

Graves into Gardens Ezekiel 37

My son just got back from his 8th grade Washington D.C. trip. He showed us pictures of beautiful monuments and memorials of those in our U.S. history who have died. **Beautiful signs of life, yet they are built upon death!**

It is Memorial Day weekend, when we honor and remember those who lost their lives in service of our country! Western Reserve Cemetery

When we stop to consider all the loss of life, it is staggering to think about!

- **The total number of Americans killed in all U.S. wars is more than 1.1 million!**
- **Since 1970, there have been 2,052 school shootings in the U.S. that have left 661 dead!**
- There have been 212 mass shootings in the U.S. already this year (where 4 or more people were shot or killed excluding the shooter).
- **In 2021, there were 1,055 fatal police shootings in the U.S.**
- The total number of abortions in the U.S. between 1973-2018: 61 million+. **That's one abortion every 37 seconds.**

There is much that can be discussed about these statistics, but in the least it can be said that this loss of life is a very sad commentary of the brokenness in us & in our world! How are we, as followers of Jesus, to respond to this?

There are things that can be done/should be done, to seek positive change, but unfortunately, **until Jesus returns these things will be a part of our lives.**

Romans 5:12 – “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” Paul is speaking of both a physical death and a spiritual death!

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it.” – Jeremiah 17:9 Death in our hearts will produce more death!

Even in the giving of the law to restrain the evil in us, sin increased! -Romans 5:20

The only real hope we have, for real change, is in the person of Jesus Christ!

Romans 5:15 – “But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

We must point people to Jesus, because man-made solutions only lead to more sin, brokenness, and death!

We are often quick to take political sides, but there is really only one side to be on when it comes to fixing what is broken within us and in our world!

Only God can change the narrative! He is the only one who can take what is dead (physically & spiritually) & bring life out of it! God is our only hope!

We see this truth here in the 26th book of the Bible – the book of Ezekiel!

Ezekiel was a priest of God who was exiled to Babylon, who learned of the destruction of Jerusalem & the devastation of God’s people over the course of a decade. The realization of this death & destruction was overwhelming!

Ezekiel became a prophet while in exile, and he not only proclaimed the Word of the Lord, but he also lived it out metaphorically before the people!

But it was in a vision that God gave to Ezekiel, **in the Valley of the Dry Bones that fear, despair, and death were dispelled, and was replaced with hope!**

Ezekiel 37:1-14

- Ezekiel needed to be placed in the middle of a valley of bones, surrounded by death, to be able to see the life-giving hope that is only found in God’s redemptive purpose! Sometimes we do too!
- Ezekiel needed to experience for himself how dry and dead those bones were, **to appreciate what only God could do to bring life out of death!**
- Man-made solutions to our sin problem is like trying to bring life out of a corpse! But God is able to do what we are incapable of doing ourselves!
- **The power of God’s spoken Word can breathe life into what is lifeless!**
- **If there was hope for Israel, and hope for us today as well, it is found in God’s redemptive work of resurrection – past and future!**

Those memorials in Washington D.C., as beautiful as they are, are still graves! But because of Jesus Christ, **our self-made graves can be opened,** and new life can emerge from our dry bones, both now and in glory!

If there was hope for God’s people then, there is hope for us now as well!

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