



Lesson 3: Speaking to the Bones - Rediscovering Identity

- **Theme:** "Who are we called to be?"
- **Bible Connection:** *Ezekiel prophesies to the bones* (Ezekiel 37:4-6)
- **Key Element:** Discovering and Living Our Church's Unique DNA

"Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!' | Ezekiel 37:4

Why prophecy? Because life and vitality are tethered to the preached Word of God! It's our core identity church. **"Prophecy to these bones."** It's our job! To speak life into dry situations.

God says to Ezekiel, *"What your situation really needs is a word from the Lord."* It's what we need as well. We need now word. An anointed word. A word that challenges, and equips, and inspires!

God still uses the **"foolishness of preaching"** to reach people. "Zeke, you're going to preach to the skeleton crew, and this is what you're going to say..." (He gives him not only the task but the content.) **"Tell the dry bones to hear the Word of the Lord."**

Let's connect **verse 4** with **verse 7**. It's inspiring! **"Then He (God) said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones.'" (vs 4) ... "So I prophesied as I was commanded." (vs 7)**

No struggle is indicated in the text! Zeke did what was commanded of him. How refreshing! I am energized and inspired by those who 'do what God commands **them** to do!' It's simple but rare. Don't get hung up on what everyone else is doing! Think obedience ... it's a game changer!

I have another game changer that demands a shift in our perspective ... It's time to **stop talking about how dead our situation is** and **start prophesying life into it!** God told Ezekiel to **prophecy to those bones.**

Imagine for a moment that your words carried the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Guess what? They do! When we speak in faith, aligning our words with God's promises, we can speak life (resurrection) to death.

Instead of speaking death, let's speak life:

1. **Over our church's future:** "God has amazing plans for our church! We will see growth, impact, and transformation in our community!"

2. **Over our worship and connection:** "Our worship will usher in God's presence so powerfully that lives will be transformed every time we gather!"
3. **Over our outreach and evangelism:** "We will reach people in our community who are hungry for God's love and truth!"
4. **Over our unity and relationships:** "Our church family will grow stronger, more connected, and more loving toward one another!"
5. **Over our individual callings:** "Every person in our church will discover and walk in their God-given purpose and gifts!"
6. **Over our community impact:** "Our church will be a beacon of hope, healing, and transformation in our neighborhood!"

A pastor in Michigan learned this principle when his church was struggling. Instead of focusing on the problems, he and the congregation started speaking life into their situation. They began to see with prophetic eyes, ***calling things that were not as though they were***.

The result? Resurgence happened! That church came alive! What are you speaking over your situation? When you speak life, mountains move, seas part, and dead things come alive!

Resurgence Question: Who are we Called to be?

Every church, just like every person, has a unique fingerprint from God. It's not about being better or worse than other churches; it's about being exactly who God designed us to be.

Jesus said something powerful ... ***"Live out your God-created identity" (Matthew 5:48 MSG)***. That's not just good advice - it's divine instruction. I've seen churches without a clear vision. You know what they do? They borrow someone else's. Usually from a big, successful church down the road.

Feel free to glean from other ministries. That's awesome! But straight-up cloning another ministry is **spiritual identity theft**. Remember **Genesis 27**? Jacob put on his brother's clothes, slapped some goat hair on his arms, and tried to pass himself off as Esau. Why? Because he wanted to snatch a blessing that wasn't meant for him!

When we try to be someone we're not, we're telling God that what He gave us isn't enough! Paul told Timothy to **"fulfill YOUR ministry"** (2 Timothy 4:5 ESV).

So, let's stop trying to trying to be like other churches! It's time to be who God created us to be! It's time to embrace our own unique, God-given identity!

Just be authentically, unapologetically us!

Understanding Our Church's Identity

Authenticity isn't just a buzzword—it's a biblical principle that applies to both us as individual believers and to our church as a whole. It's about being genuine in our calling.

The question, "Who are we called to be?" needs to be answered in two key areas:

Personal Identity

God has shaped each of us with a unique combination of passions, abilities, experiences, and spiritual gifts. Understanding these helps us serve from our strengths and embrace our God-given identity.

Collective Church Identity

Every church has its own unique flavor, its own spiritual fingerprint. We're talking about that God-given DNA, that heavenly code that makes our church stand out!

What's this code? It's the beating heart of our church, the very essence of who we are in Christ! It's the passion that drives everything we do!

This code shapes our church's face to the world. It's in every "Amen!" shouted from the pews, every hand raised in worship, every soul touched by God's love. It's running through our veins! You might not see it, but it's there! It's in the air we breathe, in the way we greet newcomers, in how we serve our community.

When we're living true to that code, when we're being exactly who God called us to be, that's when we see real impact. But when we're trying to be something we're not, that's when problems arise.

When both we as individuals and our church as a whole are operating authentically—in line with our true, God-given identities—that's when we'll see real, lasting impact for the Kingdom.

It's not about comparing or competing with other churches; it's about completing the mission God has specifically entrusted to us.

Finding Our Unique Equipment

You can't properly equip a team if you don't understand who you are as an organization. Think about it: office personnel don't need hard hats and steel-toed boots. Safety gear is for those working in potentially dangerous environments.

We've got to understand our God-given identity because our church has its own unique "equipment" needs based on its specific calling. Maybe we're called to community outreach, or perhaps to worship excellence, or family ministry. Our "gear"—our programs, our training, our resources—should match our calling.

Examples of identity-driven ministry:

- If God's called us to build and create, we need tools for construction and development
- If education and discipleship are our calling, we need resources for teaching and growth
- If we have a heart for missions, we need projects that reach beyond our walls
- If we're called to healing and restoration, we need ministries that bring wholeness

No more one-size-fits-all ministry! But before we start "equipping" our church, we need to make sure we understand our church's identity.

Not 100% sure about our church's code? No worries. There's a powerful workbook exercise that will kick-start us in the right direction. We will get to that in a few minutes.

As we conclude today's lesson, remember:

- **Authenticity attracts** the right people to our church
- **Our unique DNA** is not a limitation—it's our superpower
- **God designed us** for a specific purpose in His kingdom
- **Speaking life** means speaking according to our true identity

The dry bones in Ezekiel's vision didn't just come to life—they became a mighty army. But they became the RIGHT kind of army, designed for God's specific purpose. That's what we're discovering for our church today.

Transition to Workbook Session

Now let's turn to page 15 in our workbooks where we'll begin our DNA discovery process. We'll work through the "Cracking Our Church's Code" exercise together, starting with small group story sharing. Remember, listen carefully for themes and patterns as people share—these will reveal our church's unique DNA.