

Christ Crucified

by Michael Koulianos

The Bible is about Jesus Christ and we should start our Bible studies with the cross.

Duration: 42:30

Scripture: Luke 24:25-27, Luke 24:44-49, John 1:45, John 5:39, John 5:46-47, Acts 3:24-26, Acts 7:37, Acts 10:43

Topics: "Christ", "Christ Crucified", "The Centrality of Jesus in Scripture"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes that the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is centered on Jesus Christ, particularly his crucifixion. He warns against the dangers of becoming overly focused on scripture as mere text without recognizing its purpose to reveal Christ. Koulianos stresses that the cross is essential to the Christian faith, serving as the starting point for understanding the gospel and the scriptures. He encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with Jesus through the word, asserting that true understanding comes from recognizing Jesus as the focal point of all scripture. The sermon calls for a return to the core message of Christ crucified, which is foundational to the Christian faith.

Transcript

So today we're beginning the teaching on Jesus, the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. And what my heart, and this is the goal, which we rarely achieve, the goal is to get us through the Old Testament by Christmas. Which by the way, David, is the, yeah, is that service scheduled? Yeah, still working, okay.

We do, we are working on a Christmas service for you guys. Not on Christmas Day, we want you to be with your families, but we've got an amazing Christmas worship night planned for you, and it will be glorious. So the goal is to just get us moving here.

Hopefully, by Christmas, we land at the incarnation. That's the goal, okay? But please have mercy on me and don't stone me if we don't get there. And if I'm late, I'm just gonna tell you it's Christmas every day.

Just like it's Easter every day, okay? Take your Bibles to John 5, verse 39. Before I begin the journey in Genesis, I want to lay a foundation. John 5, 39, the scripture says, you search the scriptures, for in them, you think you have eternal life.

Somebody could just kindly help me with that. You search the scriptures, for in them, you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me. Say this out loud, the scriptures speak of Jesus.

What I would like to foundationally begin with here is that your Bible, though it answers questions posed in the Bible, your Bible is not about your Bible. You say, of course not. Well, you would be shocked at how many people fall in love with chapter and verse and never meet the Lord.

Which can create a very mean individual who rather than love you, Carla, could we kill that fan? Or somebody kill it, I'm just hearing it. And then I'm getting a little feedback behind me. Something, sorry, I'm a former Greek Orthodox, so everything's gotta be like, just right.

Just praying tongues. Yeah, I'm getting some feedback in my ear here. What, what is that, what did I do? Okay, is that better? Yeah, it is better.

So many fall in love with the text, and you should love your Bible. I wanna say that up front. There's a Jesus being preached that is not the Jesus of the Bible, therefore it is not the true Jesus.

It is a created Jesus. And if this were not a Sunday morning, I would really let it fly. If you were at Jesus School right now, you would get a full dose, but I'm really, to be honest with you, deeply concerned, and at times sickened by methods that are apprehended by people who are supposed to represent the Lord rather than appeasing other people, thinking they're reaching those people.

And by the way, compromise will never help you lead somebody to Jesus. And so these initiatives were actually birthed, some actually wrote about them, and churches actually begin to use them, churches I actually love, like taking the cross out of or off of the church building so that it doesn't bring an offense. The only problem with that is the cross is an offense.

It's meant to be an offense. Another is, this is actually true, another is the removal of choirs, which is puzzling in that there are choirs in heaven. So you'll notice here we have a big wooden cross here and a big choir, and people don't seem to mind.

And that's why if you were at the pastor's conference or heard it, you heard me say something, the church is not all about people. We should have a heart for people, but to say it's all about people means that it's not about the Lord. When in fact, the church should be all about Jesus and the church is a people.

So we want the Lord who breathed the Holy Scriptures to have the liberty to tell us what they are all about. Does that make sense to you? So I'm starting at entry level here, foundationally, and that's why I read John 5. Ye search the Scriptures, speaking of the Pharisees, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me. So here you have the word of God in flesh, listen, telling us what the book is all about.

I think we should listen. Amen? All right. John 5, 46, look how kind I am once again.

You just need to look a few verses down. I don't want you to injure your fingers turning too hard. John 5, 46 and 47, listen to these words.

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me. That's a strong statement. If you believe Moses, in other words, the writings of Moses, you would believe me, listen carefully, for he wrote about me.

