



These bones still rattle: a journey through the valley of grief, grace, and God's voice

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Abstract

In the midst of profound emotional and physical pain, a sudden injury became a gateway to a deeper encounter with God's healing power. This faith reflection journeys through suffering, scripture, and a transformative revelation: that God is not intimidated by brokenness but chooses to work within it. Drawing from personal experience and the biblical imagery of Psalms 52 and Ezekiel's valley of dry bones, the reflection explores how pain can become the very place of resurrection. This is not merely a story of recovery – it is a testimony of divine re-creation and enduring hope.

Keywords: faith-based healthcare, faith, faithfulness, hope and healing, healing ministry, brokenness, resurrection, spiritual care, christian doctors

I was fifteen then; it had just been a few months since the most emotionally shattering incident of my life. I was already broken inside, barely holding myself together. And then, one day in the shower, I slipped. A bucket full of water came crashing down on my knee, and in that moment, everything gave way. My patella had shifted out of place, sliding laterally. I collapsed right there in the shower, crying out in agony. The pain was unbearable. Suddenly the grief I had carried in silence was now joined by physical torment. I wasn't just hurting emotionally anymore; my body was screaming in pain. My family had to lift me out of the bathroom and lay me on the bed. I truly thought I would never be able to walk again; the pain was that intense. All I could whisper at that moment was, "God." Not a prayer, not a sentence, just His name. That was all for which I had strength.

That was a season where hospitals were memories of trauma for me. I didn't want to go to the hospital. I couldn't bear the thought

of lying on a hospital bed. My family tried everything to get me to the hospital, but I cried and begged them not to move me. I told them the pain would kill me if I were to move; it was that intense. My family gently applied ice over my knee for several minutes. Eventually, the cold began to numb the worst of it, not completely, but just enough to move me. They carefully carried me to the car. The whole way to the hospital, I had just one prayer on my lips: "Lord, my knee is twisted, please heal me." That was it. I kept repeating it. When we reached the hospital and they wheeled me in for an X-ray, something unbelievable happened. I stood up from the wheelchair on my own. My mother looked at my knee: *my patella was in its normal position*. We were stunned. No one could believe it. The doctor examined me, then simply wrapped my knee in a sprain bandage and gave some medication. I slowly began to heal. And I knew, I knew, God had touched me.

"Lord my God, I called you for help, and you healed me" Psalm 30:2 ¹

But it didn't stop there. That experience stayed with me. I began to think: if a sprain could make me suffer like that, what must it feel like for someone with a fracture? Not just a bruise or twist, but a bone shattered inside. I couldn't imagine it. And I began to pray for those in that kind of pain. What do people with fractured bones cry out? *"Lord, my bones are broken?"* Do they even have the strength to say those words? Because a fracture isn't just pain, it's agony. How do they stay hopeful in that slow recovery period?

In that silence, as I was praying and meditating, God spoke through his Word from Psalm 51:8. *"Let the bones you have broken rejoice."* Wait, did you observe? I did, and I paused. The bones *"You"* have broken? Why would God allow breaking? And *rejoice*? Rejoice in what? In the loss? The failure? The brokenness? Lots of questions were running through my mind.

And then, God answered, not with thunder, but through understanding. Now I understood God allows breaking: not to punish, but to prepare. David had known crushing guilt. His sin had broken him. Yet in his lowest moment, he did not just ask for healing, he asked for joy; because even brokenness in God's hands becomes the soil for renewal. The same David who danced before the ark is on the floor weeping, *"Have mercy on me, O God...my sin is always before me."* (Psalm 51) He didn't clean himself up to come to God. He brought the ashes—the fractures. And he said something I never understood until now. He is rejoicing in the fact that the breaking brought him back to God. David didn't ask God to glue him together. He asked for a clean heart. A right spirit (Psalm 51:10). Not restoration to his old self, but resurrection into something entirely new.

Now, I know that healing isn't just about feeling better. It is about becoming new and stronger where the breaks once were. A testimony in every scar. I was still mending. But now I knew: The break is not the end. It is the beginning of my resurrection.

"Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am faint; heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony."

