

What Do You See?

An Invitation to the Valley

Chapter 7

Come, Breath, Come

There comes a moment in every healing journey when we discover that effort is not enough. We have gathered the bones; we have done the work; we have attended the counseling; we have read the books; we have established the routines; we have spoken the truth; we have taken responsibility; we have shown up, and still, something is missing.

The bodies in Ezekiel's valley are now fully formed, the miracle appears nearly complete, yet they remain motionless: beautifully assembled, perfectly structured, entirely lifeless, and then God gives Ezekiel another instruction:

"Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'"

This is no longer about bones; this is no longer about structure; this is no longer about assembly; this is about life itself.

The Limits of Human Effort

One of the hardest lessons many of us learn is that effort has limits, not because effort is bad, but because effort was never designed to carry the entire burden of life. You can work hard and still feel empty. You can be disciplined and still feel disconnected. You can be responsible and still feel lonely. You can be successful and still feel restless. You can be religious and still feel spiritually dry. Human effort can organize the body, it cannot create breath, this realization is both humbling and liberating: humbling because we recognize our limitations, liberating because we no longer have to carry responsibilities that were never ours.

The Invitation of Breath

Notice something remarkable: God does not tell Ezekiel to manufacture breath, He tells him to invite it, to call for it, to welcome it, to make room for it, this changes everything. Many of us have spent years trying to force life, trying to force peace, trying to force joy, trying to force healing, trying to force transformation, yet breath cannot be forced, it can only be received. You



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do not earn your next breath, you receive it. You do not achieve the sunrise, you welcome it. You do not manufacture love; you participate in it. The deepest realities of life arrive as gifts.

The valley teaches us that restoration is not something we control, it is something we welcome.

The Four Winds

God tells Ezekiel to call to the breath from the four winds. In ancient Hebrew thought, this represented every direction: North; South; East; West... everywhere. The image is beautiful; life is not coming from one isolated source. Life is already present, the breath of God is not absent, it is moving, the winds are already blowing. The invitation is to become aware, to become receptive, to become open, this is one of the central themes of Presence. God is not hiding; God is not withholding Himself; God is not waiting to be convinced. The Spirit is already moving. The question is not whether God is present, the question is whether we are.

Learning to Receive

Receiving sounds simple, it is not. For many of us, receiving is harder than striving. We know how to work, we know how to perform, we know how to fix, we know how to solve, we know how to produce. Receiving feels vulnerable, it requires surrender, it requires trust, it requires admitting we need something beyond ourselves. Many people spend their lives trying to prove they are enough. The valley whispers a different truth: You were never meant to be enough by yourself; you were designed for breath, designed for connection, designed for relationship, designed for Presence, not independence, not isolation, not self-sufficiency.

The Sacred Pause

Perhaps this is why silence matters, why stillness matters, why prayer matters, why contemplation matters, not because they earn God's favor, but because they help us notice what is already here. Many people assume God speaks only through dramatic moments: earthquakes, visions, miracles, yet often the breath arrives quietly, in stillness, in awareness, in compassion, in gratitude, in a conversation, in a moment of forgiveness, in the embrace of a friend, in the beauty of creation, in the tears we finally allow ourselves to shed. The breath is often closer than we think, we simply move too fast to notice.

The Difference Between Existing and Living

There is a profound difference between existing and living: existing is survival; living is participation. Existing merely gets through the day; living engages the day. Existing manages responsibilities; living experiences wonder. Existing endures; living awakens. Many people exist for years: functioning, producing, achieving, yet never truly living. Then something happens: a loss, a healing, a revelation, a moment of Presence, and suddenly they realize life is more than

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survival. The breath enters, and everything changes, not because circumstances become perfect, but because the soul awakens.

Breath and Grief

This truth is especially important for those walking through grief: Grief often steals our breath. Not physically, but emotionally, spiritually, relationally. The loss of a loved one can leave us feeling as though the air has been removed from the room. The future becomes difficult to imagine, the heart becomes heavy, the world feels muted, yet the promise of Ezekiel is not that grief never exists, the promise is that breath can return, not immediately, not mechanically, not by force, but gradually. Breath returns tenderly, patiently; life can emerge again. Joy can return again; meaning can return again. The breath can find us again.

Reflection Questions

1. Where have you reached the limits of your own effort?
2. What are you trying to force that may need to be received instead?
3. What practices help you become aware of God's Presence?
4. In what ways have you confused striving with living?
5. What would it look like to become more receptive to breath?

Journal Exercise

Complete the following statements:

- The area where I feel exhausted from striving is _____.
- What I most long to receive is _____.
- One place where I have noticed breath recently is _____.
- The thing I am most afraid to surrender is _____.
- What might change if I trusted that God is already present is _____.

Presence Practice

Spend ten minutes today simply breathing: no agenda, no requests, no problem solving. As you inhale, silently say: "*Come, Breath.*" As you exhale, silently say: "*I receive.*" Allow yourself to rest, not perform, not achieve. Just receive, notice what arises, notice what softens, notice what becomes possible.

Closing Meditation

The valley was full of bodies: complete, restored, reassembled, yet still waiting, and then Ezekiel called to the breath from every direction, from every horizon, from beyond what could be

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controlled, and the breath came. Not because it was manufactured, not because it was earned, but because it was welcomed. Perhaps that is where you find yourself today, not needing more effort, not needing more performance, not needing more striving. Perhaps what you need is breath, the reminder that life is still available, that Presence is still near, that God has not abandoned the valley, that the winds are still blowing, and that somewhere beyond your exhaustion, your fear, your grief, and your uncertainty, the breath is already on its way; all that remains is the courage to welcome it: *Come breath come.*

The next chapter naturally becomes “**An Exceedingly Great Army.**” God does not raise the bones merely so they can exist. He restores them to purpose, contribution, connection, and participation in the healing of the world. Restoration is not the end of the story; it is the beginning of a new one.