

Darla Rakes
Renew 19
The Word and the Spirit
September 4, 2011

I want you to go ahead and turn to Ezekiel 37. I'm going to give you a little context today. We're in the fall season, the autumn, of course you guys all know that. The really special thing about autumn, when you look historically in the Old Testament, is that autumn like September and October, for the Jewish people, the Israelites, would consider that a time of new beginnings, a time of a fresh start. Like coming in to a new season and preparing for new things that God was going to do in their life. Now I don't know about all the things that you've gone through this year, it may have been a really, really hard year. You may have had to face some really tough things and I think for many of us that's been very, very true. But coming in to this new season, I want us to be encouraged and strengthened, because I really feel like what the Lord is saying to us is: be encouraged and be strengthened because I'm about to do something new. And want you to just be encouraged and strengthened today and I really think that's what the presence of God is in here today, and he is encouraging us and strengthening us for something new. It's about rebuilding. It's about renewing. It's about restoring. And God has really put that on pastor and I's heart, and we're going to start the Genesis series September 18th. Now the interesting thing about this is that we found that what God was speaking to us all has to do about rebuilding, restoring, renewing, all those re words, redeeming - all those sorts of things. This is what God does. Well we come to realize just looking at the entire Bible, it starts after about the fall, like Genesis Chapter 3, you move in to the rest of the Bible. It's all about restoring, getting us back to that place with Him. Story after story after story after story, bringing us back to that unity, that wholeness, that oneness, that love relationship with you and Him and as a people, as a whole, the people of God. God is moving historically since then, even now in to this day He is doing new things. We're moving in to a new time and I believe God is wanting to move His people in to unity as a whole and the Lord knows and we all know we need that in the church. We need unity. Ezekiel 37 is the valley of dry bones, and I know a lot of you may be very familiar with that scripture. And I just believe God wants to do something significant here today.

God, I just ask that Lord you would accomplish exactly what you want to accomplish in our hearts today. Father, that you would lead me and you would bring out every word that you want spoken Lord. Lead me by your spirit. Anoint my mind even now Father, and open our hearts and ears to receive what you have for each of us individually and as a whole. And I thank you Lord Jesus in your name we pray, Amen.

Well let's read first a few and then we will talk. Ezekiel 37. The Lord took hold of me and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. He led me all around among the bones that covered the valley floor and they were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. Then asked me: "son of man, can these bones become living people again?" On sovereign Lord, I replied, you alone know the answer to that. And then He said to me: "speak a prophetic message to these bones and say dry bones listen to the word of the Lord." This is what the sovereign Lord says "Look, I am going to put breath in to you and make you live again. I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin and I will put breath in to you and you will come to life, then you will know that I am the Lord." Now Ezekiel was a

