

Sermon #1897 — Miscellaneous Sermons

Title: **LISTEN TO THE WIND**

Text: John 3:8

Subject: *The Voice of the Wind*

Date: Tuesday Evening — March 29, 2011

Tape # AA-12

Reading: *Allen Kibby and Larry Brown*

Introduction:

While you are turning to my text in John chapter 3, I want to read a portion of Ezekiel's prophecy to you. In the 37th chapter of his prophecy, God's prophet, Ezekiel, declares...

(Ezekiel 37:1-14) "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the **valley which [was] full of bones**, 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, [there were] **very many** in the open valley; and, lo, [they were] **very dry**. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

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4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, **O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.**

5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, **I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.** 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and **ye shall know that I [am] the LORD.**

7 **So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.** 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: **but [there was] no breath in them.**

9 Then said he unto me, **Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.** 10 So I

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prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And ye shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken [it], and performed [it], saith the LORD.”

Let Ezekiel’s words serve as the introduction to my message tonight. The title of my message is — LISTEN TO THE WIND. Our text is John 3:8. —

LISTEN TO THE WIND

Hear the words of our blessed Savior to Nicodemus, as He asserts the wondrous mystery of the New Birth.

(John 3:8) “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Men often use many words to convey very insignificant thoughts. Our Savior used few words to convey very great thoughts. When our Savior compared the Holy Spirit’s operations to the movements of the winds, He showed us how absolutely needful the movements of the winds are, how indispensable they are. **Imagine a world without winds!** Without wind, if the air had no motion, if there were no living, breathing winds, everything would soon stagnate to into death.

Without the Spirit of God, the Wind of Heaven, the scene would be infinitely worse! The trees of the wood would clap their hands no more. The dry bones of the valley would lie still unquickened. The sweet odors of the Rose of Sharon would be shed

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abroad no more. We must have the Spirit of God. Even as the Sun of Righteousness brings healing beneath His wings, so the Holy Spirit brings life to our souls. We rightly worship and adore God the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity in Unity. As with our Lord Jesus, without Him, we can do nothing. Without the Wind of Heaven...

- We cannot live.
- We cannot pray.
- We cannot worship.
- We cannot sing God's praise.
- We cannot preach the Word.
- We cannot hear the Gospel with benefit to our souls.

THE COMPARISON

First, look for a few minutes at the comparison our Savior here makes of the Holy Spirit to the wind. — “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

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The comparison our Lord makes here is a comparison set forth and maintained throughout the Word of God. In fact, in both the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament, the words for “*wind*” and “*spirit*” are the same words.

The very first thing that comes to my mind when I think about this comparison is that **the wind is unexplainably mysterious**. Nicodemus could not understand our Lord’s doctrine. He said, “*How can these things be?*” Immediately, our Savior directed the learned rabbi to the wind. The wind is mysterious. So too are the mighty operations of God the Holy Spirit. You can see where the wind has been; but no one can tell its origin or predict its path.

- It blows North to South in one part of the world and South to North in another.
- The wind may blow from the West in Eastern Kentucky and blow from the East in Western Kentucky.
- When flying in a plane the ride sometimes gets a little rough because of crosswinds.

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Like the wind, God the Holy Spirit works mysteriously. You may observe where He has performed a wondrous work of grace; but you can never know in which direction he will move next.

- In Calling out the Elect
- In Reviving Mercy
- In Churches
- In Cities
- In Countries
- Redemption is a mystery.
- Regeneration is a mystery.
- Resurrection is a mystery.

I am certain that our Lord intended for Nicodemus to understand, and intends for us to understand that like the wind, the operations of God the Holy Spirit are sovereign and irresistible. — “*The wind bloweth where it listeth!*” There is a sovereign freedom, an arbitrariness, about the wind. It does just as it pleases, and the laws which regulate its changes are unknown to man.

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So it is with the mighty workings of our God. This is a very solemn thought, one that ought to make us humble before the Lord. — We are entirely in His hand! He can do with us what He will.

God the Holy Spirit is free, sovereign, uncontrolled, unregulated, irresistible in all His operations of grace.

- In regeneration, He works how, and where, and when He pleases.
- As He acts freely in the first operation of His grace on the heart, so in all the gifts and operations of His mercy, in all God's elect "*worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will*" (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Like the wind, the Spirit of God is powerful and irresistible. Like the wind He carries everything. There is no withstanding His power, His influence, and His grace. He casts down, as **John Gill** wrote, "Satan's strong holds, demolishes the fortifications of sin. The whole posse of hell and the corruptions of a

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man's heart are no match for" God's Spirit. When the Spirit works, who can let?

"So is every one that is born of the Spirit." — All who are born of God, every saved sinner is regenerated "by grace that is as free and sovereign, as powerful and irresistible, and as secret and imperceptible, as the wind." (John Gill)

The Spirit of God is like the wind in another way. **The Spirit is like the wind in that His work is obvious.** I can't tell you where the wind came from; and I can't tell you where it's going; but I can tell you where it has been. The path of the wind is as obvious as the glaring sun.

- The wind moves in the path ordained by God. — *"The LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet"* (Nahum 1:3).
- The wind crushes everything beneath its force. Everything bows to the wind. So God the Holy Spirit bows the hearts of chosen, redeemed sinners by the power of His grace.

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As the Wind of Heaven was involved in the first creation, so the Wind of Heaven is He who makes us new creatures in Christ by the mighty operations of His grace (Genesis 1:1-2; 3:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2).

(Genesis 1:1-2) “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

(Genesis 3:8-9) “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 ¶ And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where [art] thou?”

