



22 March 2026

5th Sunday in Lent

When God Breathes Again

Introduction

I recently bought myself a new laptop. My old one had served me well for years, but it was starting to slow down — the mousepad stuck, the screen had gone yellow, the battery drained fast, and it just didn't run like it used to.

So I ordered a new one. And — wouldn't you know it — the very day the new laptop arrived, the old one's charger gave out. It couldn't recharge anymore. And as I looked at it sitting there on the desk, it hit me: You can have all the right programs, the best processor, beautiful design — but if it's not connected to a power source, it's only a matter of time before it dies.

Every one of our phones convinces us, without a connection to a power source, it might work fine for a while, but eventually it shuts down, completely lifeless.

And that's just like us, isn't it? We can look okay on the outside — go to church, read the Bible, even know all the right answers — but without staying connected to our life source, to God Himself through the Holy Spirit, our faith slowly drains away.

We were never made to run on our own battery. We need the Spirit of God breathing in us every single day — He is the power, the Presence, the breath in our lungs, the spark that keeps us alive.

There's an old saying that puts it well:

"With only the Word, believers dry up. With only the Spirit, we blow up.
But with both the Word and the Spirit — we grow up."

That's what Ezekiel saw in his valley of dry bones.

That's what Jesus showed when He called Lazarus out of the tomb.

We're meant to live filled with the Word and the Spirit — re-charged, re-connected, and truly alive.

1. Living Our Eternal Life Now

Let's consider eternal life for a moment. We often think eternal life is something that begins after we die, but Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" Not *I will be* — *I am*. Right now.

That means eternal life starts the moment we open ourselves to Him and let the Holy Spirit breathe new life inside us. He doesn't just prepare us for the next world — He empowers us to live differently in this one.

When you forgive someone who hurt you — that's resurrection life.

When you keep hope alive in hard seasons — that's resurrection life.

When you walk into your day knowing you're loved and called by God — that's living eternal life now.

It's not about perfection; it's about connection. The Spirit keeps us plugged into God's heart so that joy, courage, and compassion don't just visit us on Sunday — they live in us every day.

2. The Breath of God Revives What We've Declared Dead

When Ezekiel was taken by God's Spirit into a valley full of dry bones — he saw lifeless skeletons, with no pulse, no breath, no hope. And into that hopeless situation, God told him to, "*Prophesy to the breath.*" The Hebrew word is *ruach* — it means breath, wind, Spirit.

When Ezekiel obeyed, those bones started to rattle and reform — yet they are still lifeless until God's Spirit entered them. Only then did they stand up, becoming a vast, living people.

That vision wasn't just about ancient Israel. It's about us.

Whatever part of us feels dry, lifeless, or beyond repair... the Holy Spirit can breathe life there again.

He is the One who makes faith vibrant, who revives hearts that have grown cold, who restores hope where we've already written the eulogy.

John 11 tells the same story in flesh and blood.

When Jesus stood at Lazarus' tomb and called, "*Come out!*" the man who'd been dead four days walked into the sunlight.

That's what God does: He speaks life into what we've already buried.

3. When Hope Feels Gone

But what do you do when it feels like even prayer is pointless — when you've run out of hope, when your spiritual charge has gone and you can't find the power point?

Let me tell you a story that still gives me chills every time I think about it.

In 1989, a pastor named Don Piper was driving home from a conference in Texas when a truck crushed his car. When paramedics arrived at the scene they found no pulse. They covered his body with a tarp and for ninety minutes, he lay lifeless.

Another pastor arrived on the scene. He felt the Holy Spirit nudging him, urging him to pray.

Everyone else said, "It's too late." But he obeyed that still, quiet voice.

He climbed into the wreck and began to sing softly over the body: "*What a Friend We Have in Jesus.*"

And then — under that tarp — Don Piper started singing too.

He was alive.

The doctors later confirmed he had been without measurable life signs. Yet God breathed into him again.

Don would later say that he experienced being in heaven — flooded with peace — and then suddenly sent back, still wrapped in that crushed car.

His story is a living reminder that the Holy Spirit never stops breathing life — even when we've given up all hope. What looks dead to us is never beyond His reach.

That same breath that filled Ezekiel's valley...

That same voice that called Lazarus out of his tomb...

That same power raised Pastor Piper from silence.

And that same Spirit breathes through our lives today.

4. Stepping Out of the Tomb

I'd like us to notice something about Lazarus' amazing death-to-life story. When Lazarus came out, Jesus told his disciples to, *"Unbind him and let him go."*

That's resurrection in action — a community helping each other out of the wrappings of fear, regret, and shame.

And that's our calling too. The Holy Spirit doesn't breathe life into us just so we can stand — He helps us walk free and helps us set others free too.

He is personal, powerful, and present — the very breath of God keeping the church alive.

So maybe today the question isn't "Can these bones live?"

Maybe it's "Will I let Him breathe on me again?"

The Holy Spirit is still breathing. He still whispers into dry souls. He still calls our name at the tomb.

Take a deep breath right now. That breath in your lungs is a gift — a reminder of His presence. You are alive, and He is not finished with you.

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, breathe on us again.

Where we're tired, renew us. Where hope has faded, fill us with Your power.

Keep us connected to our Source — the Father who loves us and the Son who saves us — that we might live this eternal life, right here, right now. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. Where in my life do I feel dry or exhausted — like Ezekiel's valley of bones — and what might it look like to invite God's breath there again?
2. What would it mean for me to live eternal life now, not as a distant hope, but as a present reality shaped by love, trust, and courage?
3. When have I seen God bring life out of something I thought was over — a situation, a relationship, or even my own faith?
4. What "grave clothes" might I still be wearing — fears, regrets, or habits — that keep me from walking freely in God's Spirit?
5. How can I be part of God's renewing work in others — helping someone else believe that their dry bones can live again?