

Messengers of Hope

Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one of your favorite sweet treats?
2. Who is one of the most encouraging people you know?

Read the following passage: Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Ezekiel lived during the darkest generation in the history of Israel. In 597 BC, most of the population was taken into exile. In 586 BC, the city of Jerusalem, along with the Jewish temple, was completely destroyed. The Israelites lost everything that mattered most to them: their land, their king, their temple, and the presence of God. That's the context in which Ezekiel heard the question, "Son of man, can these bones live?" To bring hope in the middle of darkness, we cannot rely on what we see or feel. We have to depend on the word of God.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Our emotions are an integral component of our humanity. What role should our emotions play in our lives? How would you rate your emotional health? What would you like to see change in your emotional life?
2. God showed Ezekiel that he would bring the nation of Israel back to life. Are there any areas in your life right now in which you are longing for a major turnaround? Explain. What should we do when we are hoping for a significant change in our personal lives, our relationships, or our circumstances?
3. The exiles to whom Ezekiel prophesied felt the deep pain of being dislodged from their homeland. What are some ways a strong sense of belonging can benefit us? Do you feel connected to spiritual family? What are you doing to help others connect to spiritual family?
4. Read Ezekiel 36:24-27. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our personal transformation? How can we cooperate with the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives?
5. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. How can the "armor of God" help us resist the work of demonic spirits? Are there any particular components of the armor of God that you feel you should give specific attention to in your life right now? Explain.

Pray