

Dear Friends,

Ezekiel 37: 1-10

The prophet Ezekiel had a vision. In it, he found himself in the middle of a valley filled with bones. The bones were no longer connected with each other to form skeletons. I imagine them scattered around the valley. They were very dry. The people whose bones these once had been, were clearly long dead. For the bones, there was no hope, no future, nothing more could be expected of them.

After the death of Jesus his friends may have seen themselves as being a little like these bones. As a group, they fell apart. One of them, Judas, had gone his own way and betrayed Jesus. Soon after that he was dead. When Jesus was arrested, all of his friends had deserted him and run away. The women and the men went in their own directions. Two of them left the others behind in Jerusalem and went towards Emmaus. Like the bones in the vision, the friends of Jesus became disconnected and scattered.

Each individual friend was frightened and confused. They were afraid. Perhaps those who came for Jesus would soon be coming for them. They were confused. They had tried but failed to understand the teaching that Jesus gave them. Their fear and confusion made it impossible for them to pass on that teaching to anyone. A servant girl pointed Peter out as one of the friends of Jesus, but Peter denied it strongly. He was not able to whisper to a single soul that he belonged to Jesus. He certainly did not look like a candidate to pass on the message. Their fear and confusion had drained the disciples of life. Like the bones, they had no hope, no future, nothing more could be expected of them.

Perhaps they did not need to be worried that those who came for Jesus would come for them. The authorities knew that they had nothing to fear from Jesus' friends. Without Jesus they were nothing. Which was of course a big mistake. The friends were not without Jesus. God had raised him from the dead and he was alive and at work, on the move and active. One of his first tasks was to gather his friends back together.

He appeared to the women and sent them in the direction of the men saying "Go and tell my brothers that they will see me". He appeared to the two going away from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The experience sent them back to Jerusalem and to the rest of the community. Once they were all gathered, Jesus appeared to them and told them to wait until they were clothed with power from on high.

So, they gathered in the upstairs room. They devoted themselves to prayer. And they waited.

God bless you,

Tony