Ezekiel — Strength

She sat in the Emergency Room lobby, waiting for hours while holding her five-month-old son. Holding him close in these hospital waiting areas was becoming all too familiar.

Leaning on her friend's shoulder she whispered under her tears, *"When is this going to be over? I'm just so ready for it to be over."*

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We sat in the large room, packed in with so many others who loved our friend so dearly. His wife radiated love as she took in every moment and memory being shared about her late husband, holding onto her one-year-old oh so tight. Cancer sucks.

God, how do you let one young life end? Why did our friend have to leave us? When will this ache subside? Where are you, God?

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I sat in the car and sobbed. Driving home from work the week before Mother's Day, I was forced to pull over after the sweetest Mother's Day commercial played on the radio.

Why, God? I have done everything right, just as you asked—just like everyone told me to—and still I am not a mother.

I tightened my grip on the steering wheel, hoping to find some sort of grounding or strength. The lighthearted commercial ended, but my tears and simultaneous rage continued.

Can you even hear me? Are you even listening?

Then a soft song began that not only comforted, but strengthened, my breaking heart.

You give life, You are love
You bring light to the darkness
You give hope, You restore every heart that is broken
And great are You, Lord

It's Your breath in our lungs
So we pour out our praise, we pour out our praise

It's Your breath in our lungs
So we pour out our praise to You only

All the earth will shout your praise
Our hearts will cry these bones will sing
Great are You Lord

This song, "Great Are You Lord" by All Sons & Daughters, has continued to be a favorite of mine for over a decade, and yet I just recently learned the words of this song were partially inspired by Ezekiel 37.

In this chapter, Ezekiel shares images of a valley of bones. God tells him to prophesy over the bones, and they come to life. He prophesies again, and God breathes life in them. Then he prophesies a third time and God says, “Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.”

These people trapped in exile looked back on the histories of their forefathers with little understanding of how they arrived where they were, why they were there, and what image of hope they could hang onto. Not too farfetched for those of us today wondering when or if God will act, where He is at, and if He is even listening.

So God sends them to dry bones—and he raises them, breathes life into them, and promises to return them all to their home. Showing God was there and hadn’t left them after all. What strength arose with the army of the nation of Israel from the depths of that ground in Ezekiel 37—an army of forgotten promises, of repentance. An army carrying hope in its very lungs.

As I sobbed in my car, I did not receive an immediate solution to the problem or pain I was in the thick of, but I was strengthened. I was given hope. I was able to breathe again. I was empowered to push through in the midst of all that was going wrong. God cried and sang with me in that car on the side of the road and whispered. “I have not forsaken you. Lift up those dry bones, and let me be the breath in your lungs again. I am with you, and I will go with you.”

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In the Emergency Room waiting for healing and answers. In the church celebrating and mourning the life of a friend cut all too short. In the car too overwhelmed with emotion to travel any further. In the caverns of the darkest places in our broken hearts—God is with us.

PRAYER

From woe to warning
You go with us
From exile to hope
You go with us
With compassion and faithfulness
You go with us
With strength and assurance
You go with us

Make us ready to move, ready to follow
Ready to dream, ready to create
Ready to trust, endure, and, with You, overcome.

Amen

EPISODE 61 (SESSION 2)

THE FOUR PILLARS



BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:

I

TEXT

What stands out from the Text that you want to carry with you as you read this? Try meditating over and memorizing parts of Ezekiel.

II

COMMUNITY

What is your community drawn to most in this conversation? The imagery in Ezekiel? The promise of hope? The brief introduction to apocalyptic literature bringing hope?

III

DISCIPLESHIP

Who do you find alongside you in the midst of pain? What stories can you share with a young adult going through something similar? How can you creatively share your own story of hope?

IV

WRESTLING

How do you wrestle with the apocalyptic genre of Ezekiel? Too different? Familiar? Where do you see these prophecies overlap within history? Why might this be?

Spotify

Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.

BEMA SESSION 2

MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

True success is developing intimacy with God. In Session 1, we encountered the idea of "Creating Space for God" in our lives. We believe that ***if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it*** *as He desires. You're already doing this as you dive into the Text and jump into a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS
YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world. *Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION
THEOLOGY OF WORK

This isn't only for church or Bible study; this is about what we do every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. ***The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***

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