**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**April 22nd 2018. Spirit**

**Discussion notes: Bones. Ezekiel 37.**

Ezekiel was a priest, the son of a priest, carried into exile in the first wave of Babylonian captivity with Jehoacin in 597 B.C. Five years later when he was 30 and the age he would have started his temple ministry Ezekiel has a visionary encounter with God and is commissioned as a Prophet. His deeply symbolic work carries a strong focus on the temple and also on the Spirit. Ezekiel 37 is a memorable prophetic vision of the valley of dry bones, an image which speaks as powerfully to situations of apparent ‘death’ and decay today as it did about the nation of Israel in the 5th century BC.

1. The bones are described as ‘very dry’ (v 2). Have there been times when your spiritual life individually or corporately in Church has felt ‘very dry’? Why do you think that was? What causes spiritual dryness and ‘death’.
2. Historically the future of the nation of Israel looked hopeless. God asks Ezekiel, ‘Can these bones live’? What do you make of Ezekiel’s response? What would your response be if God asked you about people or situations you know of loss of faith and immense spiritual dryness?
3. Ezekiel is full of the Spirit and a prophet of the Spirit. In Hebrew, and Greek the same word for Spirit is ‘breath’ and ‘wind.’ When in the Old Testament and New is the breath of God mentioned? What effect does it have?
4. God sees life where humans see death. Part of faith is having faith that God can raise the dead (Hebrews 11:19) and so can transform all other dead situation. How does prophetic seeing and speaking allow life to be brought to dry and dead situations?
5. How crucial is it that prophetic people obey God by speaking into situations with his ‘anointing’ to change things?

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was a methodical and organised man. He ministered at a time when established religion in England was at a very low ebb. Though he was a great organiser he didn’t see great breakthrough in ministry until his own encounter with the Spirit when his heart was ‘strangely warmed’. In Ezekiel 37 the dry bones come together, and the organism seems very together, but it is not alive until the spirit/breath comes. As Church pray that we don’t rely on great organisation but always seek to walk in the Spirit.