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PRELUDE

Our Savior Divine (Jones)

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL to WORSHIP

Pastor: O God, we come to you dry, discouraged, feeling frail and powerless. But we come believing that you have the words of eternal life. Speak to our dry bones that your Word and your Spirit might give us life and empower us to speak your truth, with words and in action, into this world you love. Amen.

HYMN

Lord, Speak to Me

1. Lord, speak to me, that I may speak in
2. O strength - en me, that while I stand firm
3. O teach me, Lord, that I may teach the
4. O fill me with thy full - ness, Lord, un -
5. O use me, Lord, use ev - en me, just

liv - ing ech - oes of thy tone; as thou hast sought, so
on the rock, and strong in thee, I may stretch out a
pre - cious things thou dost im - part; and wing my words, that
til my ver - y heart o'er - flow in kin - dling thought and
as thou wilt, and when, and where, un - til thy bless - ed

let me seek thine err - ing chil - dren lost and lone.
lov - ing hand to wres - tlers with the trou - bled sea.
they may reach the hid - den depths of many a heart.
glow - ing word, thy love to tell, thy praise to show.
face I see, thy rest, thy joy, thy glo - ry share.

¹ Much of the worship liturgy for this year's Lenten season will be adapted from a hard copy resource called "Worship in the Wilderness" by Sara and Sam Hargreaves/Music and Worship Foundation 2018. This is from Pastor Laura's personal worship material library.

LITANY OF CONFESSION OF SIN

Pastor: Holy One, when we come to you hungry, could it be that we've not been feasting adequately on your Word...

All: *Word of God, feed me.*

Pastor: Holy One, there are times when we lose our way; could it be that we've been running around in circles, following after the words of those who do not truly care for our souls?

All: *Word of God, lead me.*

Pastor: Holy One, when we are stuck in repetitive habits; could it be that we have grown comfortable with the status quo and have settled for mediocrity...or even less?

All: *Word of God, shake me.*

Pastor: Holy One, when our hearts have turned cold toward this world and the people in whom you love, could it be that we have forgotten your compassion and mercy towards us?

All: *Word of God, break me.*

Pastor: "The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit. It can separate joints from bones. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

All: *Holy One, through your Living Word, feed me with your wisdom; lead me with your love; shake me with your reality; break me with your perspective and rebuild me with the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS²

Pastor: Hear the Good News: When we wonder if the weary and weakened, dry and brittle, disjointed and scattered bones of our spirits and lives can ever live again, the Holy Word of God comes to us, saying: I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live.

All: *When our soul finds rest and is settled, we will know that the LORD has spoken and it is the Lord who has done it! AMEN!*

OLD TESTAMENT READING – Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NIV)

The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ⁵This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' ¹²Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will

² Bair, Laura C. March 2021. Based on Ezekiel 37:1-14.

bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.”

This is the Word of the Lord. Let all the people say, “Thanks be to God.”

NEW TESTAMENT READING – Matthew 4:4-11(NIV)

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

This is the Good News of Christ, let all the people say, “Praise be to Christ.”

SERMON

Speaking Truth in the Wilderness

Rev. Laura C. Bair

SPECIAL MUSIC

He Will Hold Me Fast

Cathy Rentzel, Vocal Solo

OFFERING INVITATION

Pastor: From God, come the blessings that make life possible, even the very gift of life itself. In gratitude and thanks, let us respond with a portion from our labors. By the Spirit’s leading, may our church use those gifts to bless the life of others, that those who are bone-weary may find rest for their souls and know in a very tangible way the assurance of God’s love and the promise of hope. May all we give be done for Christ’s glory.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION³ (Based on Ezekiel 37)

All: *Living God, you are the Lord of all! Only you can send your Spirit to bring us new life. You graciously speak your word of hope in times of struggle and uncertainty and in times of joy and peace. We are grateful that you are continually at work in our lives and the world to fulfill your promises. May our giving today show our trust in you. We pray through Christ our Lord who taught us, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

³ Pfahler, Laurie. “Prayer of Dedication: May 24, 2015 – Day of Pentecost.” [Discipleship Ministries | Offertory Prayers and Invitation for May...](http://Discipleship Ministries | Offertory Prayers and Invitation for May... (umcdiscipleship.org)) (umcdiscipleship.org)

Have Thine Own Way, Lord

1. - 4. Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!

Thou art the pot - ter; I am the clay.
 Search me and try me, Sav - ior to - day!
 Wound - ed and wea - ry, help me I pray!
 Hold o'er my be - ing ab - so - lute sway.

Mold me and make me af - ter thy will,
 Wash me just now, Lord, wash me just now,
 Pow - er, all pow - er, sure - ly is thine!
 Fill with thy Spir - it till all shall see

while I am wait - ing, yield - ed and still.
 as in thy pres - ence hum - bly I bow.
 Touch me and heal me, Sav - ior di - vine!
 Christ on - ly, al - ways, liv - ing in me!

CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor: Holy Spirit, breathe through us, so that we might speak out words of light and life where we see only shadows and death. Send us into this world of exile with the promise of a world renewed and the power of our Risen Savior, in whose name we pray.

All: *Amen.*

POSTLUDE

Calvary's Shadow (Marks)