prophet in the Old Testament. He came to be a prophet when he was about thirty. Jeremiah had been the prophet speaking to the people and he was telling them over and over again – look, turn from your ways, come back to the Lord, you're in trouble, you're heading in the wrong direction, and he tried and he tried to speak and tell the people but they went on their way. Ezekiel is actually prophesying to those same people after seventy years of captivity, seventy years of captivity, taken by King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylonian captivity. They were there seventy years, but this is a new day. This is a new day. Everybody say "it's a new day for me." It's a new day for me! I believe this is what God is speaking to His church. This is a new day for His church and I want you to receive it and I want you to begin to believe it. Because if we receive it and we believe it, He is going to do it. When God speaks something it's very important that we receive it. It's a new day for me. It's a new day. Let that get in there. It's a new day for me. God is doing something new in me this year. It's a significant year for you, a significant year for you. It is a new day for you. Now these people had been in Babylonian captivity for seventy years, but during that time Persia rose up and took over. And they became the powerhouse and Babylon fell. But the king of Persia – God moved on Cyrus's heart – and he actually let the people go and even gave them gifts to go and restore and rebuild. You know a while back we talked about Nehemiah on the day we did communion and we talked about them rebuilding the walls and they rebuilt the walls to their city of Jerusalem in fifty-two days, the book of Nehemiah says. However, what you don't know is, or you probably do know, that's their second effort. They attempted it twenty years prior when they first came out of captivity and King Cyrus let the people go back and gave them gifts to go and restore your land, rebuild your city and they go back. In the book of Ezra it talks about it. They failed to rebuild. They attempted. They started. They started to do it but what happened? It was discouragement. What happened was discouragement. The people became so discouraged. They even hired professional people to go and discourage them. I don't know what kind of job that is – professional discouragers. They just go and taunt them and beat them up and I don't know, you ever feel like you have that happen to you? Like people are professional discouragers in your life. Like that's their job. Well, that's what was happening. But this is the word that was given to them prior to leaving. So it was intended that they were going to go right in restoration and they were going to be successful. God had intended it. Let's go back and read this again. Ezekiel 37. This is the prophet. And God carries him away and he's having some kind of spiritual experience that is showing him what God is about to do amongst His people. The Lord took hold of me and I was carried away by the spirit of the Lord to the valley filled with bones. Now listen, you think about the visual about a valley filled with bones. You know something bad happened there. I mean bones. And these bones aren't together, they're just scattered about. I mean this is a place of disaster, of death, where the enemy did exactly what he wanted to do. And I've heard this spoken a lot, but I didn't ever connect what kind of attack it takes and they were in the valley, you know, in a low place. And the enemy came in and just decimated them, tore them and ripped them limb to limb, I mean bones scattered, death and defeat. And then he led me all around among the bones that covered the valley floor and they were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. And then he asked me: "Son of man, can these bones become living people again?" Oh sovereign Lord, I replied, you alone know the answer to that and he said to me "speak a prophetic message to the bones and say dry bones listen to the word of the Lord." Now I want you to get a hold of this. Because what this is talking about, what we are saying the word of God, there is power in the word of God. Yes! We have to use the word of God to speak over our very lives and what God's been speaking to me about is a passive Spirit. Now is not the time to take

on a passive spirit, because there are discouraging spirits and discouraging voices that are attacking the people of God because they begin to move and God said restoration, restoration, restoration! I'm gonna rebuild. I'm gonna redeem your life. You're gonna have! I'm gonna return! I wanna bless! And then the enemy comes and says "no, no, no!" And what happens if we're passive in this moment? What if you're passive in the moment that you've been going through this year and what you've been going through this year. Are you going to be passive in sickness? Are you going to be passive with your children going astray and taken in to captivity by the enemy? Are you just going to get too discouraged and let down and give up and just let them go because you prayed so long and you haven't seem them come home yet? You gonna give up on that spouse? A passive spirit is what God's been saying. Do not have a passive spirit? Because God intends to restore you, He intends to rebuild and he says - he says to Ezekiel "speak a prophetic message." What's a prophetic message? It's the word of God, what God's will is for you. Speak the word of God over your life! Speak it! And he said "dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord." And this is what the sovereign Lord says "look, I'm going to put breath in to you to make you live again. I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin and I will put breath in to you and you will come to life - THEN you will know that I am the Lord." Now let's go on to verse 7. So I spoke this message. Now why did God need the prophet to say these words? Huh? Let me tell you, God has delegated the authority to you. You have to speak what it's. He's declared it. But it's up to us to say it. I'm telling you that what we say - we have to declare the word of God. So, the prophet foretells what God has ordered to happen. What has God ordered to happen in your life? Are there dreams? Are there things? Are those words that have been spoken over your life that you have yet to see take place? This was two decades later before they built the walls, and Nehemiah did it fifty-two days. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. Here it in your mind! Here it! The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons, whole. Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones and then skin formed that covered their bodies but they still had no breath in them. And then he said to me "speak a prophetic message to the winds." Son of man speak a prophetic message and say. Now listen, isn't this interesting, he wants him to speak to the winds. There were times he would tell him speak to the mountains, speak to the hills. Speak and declare, declare what is to be! And he says "come oh breath from the four winds." This is what the sovereign Lord tells him to say: "Come oh breath from the four winds, breath in to these dead bodies so that they may live again." Everybody say breathe, breathe! God breathe in to us, restore us, that we may live again. The things that have traumatized us this year, the things that have tried to steal from us this year, God breathe in to each of us. Just breathe in! The breath of God in us Lord, let the wind and the breath of God just blow on us as a people. So I spoke the message he commanded me and breath came in to their bodies and they all came to life and they stood on their feet a great army! A great army! This is what the God I believe wants to do in our day, in our time. Listen, we are a wounded people, we are a beat up people, the enemy has tattered us and for some of us he has destroyed us down til we are dry bones. And some of us come in and we are discourage, we're so discouraged, we're convinced, we've got no courage anymore. The passive spirit, a passive spirit that just says okay well, you know, if this is where I've gotta live then I'm just gonna come down to this level, this degree and I'm gonna live in this place. I'm gonna just settle here, kids are never going to give their hearts to the Lord, I'm just gonna settle here. I'm sick, I'm just gonna settle here, this is my life, I'm just gonna settle in to this. A passive spirit accepting - but I want you to notice this is a scripture about word and about spirit. Now you can have just word and you can have just spirit. And I'm telling you if we just

