

## **Sample Passage – We have a place in God’s Mission**

From: God’s Family Business by Paul York

Excerpt from chapter 1

### **The Question of Our Identity**

If you have experienced the marvelous and shocking grace of regeneration through the saving work of Jesus, you have been brought back from death to life by the creative power of the Spirit of God. Only God could have done it! Through repentance, you became a member of a new people. You were brought unexpectedly back from the dead and reanimated by the Spirit. You stand capable of actions which were impossible before the Spirit moved upon you. We should never stop rejoicing about this! This is the miracle of God’s salvation.

I urge you, however, to look a little closer. Notice that God used real people in the process of bringing you from the state of being spiritually dead into your new state of being fully alive in Christ. There were human participants involved in the story of how the Spirit remade you. God could have done the work on his own, but he chose to work in an unexpected supernatural teamwork with real people. Someone stopped and saw your helpless condition, “prophesied” over you, and summoned the Spirit to your aid. Their obedient involvement changed your world. Now you too are called to be empowered by the Holy Spirit so that God can use you to extend this living story of grace.

No one God has raised to new life is merely a spectator in this miracle. Every Jesus-follower has inherited a role in God’s family business. Every one of us is a steward of certain natural gifts that we can use for God. In addition, in this age of the Spirit every one of us is also called to go beyond natural efforts in some way or another, partnering with the Spirit to advance God’s mission to the nations in supernatural ways.

We all have been given the dignity of a divine invitation to partner with the active guidance of the Holy Spirit by “prophesying to the bones and to the breath.” We can play a part in the transformation of our generation. God has not changed his mission, and he is giving us a part in it. We have the awesome and mysterious opportunity to co-work with God! This is the miracle of God’s mission.

Ezekiel’s vision has something to teach followers of Jesus today. While we should never stop rejoicing over our salvation, we also should never stop asking how we can obey the Spirit’s call to work with him in his mission. To accept one miracle but reject the other is to work against the settled purposes of God.

The people of Israel in Ezekiel’s Old Testament time were being called back to their national “Genesis 12:3 identity” as the children of Abraham, created to bless all nations in the world. Today, God’s New Testament people are being called back to our “Galatians 3:5–14 identity” as the new global children of Abraham:

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed” ... Christ redeemed us by becoming a curse for us ... so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:7–8, 13–14)

Our faith in Jesus the redeemer has made us members of a new global family of promise! We are now part of the family of Abraham. We carry the Abrahamic DNA of God’s mission, the promise to bring God’s desired

blessing to all peoples of the world.

This new family of Abraham is not just a name with a nice biblical ring to it. It is the name of the people set apart by God to introduce his kingdom to the nations. We are a family that exists for the specific purposes chosen for us by God. Our Gospel is good news for all peoples.

In this age, God's blessing comes through us to the world as his gift of transformative power. Our potential is not measured by our natural abilities but by the abilities of the One who selected us for service. We have a divine calling to work with our Father as he redeems people and restores the potential of our fallen race. We have a hands-on role in working with the Spirit to produce a new family of God—a people for his glory among all the peoples of the world.

Like Ezekiel's renewed army, we stand filled with real potential to participate in God's plan for humanity. Before the story of this age is over, God will certainly gather a people of all nations as his own redeemed, blessed family. Every demon in hell may rise to stop this mission, but God will still prevail.

We are not living in a time just like any other. There is an urgency in the air. Like Ezekiel, we are called to prophetic obedience so that the peoples can receive the promise of the Spirit (Galatians 3:13–14, Acts 1:8). God is not primarily waiting for us to bring gentle, incremental improvements to the surrounding world in our spare time. He is summoning us to see his global vision with him and to begin to act and prophesy in the Spirit's power.

Look around at the world in your generation. So much evidence of God's design and creativity is visible in the peoples of the world; yet there is also so much hatred, so much anger, so much destruction, and so much death. Hopeless ranks of people appear already dead inside as they file toward their graves. They have tremendous significance and value; yet they are also fully compromised by selfishness, injustice, and sin.

We who follow Christ sometimes resemble an army of dry bones. We often fail to see or care about the peoples of the world. Something in us needs to be called back to life. We need a renewed infilling of the divine breath so that we too may live, accepting our potent role in his mission. How else can our generation find God and inherit his gift of a transformed life? Jesus' followers inherit an astonishing potential to advance his mission, and yet so many of us don't realize it.

I pray that you will see your God-given potential in these pages. Much of what you see will be surprising, unnerving, and unforgettable. It is sobering to look at our world through the worldview of God. A journey into God's mission can reveal just how often we have resisted our calling to bless all nations and how slow we are to obey when the Spirit urges us to prophesy to the bones and to the breath.

There are a lot of dead bones, and they are very dry. Yet God is still calling us to participate in his mission, and he is the God who brings dry bones to life. Those who care to listen can still hear the Spirit whispering his quiet question in their ear, "My child, can these bones live?"