Psalm 6:2

That night, my sprain pain grew worse. It surged through me, relentless and sharp. And in the quiet of that suffering, my thoughts turned to those with fractured bones, those whose pain runs even deeper. My heart ached for them. Through tears, I cried out, *"But God...when bones are broken, they say healing is long and uncertain. They say we may never return to how we once were. So how do You restore someone from this place? How do You heal what seems permanently altered?"*

This time God answered me with a memory of Ezekiel's valley. It's a graveyard of dry bones, not just broken, but dead, sun-bleached bones scattered by time and despair. No flesh. No breath. No sign of life. In such a situation, God asked a question, not to test Ezekiel, but to invite him into the impossible: *"Can these bones live?"* Do you feel that question echoing in you right now? Do you think... *"Can I be normal again? Can I be more than what I've lost?"* Well, Ezekiel didn't say "yes" or "no," He said the most honest thing a weary soul can offer. *"O Lord God, You know."*

Are you also crying out to God in a similar way?

You know how long I've been here.

You know what broke me.

You know what I've lost.

You know the nights I wept without words.

You know how tired I am of fighting.

Then God gave the strongest command to Ezekial, *"Prophecy to the bones."* Not to people. To the bones. God said to speak His Word into what looks unrevivable. And as Ezekial spoke, *"O dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord,"* the bones rattled. They moved. They reassembled. Tendons grew. Flesh returned. What was scattered began to gather. What was dead began to live. What was still began to stir, and then came breath, His breath (Ezekial 37:1-14). And when God breathed, what was once unrecognizable began to rise. Not just restored, but resurrected.

And I wept. Not from despair this time, but from the slow, steady realization that God is not afraid of broken things. God sees the shattered places, and He still speaks life into them. The



healing may not be instant. Some days will still ache. But the bones, those deep, hidden places, can live again. Because the voice that brought life to dust, the mercy that met David in his worst moment, the breath that filled an empty valley: that same God is still speaking.

And I see it now; God isn't intimidated by broken things. He doesn't avoid the ruins, we find Him there. He is the God of the valley and the lament Psalms, the God who makes dead things rise and crushed bones rejoice. So maybe the question isn't *"Will I be whole again?"* Maybe the real question is: *"God, will You meet me here?"* And He always does. Not with shame, but with mercy. Not with condemnation, but with compassion. Not with empty promises, but with breath: holy, healing, and eternal breath. And now I know, though everything in me once said it was over, *"But God..."* That's where my story turns. From this point, even from broken bones, He will resurrect me. He doesn't just put pieces back together. He re-creates. He breathes again. So I wait, right here, in the valley. Not with false hope, but with sacred expectation. Because I know something the pain can't erase: He is still the God of broken bones; still the God of dry valleys; still the God of breath of wind and resurrection. And He hasn't left me here to die. He's brought me here to begin again. The broken bones aren't meant to break me, but to re-build me!

So, I lifted my face, though tears blurred my vision. I whispered again: *"But God..."*

That's not the end of my sentence; that's the beginning of my story.

So dear reader, shall we stay in this moment, not rushing the process, not surrendering to despair, but holding space for the miracle of healing? As we speak his Word, we will see the bones rise; we will feel his breath fill us again, not because we are worthy but because He is faithful. Shall we dare to prophecy over our own broken bones and over those of others for whom we care? Not because we are powerful

but because he is still the God of broken bones and empty valleys. The same God who met David in his shame and Ezekiel in his vision is still speaking into ruins. Shall we tune our ears like Ezekiel, standing still in the middle of what looks impossible, listening for the first sound of resurrection: the rattle of bones returning to life? Shall we welcome the breath from the four winds, inviting Him to breathe over every fracture, every failure, and every forgotten place within us and throughout the whole world? Because even here, especially here, He still speaks. And when He speaks, bones live again. When life says, *"You're too far gone,"* and pain says, *"You'll never be whole,"* there is one holy contradiction: *"But God..."*

Even from this point; especially from this point. *"But God..."*

This isn't just a story of recovery. This is a story of resurrection.

My resurrection! Your resurrection! Our resurrection!

So even in the moments when sickness weighs heavy and the pain feels endless, we are invited to hold onto hope. Let the doctors do their part, the medicines work their way, the therapies guide the body, but don't forget the Spirit who breathes life into what seems lost. Restoration may come slowly, sometimes in ways we cannot measure or see, yet hope does not fail. Just as bones can mend and hearts can heal, so can God's hand bring renewal where despair whispers 'never again'. In sickness and in waiting, in the quiet of brokenness, we are called to trust, to speak life over our situations and to believe that resurrection, both of body and spirit, is still possible. Even here, even now, *"BUT GOD..."*.

References

1. All scripture quotes from The Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Zondervan. (Original work published 1978)



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