

Hope Community Church

Week 6 - Statement of Faith: Regeneration

From Hope's Statement of Faith:

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Gen. 1:26; 5:2; Gen. 3; 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Rom. 9:22; 2 Thes. 1:9; Rev. 19:3, 20; 20:10; 14:15; 21:18; Psa 51:7; Jer. 17:9; James 1:14; Rom. 3:19; 5:19; Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9; 3:16; John 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:1

Leader's Note: The big debate could be when regeneration takes place - you don't need to hold a position on this to agree with this Statement of Faith/be a member at Hope.

Calvinism - regeneration comes before you come to faith. God opens your eyes, you see him and by your own free will, you see him as irresistible.

Arminian - God has given enough grace out there for everyone, but only those who make the choice get regenerated.

If your group starts a debate concerning Calvinist or Arminian views you can engage it to a point. At the end of discussion, it is our recommendation that you take the lead of Ezekiel in Ezekiel 37:3 and state "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." :)

Definition of regeneration (from Merriam-Webster Online):

- an act or the process of regenerating : the state of being regenerated
- spiritual renewal or revival
- renewal or restoration of a body, bodily part, or biological system (such as a forest) after injury or as a normal process
- utilization by special devices of heat or other products that would ordinarily be lost

Split into groups and divide up the verses in the table below from the Statement of Faith. Each group can take three or four verses.

In each group, discuss: what do these passages say about us? What do they say about God? Then share with the large group.

Verse	What does this say about us?	What does this say about God?
Genesis 1:26		
Genesis 3:19		
John 5:24		
John 8:12		
2 Thessalonians 1:9		
Jeremiah 17:9		
James 1:14		
Romans 3:19		
Romans 5:19		
Proverbs 28:13		
1 John 1:9		
1 John 3:16		
John 1:13		
2 Corinthians 5:7		
Romans 8:1		

Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NIV)

¹The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!’ ⁵This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ ¹²Therefore prophecy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

? What sticks out to you about the imagery used in the Ezekiel verses?

Possible Answers: Life verses death imagery. A pile of bones is a very dark picture. A complete transformation is described starting with a pile of bones to tendons, flesh, skin and eventually breath. God says it and it is accomplished.

? What is God trying to convey by using such vivid imagery?

Possible Answers: His full power and authority is on display. He gives life when there is death. His Spirit (vs. 14) is what gives us life. It's not good news for us until He gives life.

? How does God respond to Israel's lack of hope?

Possible Answers: He rewrites what's possible. He becomes their hope and does the impossible - raises them from the dead!

? What significance is there in God using Ezekiel to speak to the bones: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says'?

Possible Answers: God does it to show Ezekiel his strength and the power of the word of God.

? How does this remind you of the power of God's word in your life?

Possible Answers: There is value in speaking God's word and knowing that God's word is powerful. The power doesn't come from us, but from God working in and through us.

? What is the result of God's dead-raising work in verse 13? How does this purpose fit into the definition of regeneration?

Possible Answers: God renews us so that we can know that he is Lord. He brings us to new life to glorify him and be in relationship with him. Where there was only death before, there is now life and hope because of Him.

? Looking at all the scripture in this study, what is "new" about us when we have trusted that God is our Savior?

Possible Answers: God has actually given us His spirit which unifies us with Christ. And this is the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11). We are alive in the understanding that he is our life. We know that he is Lord and the Holy Spirit continues to reveal more of him to us through scripture. Because of His Spirit, we are able to be in relationship with Jesus and that relationship with Him causes transformation in us. Ezekiel 36:26 - He has given us a new spirit.

? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit's work in your life?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.

For Discussion and Accountability

? What can you do to remind yourself that you've been made new even in the times when you don't feel like you have been?

? What have you been reminded of/learned today that you will reflect on and ask the Holy Spirit to use?