have word – I tell you there are people working in seminaries across this nation that they intellectualize the gospel and it is as dead as everything, and they give students what has no life, just word. When you read your word, I want you to pray before you read your word and you say “spirit speak to me through this, God show me what you have for me today. I invite you holy spirit to speak to me through the words.” I’m telling you, God speaks through His words. It’s not just intellectualizing gospel. It is a spirit, free, prophetic, word of God that breathes life in to us! And we are restored by it! And we are a great army who rises up because we hear and we feel the wind of the spirit blowing on our lives. And I’m telling you, this is what God wants to do – word and spirit. Do you know what strikes me here? All came to life, all! Everyone one of us God wants to bring to life. All came to life and stood up on their feet a great army. Do you know what happens when you have word and you have spirit together? You have power! You have power when you put word and you put spirit with it. What is the word? The word is Jesus right? The word is Jesus. He is the head and we are the body, we are the word. And spirit, you put us, you put Jesus with spirit, you put that together and you have power and it’s the kind of power that resurrects a great army and a new life and a new beginning, and I’m telling you to receive this today because I have fought in a war all week. And there’s a reason for it, because the enemy doesn’t want you to hear that spirit and word together resurrects your life! Now, a passive spirit. You know Revelation 3:15 says this: I know all the things you do that you are neither hot nor cold and I wish that you were one or the other, but since you are just lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. A passive spirit opens the doorways to sin. I mean you can see it again and again in scripture. Do you know that when King David fell to Bathsheba, do you know his army was out fighting a war? And David always went. And this is a really interesting thing, this particular time it says he stayed home. He stayed home. And this is when he fell in to sin with Bathsheba. A passive spirit says well, no need to fight, let’s just accept what is, it will be alright. I’m going to tell you that we are called in as mighty warriors. We are at war in the spirit realm with word and spirit. There is power. And there is no reason for us to be living defeated lives. And I believe it’s a day for the church to not live defeated anymore. Anymore! We’ve got to learn to use the weapons that God has given us and I think we’ve really even forgot, we’ve even forgot that we have weapons and so we just kind of accept passively - well this is my life, this is what I have to deal with. It’s been so long I’m kind of discouraged, the discouraging spirits have attacked me and attacked me and attacked me, so now I just have no courage left to fight. I’m telling you - spirit and word will give you courage. Coming together in communion in here and worshipping and praising God is lifting our courage, it’s encouraging us, it’s strengthening us, and God is saying “Take courage again!” Rebuild the walls in your family, in your life, in your marriage. I’m telling you this fall season God is going to restore your homes, he’s going to restore marriages, he is going to restore your children. Don’t be passive! Don’t be passive! Start decreeing and declaring what it is you know is God’s will. You know it’s God’s will. Do not be passive with the enemy. If you’re passive with the enemy, he’s gonna take a little and he’s gonna be done. No! He just comes back for more and more. A passive spirit - we need a fight mentality. We have taken a peace time mentality in war times. We have a peace time mentality. We really do. In the church we’re like - this is what it is, I’m just going to live with it, I’m just going to accept it. It’s a peace time mentality and I’m telling you, we need a fight mentality. Church, we need to fight. Do not be passive. You want free of something? You want free of something you’ve been captive to? You want a sin broken off your life? You are tired of going around the same mountain again and again and again and again. Do you think that’s what God has for you? Do you think that’s what God has for you? That that would be God’s will? I’m

