**Those Bones Never Saw it Coming**

Good morning.

As you are reading and not hearing this reflection Rev. Ruthanne has ‘invited me to brevity’. What a lovely way to say, “Keep it short, Phil”. I have therefore challenged myself to stay within the same 724 words she used to articulate her message of light and hope last week. ☺ (Just used up 54 words.)

The dry bones in that valley never saw new life coming. When you are thoroughly depressed joy is a cruel illusion. When we are in a silent place long enough, a knock at the door startles us. In the midst of darkness you can barely imagine a brilliant sunny afternoon. There was nothing about Lazarus on ‘day four’ that had him anticipating his fiend’s voice scream, “Lazarus, come out.”

God, by his very nature breathes new life into death. It is not a thing he *can do* it is always *what he is* doing. God pierces the darkness with light, floods sadness and depression with Joy.

Where is the death in your life? Where is the oppressive weight of sadness? Where is it dark? Is there some aspect of your life that has been long dark? Look around at this Covid-19 stricken world of ours; it is dark, there is a palpable fear and depression, its sooo quiet.

Ezekiel’s bones never saw new life coming but it did! This is what God does and it is an amazing thing to behold. Even on Good Friday you and I know there will be Easter!

 **Go and tell your world!**

Death cannot anticipate new life, or darkness light, or depression joy. Let the promise of Ezekiel’s vision and Lazarus and Easter fill your darkness with light and go share the news! Go speak new life into whatever death you see.

God spoke creation into existence. He did not *think* but *spoke*, “Let there be light.” *He said* “Let the earth bring forth living creatures” *God said*, “Let us make humankind”.

In his vision Ezekiel recalls, “Then (God) said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones... I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live;”

God could have created in silence, by thought alone, but he spoke, he articulated. God could have had Ezekiel stand and watch but he spoke, he articulated.

Here’s a fascinating observation. *To articulate* means to ‘give voice to’ and *to articulate* also means to ‘join two things together’. When a surgeon re-attaches a severed finger he is re-articulating it. This means that In Ezekiel’s vision God articulates (speaks) and his voice (spoken through the prophet) causes the bones to articulate.

Both life and new life come as a result of speaking. To speak is to issue from yourself, to put your thoughts and feelings out. Love that exists only in my thoughts or in the confines of my heart cannot create or re-create anything. Love spoken created the universe. Love spoken into death creates new life. Speak your love and let God create from it!

Sometimes and in some circumstances we can keep it as simply as “I love you” More often love is articulated in a thousand different ways...

“How are you holding up today?

“I gotta go to the grocery store, can I get you anything?”

“Hey, your hair really looks good today.”

“Isn’t it great to hear the cardinals sing?”

“Call me if you need anything”

It is often hard to articulate love. To speak love requires vulnerability, exposure, but we don’t have to do it alone. Ezekiel didn’t just say his words over the valley of dry bones God gave him the words to say. We too can seek from God the words to say and the strength to be vulnerable enough to speak love. Positive thoughts; love, hope even joy unarticulated are like seeds unsown.

By articulating we articulate. By speaking love we join things (like people to people and people to hope). This is how God works...actually no, *this is* *who God is.* Jesus is the word made flesh. Jesus is God speaking his love to creation ...and our bones didn’t see it coming.