

Breath of Life

A 5-Day Devotional Bible Study

Based on the Pentecost sermon exploring God's life-giving breath – from Creation to the empty tomb to your heart today.

GENESIS · EZEKIEL · JOHN 20

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God Breathes Life

Key Verse: "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." — Genesis 2:7

Devotional

Have you ever blown up a balloon? Before you breathe into it, it is just a floppy, shapeless piece of rubber. But the moment your breath goes in, it becomes something full of life and color and possibility. God did something like that with the very first person, Adam. God shaped him carefully from the dirt of the ground, the way a potter works with clay, forming every detail with love and attention. But Adam was not yet truly alive. He was like that flat balloon. Then God leaned in close and breathed into him. Not just any breath, but the breath of life itself, overflowing and abundant. And in that moment, Adam became a living, breathing, thinking, loving human being. This tells us something amazing about who God is. God is not a distant creator who wound up the universe like a clock and walked away. God is close. God gets personal. God breathes into people. And here is the most wonderful part: you are made the same way. Every breath you take right now is a gift from the same God who breathed life into Adam. You are not an accident. You are not a mistake. You are someone God made on purpose, with care, and breathed life into. That is how much God loves you.

Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to you that God personally breathed life into the first person?
2. How does knowing God made you on purpose make you feel about yourself?
3. Can you think of one way your life is a gift from God today?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for making me and breathing life into me. Help me remember every day that I am your creation, made with love and purpose. When I forget how special I am to you, remind me that you formed me carefully and breathed your life into me. Amen.

Dry Bones Come Alive

Key Verse: "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet — a vast army." — Ezekiel 37:10

Devotional

Imagine walking into a valley and finding it completely filled with dry, old bones. No life. No movement. Just silence and dust. That is exactly what the prophet Ezekiel saw in a vision God gave him. The bones were very dry, the Bible says, which means whatever life had been there was long, long gone. It seemed completely hopeless. But then God asked Ezekiel a surprising question: "Can these bones live?" What would you have said? It seems impossible! But Ezekiel was wise. He did not say yes and he did not say no. He said, "Lord, you know." That is a pretty great answer. Because Ezekiel understood that with God, impossible things happen all the time. Then God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones, and to speak to the wind. In Hebrew, the word for wind and breath and Spirit is the same word: ruach. And when Ezekiel obeyed, something incredible happened. The bones rattled and came together. They grew muscles and skin. And then the breath of God rushed in, and they stood up alive, a whole multitude of people. This story is for anyone who has ever felt hopeless, stuck, or like things could never get better. When you feel like those dry bones, remember: God specializes in bringing life to places where hope seems gone. God's breath can reach you right where you are.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever felt like things were too hard or too broken to ever get better?
2. Why do you think God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" instead of just doing it?
3. What does this story tell you about what God can do in impossible situations?

Prayer

God of the dry bones, thank you for being a God who brings life to hopeless places. When I feel tired or sad or like things will never change, breathe your Spirit into me. Help me trust that you are always at work, even when I cannot see it. Amen.

Peace in the Locked Room

Key Verse: "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord." — John 20:19b-20

Devotional

Picture the disciples on the night of the first Easter. They were hiding behind a locked door, scared and sad. Their friend Jesus had been killed just a couple of days before. They did not know what would happen next. They were probably crying. They were probably whispering so no one outside could hear them. They had locked the door to feel safe, but on the inside, they were anything but safe-feeling. And then, without warning, Jesus was just there. Standing right in the middle of the room. And the very first word he said was not, "Where were you when I needed you?" It was not, "I am disappointed in you." The very first word was shalom. Peace. Be at peace. Jesus came to the people who were most afraid, most ashamed, most broken, and he brought peace with him. He showed them his hands and his side, the marks from the cross, not to accuse them, but to show them: it is really me, and I am really alive. Notice that Jesus did not wait for them to come out of hiding first. He came to them. That is what Jesus always does. He comes to us in our fear and our failure and our sadness and he brings peace. You do not have to clean yourself up before Jesus will show up. He finds you where you are.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever hidden from something you were afraid of or ashamed about?
2. Why do you think Jesus said "peace" as his very first word to the scared disciples?
3. How does it feel to know Jesus comes to find you even when you are hiding?

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for coming to people who are scared and hiding. Thank you for bringing peace instead of punishment. When I feel afraid or ashamed, help me remember that you come looking for me with love and peace. You always find me. Amen.

Receive the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" — John 20:22

Devotional

Do you remember what we learned on Day 1? God breathed into Adam and he came alive. Do you remember Day 2? God's breath rushed into the dry bones and they stood up. Now here in John chapter 20, Jesus does it again. He breathes on his disciples and says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' The very same word used in the Greek Bible for this breathing is the same word used in the story of Adam. John wants us to notice this on purpose. This is not just a nice moment. This is a new creation beginning. The disciples were spiritually exhausted. Their courage had completely run out. They had failed and hidden and denied knowing Jesus. They were like dry bones in that locked room. And Jesus breathed into them. Not because they had earned it. Not because they were doing such a great job. But because that is simply what God does. God breathes into empty, broken, tired people and fills them with life. This is what happens in your baptism. When you were baptized, the same risen Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into you through the water and God's promises. You did not do anything to earn it. You were given it as a free and wonderful gift. And every time you come to church, every time you hear God's word, every time you receive communion, that same Spirit is renewed in you. You are not running on your own power. You are running on God's breath.

Reflection Questions

1. What is something you cannot do on your own that you need God's help with?
2. How does knowing the Holy Spirit was given to you as a gift make you feel?
3. How is the Holy Spirit in your life like God's breath in Adam or in the dry bones?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank you for being a gift I did not have to earn. Thank you for filling me in baptism and renewing me week after week. When I feel empty or weak, remind me that your breath is already inside me, making me alive. Help me live by your power today. Amen.

Sent to Share Grace

Key Verse: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you... If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven." — John 20:21b, 23a

Devotional

On our last day together, we arrive at the most surprising part of the Easter evening story. After Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit into the disciples and fills them with his peace, he gives them a mission. He says: just as the Father sent me into the world, I am now sending you. And then he gives them something remarkable to carry with them: the gift of forgiveness. If you forgive someone's sins, they are forgiven. Now, this might sound like a lot of responsibility for a group of people who were just hiding behind a locked door a few minutes ago. But that is exactly the point. God does not wait until we are strong, brave, or perfect before putting us to work. God fills us with the Spirit first, and then sends us out. The same grace that found the disciples in their fear and failure is the grace they were sent to share with others. Think about that in your own life. Has someone ever forgiven you for something you did wrong? Do you remember how that felt? That feeling of being let go, of not having to carry that heavy thing anymore? That is what God's forgiveness feels like, and you get to help bring that feeling to other people. When you say sorry and mean it, when you forgive a friend who hurt you, when you are kind to someone who feels left out, you are doing exactly what Jesus sent the disciples to do. You are filled with the same breath that filled Adam, that raised the dry bones, that transformed the disciples. And you are sent. Go share the grace that found you.

Reflection Questions

1. Is there someone in your life you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from?
2. How can you share God's grace with someone at school, home, or in your neighborhood this week?
3. Looking back at this whole week: what is one thing you will always remember about God's breath and Spirit?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for filling me with your Spirit and sending me out to share your love. Help me forgive others the way you have forgiven me. Give me the courage to bring your peace and grace to people around me every single day. Thanks be to God. Amen.