telling you it's time to speak prophetically over our own lives the word and in the power of the spirit and let God resurrect it! And he had him speak it, he had to say it. It had to be spoken by a man. It has to be spoken by us. It has to be declared – what is. Now there's something you need to claim today. I mean there's something in your life you need to claim. I don't know if it's a child that's wayward. I don't know if it's a marriage that's on the rocks. There is something you need to stand up and fight for and have a fight mentality that says “No! God intends for these walls to be rebuilt, God intends for my life to be restored! And I will not be passive anymore!” Forgive and release all those things in areas. If there are any doors, if there are any doors that have been opened to discouragement, then we need to close them. And sometimes those doors that we open, pray aggressively against discouragement, disappointment. You can pray against these things. And I'm thinking we are just so weak in the area of prayer, it is right down scary! We've got the peace time mentality of well you know just gonna do what is. We have to pray. Discouragement is looking at circumstances instead of the faithfulness and power of God. Look at the things that God has done in your past. Look at the great things he has done. Look at the blessings you already have in your life and encourage yourself with these. Disappointment – when we lose heart due to resistance and opposition of the enemy, disappointment sets in. And I'm telling you what – if you let disappointment set in – the dreams of God that are in you – you can really lose those. There are things God wants to do. You'll just lose them. You'll lose that appointment. This appointment. You will lose the appointment that God has for you. Don't lose the appointment. Let me tell you, the enemy is just not going to sit by. When God has spoken a vision, a dream, the enemy is not going to go well you just go ahead.....uh-uh! You will have to fight for the promises. You will have to fight for what's yours. And you know what? God wants you to. God expects His people to fight, to declare, to decree, to take the word and with the spirit - empower! And God resurrects things, and redeems them and brings them about and gives them life. There is power when you put those two together. Now there are divine delays. Let's talk about divine delays. God sometimes orders divine delays to first develop our character. I have experienced divine delays a number of times in my life. And you're tormented during those times. Is God hearing me? Is He hearing me? What's going on? Where's the Lord? There are divine delays. And divine delays work things in us, it's develops our character, develops our stamina, develops a strength in us that says: my God will come through! I trust in my God! And you will have to decide in those times of delay. Well, do we just accept and go - oh well it's never going to happen - or do we say you know what I believe this is what God's will is. And I'm telling you, as long as you believe it is God's will, stand in it! Don't give in to the enemy and his discouraging lies. He develops character before there is a breakthrough. If we lose patience, we will seek relief instead of victory. We will settle for relief instead of victory. We will settle for relief instead of victory. Galatians 6:9 says: So, let's not get tired of doing what is good; at just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Don't give up. Perseverance is testing that develops. Testing develops perseverance. I mean and James talks about it. God is developing perseverance in your life. God wants a mature believer. He wants a mature Christian who believes in His word and will stand firm and not waiver! We want everything fast. We want everything quick. In Ezekiel 36, if you jump back, before Ezekiel had the vision where he was carried away, the Lord spoke some words to him for the people. And he says these words in verse 24: for I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean and your filth will be washed away and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit in you and I will take our your stony, stubborn heart and will give you a

