraculously, as he preached, he heard a startling noise and witnessed a shaking where the bones came together and *“they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army”* (Ezek 37:10).

Ezekiel then realized the connection between this dream and his earthly ministry to the children of Israel, captives in Babylon; preaching to them who would not hear him would be like preaching to the dry bones which could not hear him. Around a century earlier, Isaiah characterized the forefathers of these captives as being rebellious; not wanting to hear the truth but wanting their prophets to lie to them: *“speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits... cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us”* (Is 30:10-11). Since then, they had become even more distanced from God; wanting to remove Him from their daily lives and wanting to hear anything but the truth on the Sabbath. Ezekiel, nevertheless, remained obedient to God and preached repentance to the people, but they blocked their ears. They listened, instead, to other prophets of their day who spoke good-sounding words *“out of their own hearts”* (Ezek 13:2). Because Ezekiel didn’t compromise on preaching the word of God, he became an outcast amongst his own people. They spoke disparagingly of him to his face and behind his back which troubled him; he may have wished for a more friendly relationship with his detractors, but that did not happen. God merely told Ezekiel, neither be afraid of their words nor be dismayed at their looks because *“thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear”* (Ezek 2:7).

That dream encouraged Ezekiel not to give up but to obey God by continuing to preach to the rebellious people with this one prayer in mind; one day someone might hear the word of the Lord. Because God had compassion on His people He sent Ezekiel and others to them, *“But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets”* (2 Chr 36:16). By the grace of God, Ezekiel was willing to endure these difficulties just to find that one person who would believe. He knew that he was powerless to make anyone believe the word of God, but he also knew that he was still obligated to preach the word, but only as God gave him understanding. The encouragement to continue preaching came when Ezekiel saw the dry bones come together after he preached to them and when God subsequently breathed life into them; it was then that their sins were forgiven and it was when they first believed— this was the outcome Ezekiel prayed for.

That simple message of forgiveness is still preached by believers today to spiritually dead souls strewn throughout the world. When the word of God is preached, it will find those hearts that desire to be saved despite our best efforts. The only requirement is that we preach the word of God found in the Bible. It may seem futile to do so without adding some human interest into religious gatherings to attract people, but God promises that His word will not return void; it always has His intended effect regardless of the number of people who hear it or of what we may think. When God awakens one who is dead in his trespasses and sins (“*lay sinews...bring up flesh...and cover with skin*” – Ezek 37:6) He promises to breathe life into that soul who confesses to another believer the sin that troubles him and hears that same simple message of reconciliation; “*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*” (Matt 9:2). It is God who calls all people to repent and believe the gospel, even those who want nothing to do with him.

However, once a person physically dies without being reconciled to God, there is no further hope for eternal life in heaven. Dear reader, if you have not been reconciled with God, know this: He can breathe life into your dry bones too if you will fervently pray today that He grants you ears to hear and faith to believe that simple message preached to you by a servant of God—believe your sins forgiven in the Name and Blood of Jesus. Tomorrow may be too late.

*God's Peace,*

Charles Korhonen