SMALL GROUP BIBLE DISCUSSION

FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 26, 2014

TOPIC: THE BREATH OF LIFE

Lesson in a Line:

In the spiritual realm, all of our human efforts, systems and structures are ultimately useless, unless given life by the Spirit of God.

Points to Make:

- In the Genesis 2 account of the creation of man, God made a statue of dust that was of less enduring quality than, for example, Michelangelo's "David."
- God's 'dust-man' could easily have been destroyed by wind, water, or any attempt to move it. Humankind, at its most basic level, is very fragile and weak.
- However, a most incredible transformation took place when the breath of God and the spirit from God entered into that dust-man in Genesis 2:7: the dust became flesh, bone, blood, lungs, liver, stomach, intestines, heart, hair, brain and skin – the physical image of "the man Christ Jesus".
- At the same time, Adam also received the ability to think, create, imagine, analyze, emote and exercise his will – becoming the spiritual image of God.
- In his primitive state, Adam had no idea what was going on around himself. He was insensitive, unresponsive, unfeeling and totally dead.
- The breath of God made all the difference!
- Ezekiel's experience is another one we need to consider. His vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-10) was the occasion for God to teach him (and us) a tremendously important lesson.
- The word "breath" is used seven times in this passage. They are all translated from "ruach", the Hebrew word for spirit.
- There was a need for those dry bones to do more than simply come together as skeletons, or even have muscle and skin cover them. As miraculous as that would have been, it would be pointless without the Spirit of God to give them life. God intended those corpses and rise up to become the mighty army He intended them to be!
- We have lived to see Ezekiel's prophecy come to pass before our very eyes in the modern history of Israel. But God has much more in store for us than just witnessing the restoration of a human kingdom!
- On the evening of Resurrection Day, Jesus met with His disciples and commissioned them: "… as the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21b). "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22).
- Of course, when someone breathes, it indicates they are alive. By far the quickest way for someone to die is simply to deny him or her the ability to breathe.
- Our need for and usage of oxygen varies, depending on what we are doing. If we are asleep, our breathing slows down and our usage diminishes. If we are working out, however, our need for oxygen increases dramatically, causing us to even gasp as we do strenuous exercise.

Key Scriptures:

Genesis 1:27, 2:7; Job 27:2-4 (*3), 33:4, 34:12-15 (*14); Ezekiel 37:1-10; John 20:22; Acts 2:1-4

- Jesus' statement in John 20 was really a prophecy of what was yet to come in Acts 2:1-4.
- The infilling of the Holy Spirit that the 120 received was not linked to a gentle breeze or a slow, deep breath. It was linked to a rushing, mighty wind.
- In other words, the great work they were about to embark on would demand a lot of 'air' – a lot of Spirit! They had a great work for God ahead of them and the empowering, energizing Spirit of God came upon them like a violent wind and fire.
- When we look at our individual lives or our church assembly, what do we see? A dead dust-man with no life, or a living, breathing spiritual giant? Do we see a great army of soldiers with not enough strength to even stand, or do we see a band of Christian soldiers, "marching as to war"?
- Do we see saints breathing slowly and deeply, in sweet sleep and unconscious of the dying world around them, or do we see passionate, committed, hard breathing, Spirit filled dynamos, eager to do the Master's work?
- Where do you see yourself? Where do I see myself? Where are we today, and where do we need to be tomorrow?
- Without the Spirit of God, everything we do is useless. Our systems and structures are only temporal. We must have the moving of His Spirit in our lives if we hope to impact our world for Christ.

Discussion Tools

- In our day, there are machines that can "breathe" for people, essentially giving them life. In Genesis 2:7, God breathed and man became a "living soul." Discuss the differences in the "breath" that a machine can give and the breath that God gives to a human.
- What happens when a machine stops breathing for a person? What would happen to us if the Spirit of God no longer moved through us?
- In what ways can we ensure the continual breath/Spirit of God in our lives?

PRAYER TIME

Breathe on me once again, Lord. Revive Your Spirit in me and help me to become a spiritual giant.

Ice-breaker: How long can you hold your breath? Describe a situation when you had to hold your breath for a long time.

NOTES