tender and responsive heart. And I will put my spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations. Verse 28: and you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people and I will be your God. Is that what we want? Do we want to be His people and He be our God? You know, and I love this, this is a little saying that God gave me: God takes full responsibility for what's fully His. Full responsibility for what's fully His. And as we move in to this new season and we want God to do new things, restore marriage, redeem lives and everything, you know what? If we fully trust God, He can fully trust us. If we fully surrender and give Him everything then He takes full responsibility. Don't be passive. Do not be passive at this time. Begin to declare and decree what is the prophetic word of God, the word of God over your life. Take authority. Do you know you have been delegated spiritual authority? Do you know that? God has delegated that to you. We have that. But if we don't say anything, ain't nothing happening. The spiritual authority is in us. We have to speak the word by the power of the spirit. And I think some of us are quiet. I'm just gonna pray quietly with my eyes closed. You know what? I really just don't believe any of that is going to work in this case. I believe you have to speak it out! He didn't say to Ezekiel "just kinda think these thoughts." The word that we say with the power of the spirit has resurrection life in it! It will restore your life, redeem your life, rescue your kids! Who wants some of that? Yeah! I mean there ain't nobody in here got it all perfect. We got things going on in our lives. We got things we got to get back from the enemy. We have to step up in to spiritual authority and get out of spiritual passivity. I'm gonna tell you that requires a prayer life and it also requires some decreeing and declaring out loud! I will not accept that Satan! I will not! This is what God says! I claim my family in you because that is the will of God. My children will come to know you and serve you. My marriage will be restored in the name of Jesus. I will not just accept whatever is. I will not. Amen. So put on the whole armor of God, every piece of the armor. God has given you a shield of faith and it does block the enemy, use it! Faith, when the arrows are coming of discouragement! Faith, shield yourself with faith and believe in the mighty power of God! You know what, I'm just going to read Ephesians 6, just because we need to hear it. This will be my final word, but I want you to listen to this. I'm going to read this and then we're going to close, a final word. Be strong in the Lord and His mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all the strategies of the devil. Do you know the devil is strategizing to get you? Yeah! For, we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in the dark world and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Woah! Verse 13. We need God's mighty power for that! Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so that you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil; then after the battle you will still be standing firm. After the battle you're going to still be standing firm if you have your armor on. So verse 14. Stand your ground. You don't run. You don't become passive. Stand, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness, right ways of thinking, for shoes, put on the peace that comes from the good news so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on a salvation as your helmet and put on the sword of the spirit which is the word of God, which we've been talking about today, the word of God. And pray in the spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. I'm telling you word and spirit begin to decree and declare over your life what God has for you. Do not be passive at this time when God wants to do a restoration work and a redemption work and a rebuilding and a restoring of lives. This is not time to be passive. No passivity, spiritual authority. I don't know what we need to do – but everybody

stand up. Everybody say again “it’s a new day for me.” It’s a new day for me. It’s a new day. It’s a new day for you, a brand new day. What God is going to do in this church, we are going to decree and declare what God has for our lives.

Pastor Mike Rakes

You know in preparing for the Genesis series, I’ve noticed that the trinity are just all throughout that. So you have word and you have spirit but where’s God in that? The Bible says God is love. So you have love and word and spirit and you have a biblically functioning community where the power of God is present in homes and in marriages and at work and where ever the sole of your feet hit the ground, the Father, the son, and the holy spirit guide you through your days, guide you through your life. You can walk in victory, not in fear, but confident that the Lord is with you. You have no fears, no shame, for the Lord has taken all that away, giving you a confidence not of your own self but in Him. For He is our God who reigns forever and forever and gives us His word, the eternal word, the holy spirit lives within us. Know ye not that you are the temple of the holy spirit and we are to love everybody and how will they know us? By our love, they’ll know we are different by our love. So therefore, have no fear today, have joy, joy in the holy ghost, joy that your God is in charge, joy that he has given you power in your hands and even power by the holy ghost in your mouth to declare the works of God be done in your life, your kids, your family, your city and our nation. To the glory of God, let’s sing this song. Give your praise and sing it strong church! That’s good, that was perfect. Calm down one second, I’ve got your instructions, here we go, this is how we’re dismissed. As you leave I want you to think about what you are supposed to declare, what you need in your life, if it’s about your family or whatever. And I want you to declare it all the way as you see the latecomers who slept in coming in to church. Declare it to them on the way to the parking lot and declare it all day long. Your God is in charge of your life! He wants to bless you. Don’t have any fear! God bless you church! We love you! We’ll see you next Sunday. Have a great day in the Lord.