(2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2) “Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things [are] of God, who hath

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reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

“6:1 ¶ We then, [as] workers together [with him], beseech [you] also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.)”

WIND'S VOICE

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Look at our text again. — *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”* (John 3:8). The word translated “*sound*” here is the word from which we get our word “*phone*.” It is much more than a mere noise. It is commonly translated voice. Our Lord said, *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof.”* — **What is the voice of the Spirit, except the Word of God by which God the Holy Ghost conveys life and faith to chosen sinners** (Romans 1:16-17; 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-23; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

(Romans 1:16-17) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

(Romans 10:17) “So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

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(1 Corinthians 1:18-23) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where [is] the wise? where [is] the scribe? where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”

(James 1:18) “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

(1 Peter 1:23-25) “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

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¶ For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

LISTEN AND HEAR

May God the Holy Spirit give us grace to listen for and hear His voice. — *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”* (John 3:8).

How often the Scriptures speak of the four winds, representing the four corners of the earth, into which God has scattered His elect and from which He gathers them (Ezekiel 37:9; Matthew 24:31; Jeremiah 49:36).

(Ezekiel 37:9) “Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from

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the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”

(Matthew 24:31) “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

(Jeremiah 49:36) “And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.”

The North wind is cold (Song of Solomon 4:16) The North wind awakens, as God the Holy Spirit awakens the soul by the strong, cold gales of conviction, reproving us of sin (John 16:8).

(Song of Solomon 4:16) “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, [that] the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.”

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(John 16:7-11) “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

The South wind comes gently to comfort (Song of Solomon 4:16; Luke 12:55).

(Song of Solomon 4:16) “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, [that] the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.”

(Luke 12:55) “And when [ye see] the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.”

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It takes both the chilling North wind and the heat of the South wind to make our garden fruitful. How comforting and delightful those warm, balmy Southern breezes are in the Spring of the year! So God the Holy Spirit comes as our Divine Comforter, applying the good news of the Gospel effectually to our hearts, creating faith in Christ (Isaiah 40:1-2; Ephesians 1:12-14).

- Redemption Accomplished at Calvary
- Redemption Applied in Regeneration

(Isaiah 40:1-2) “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.”

(Ephesians 1:12-14) “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed

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with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

As used in Scripture, to describe the winds in around Israel, **the West wind brings rain from the sea** (1 Kings 18:44-45; Luke 12:54). You have to have more than wind to make your garden fruitful. You’ve got to have some water. And God the Holy Spirit brings the water of His grace at the time appointed, both the former and the latter rains.

The East wind is tempestuous (Job 27:21) and withering (Genesis 41:23).

(Genesis 41:23) “And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, [and] blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them.”

The East wind blasts away all earthly carnal hope, and strength, and support, and forces us to flee to Christ, our great Joseph, finding all in Him.

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- It was a mighty East wind (Exodus 14:21) by which the Lord God opened the Red Sea and delivered Israel out of their bitter bondage in Egypt.
- It was an East wind that caught the ship carrying Paul and his companions, forcing them to give up all hope in themselves and “*let drive*” (Acts 27:14).
- The East wind broke the ship; but God uses broken pieces(Acts 27:9-44).

(Acts 27:9-24) “Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished [them], 10 And said unto them, **Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.** 11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.”

“12 ¶ And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised

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to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, [and there] to winter; [which is] an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. 13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained [their] purpose, loosing [thence], they sailed close by Crete. 14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let [her] drive. 16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: 17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. 18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next [day] they lightened the ship; 19 And the third [day] we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. 20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on [us], all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.”

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“21 ¶ But after long abstinence **Paul stood forth** in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of [any man’s] life among you, but of the ship. 23 **For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,** 24 **Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.**”

(Acts 27:39-44) “And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. 40 And when they had taken up the anchors, **they committed [themselves] unto the sea,** and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. 41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast,

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and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. 43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from [their] purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast [themselves] first [into the sea], and get to land: 44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on [broken pieces] of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."

Yes, God uses "*broken pieces.*" He only uses "*broken pieces.*" He graciously stirs up a strong, tempestuous East wind, blasts our gourds (Jonah 4:6-8), withers our corn, destroys our strong, reliable, dependable ships, and makes us "*broken pieces*" fit for the Master's use. God never uses anything but "*broken pieces.*"

Listen to the Wind. — "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

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CHRIST'S PRAYER

Turn with me to the Song of Solomon, and I will send you home with our Savior's prayer for your soul in your ears. Look at it with me in the Song of Solomon, chapter 4, the 16th verse.

(Song of Solomon 4:16) "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, [that] the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

Are these the words of our dear Lord? They are indeed. None Christ can send the Holy Ghost to His people. No one else can call the Church of the living God "*My Garden*." He is the rightful Owner of the Garden. The Church of God is His alone. It is His by the gift of His Father and by His own choice, His by the purchase of His blood and by the conquests of His grace. And we are His by the voluntary surrender of our souls to Him, when He has made us willing in the day of His power. And that He does by the Wind

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of Heaven. — *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”*

He calls both the North wind and the South wind to blow upon our souls, commanding all the influences of His grace upon us in the time each is needed, sweetly bringing forth fruit from His Garden as only He can.

Oh come, Holy Spirit, O blessed Wind of Heaven, come, to convince and comfort me, to humble and direct me, to chill my affections to the world, and to make my heart burn with love for the Lord Jesus. Come, holy, gracious, almighty, Quickener, Reviver, Restorer, and Glorifier of God my Savior!

Then shall we cry out with the Church in this Book, and say, *“Let my beloved come into His Garden, and eat of His pleasant fruits.”*

Amen.