**Study Five:**

Ezekiel is one of the prophets. Today there is a tendency to think a prophet as someone who predicts the future. However, in Biblical times a prophet proclaimed God’s message now. There is a real sense of immediacy.

This passage is about God restoring life. This vision highlights that no human being could restore life, except God alone. This passage focuses on the restoration after captivity as well as from a long and continued dispersion. Several commentators state that while this passage is a vision, it is also a foretaste of the resurrection.

Verse one: Note that the hand of the Lord came upon Ezekiel and he was led by the Spirit. Some claim that the valley where this took place is Mesopotamia.

Verse two: The very dry bones highlight the long exposure to the sun. The passage reinforces the lifeless reality.

Verse three to five: Only God can give life to these bones, a new breath.

Verse six: This verse reveals the life-giving power of God and we come to know the power of God. We are to recognise the power of God in our lives. The power of God to restore to a new creation that which is dry and barren, that which is lifeless.

Verse seven to ten: Not only does God bring bones together, God gives sinews, flesh and skin. In God we can enjoy fullness of life. In verse nine there is the reference to the four winds. A number of commentators note that the winds refer to the four corners of the earth. God is concerned for all aspects of his creation. Verse ten states there is a vast multitude magnifying the greatness of our God.

Verse eleven to fourteen: The Israelites had been in captivity, they had no hope, they were lost and isolated, but God gave them life, newness of life.

We too can know the creative and restorative power of God in our lives.

**Psalm 130**

This psalm goes from deep distress, repentance, forgiveness to hope.

The Psalmist's experience leads him to urge Israel to trust in God for forgiveness.

Verse one and two - the Psalmist is foundering in deep waters. The deep waters representing sin and guilt and separation from God "Out of the depths ..." and then there is the call to be heard by God.

Then in verse four - there is the acknowledgement that God forgives, and because God forgives, we come to God in humility. (See 1 John - perfect love casts out fear.)

Verse five - there is a determination to wait on God and we know that in Him is our hope. Our faith is built on God's promises and as verse six reminds us, we look to God in faith. "My soul looks for The Lord", and this is reinforced with, "more than watchmen for the morning".

Verse seven - the psalmist not only thinks on his own distress, but he calls on the nation of Israel to trust in The Lord as well. There follows the assurance that there is "ample redemption". The Psalmist's salvation it tied up with the salvation of his people, his nation.

Verses seven and eight, salvation is more than just being rescued, it is about wholeness and maturity for both the individual and the community.

**This is the last of the printed studies in the booklet**. There is another study for Palm Sunday on the web.

However, we are coming up to the Triduum, the Three Holy Days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Day of Resurrection - Easter Day. A question, “Are we too quick to get to Easter without really grappling with the dynamics of Good Friday?” I recall from my youth an expression that went like this: “Easter only makes sense when you have experienced the pain and reality of Good Friday.

This study reminds us that God restored life. Do we give sufficient thanks for the ways in which God restores our lives, how we move from being dry bones to being a vibrant lively creation for God?