But listen, this is amazing. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? Whoa. He's saying that if you don't believe the Scriptures, he's telling the Jews this, you won't believe me as the incarnate God speaking to you directly.

That's how much the Lord loves the Scriptures. Now last week I read about Abraham, the rich man, and Lazarus. And by the way, Jesus does not begin that passage by saying this is a parable.

So theologically speaking, there are grounds to stand on regarding the fact that that could have been a true scenario, and that's my opinion. Or he would have started it with saying this is a parable. Notice that the rich man says, Lord, send him, Lazarus, back from the dead to speak to my family so that they don't come to this place of torment, which by the way, is another teaching that is popular today, that there is no hell.

Well, what in the world did Jesus come for? Why did he bleed and die? Why was he buried? And what did he do for those three days? Oh my God. Please don't watch people because of their outfits. Actually listen to people because of what they preach.

Please, can we start there? That would be quite, that'd be a great start. All right, now, you can dress nice and preach the word properly. It's probably better than not dressing nice and preaching the word properly, but gosh.

What does Abraham say? He has Moses' writings. He has the law and the prophets. If they do not receive the law and the prophets, they will not receive a man who's been raised from the dead.

That's amazing. Powerful. The word of God is powerful.

Say that out loud. The word of God is powerful. John 1, 45.

You're gonna get a lot of Bible this morning. Now, what I'm not doing right now is taking you to the prophetic allegories or types and shadows pertaining to the mystery of the Lord in the Old Testament. I'm not even doing that yet.

What I want to build foundationally in your heart today is that your whole Bible is about Jesus Christ. It is not a weapon for you to always be right. If you use your Bible to merely be right and miss Jesus, you have missed the heartbeat and the point of the Bible, not according to Michael, according to the Lord Jesus.

That's what I'm trying to build right now, that according to Jesus himself, he is telling us his word is about him. We have to start there before the beauty and the mysteries of the Old Covenant are unveiled, okay? John 1, 45. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, we have found him, say him, of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, major and minor, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Now that is a powerful statement. Here, Nathanael says, Moses wrote about Jesus. The prophets also wrote about Jesus.

That covers a massive, massive landscape in the Old Testament. Do you follow me? Especially if you see that David is a prophet. Now you've got to deal with the Psalms.

You see that even Solomon was empowered of the Holy Spirit to build the Lord a house. Now you've got to deal with Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes. You've got to deal with the Pentateuch and the Torah.

In other words, there's not a whole lot left when you get through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Malachi, Nahum, major and minor prophets, Ezekiel. Don't you realize that when Jesus told the Pharisees, when they asked him, are you the son of God? Are you the Messiah? How did he answer? You will see the son

of man coming in the clouds at the right hand of the power. He's basically pointing back to Daniel chapter seven.

It's an absolute repeating of Daniel's vision. What he was basically saying is, boys, not only am I saying yes, it's always puzzled me when people say Jesus never claimed to be God. What do you think son of man means? To say I'm the son of man is to say I am the one at the right hand of the father from Ezekiel's vision and Daniel chapter seven.

He's basically saying, I love how Bob Gladstone said it. You think I'm on trial right now. Go back and read Daniel seven.

You're the one on trial. But I'll let you dig yourself your own grave. So when Nathaniel says here, Moses writes of him.

The prophets write of him. That is telling me that the scriptures themselves speak of Jesus. And to not see the scriptures this way, it's how people, it's what gives way to not enjoying the scriptures.

Because then you just think you're reading about people. After a while, you kind of get over that. And how many of you know, Jesus called these same people when he rebuked them in John five, he said you search the scriptures thinking that in them you find life.

To the religious Jews he's speaking, he also says that your father is the devil. And I'm gonna get to this in a moment, but if Jesus doesn't open the scriptures, you can be as religious as a dead duck. Dead as a doornail as they say.

Luke 24, 25 to 27. Is this all right? Thank you, I knew you'd like it. I was getting stirred up this morning just going through them.

Luke 24, 25 through 27. Then he said to them, oh foolish ones. Oh Jesus would never be direct, would he? He would never say anything to me that would upset me.

Oh foolish ones. There's another word for that, fool. And slow of heart to believe.

All right, let's track here. Slow of heart to believe. In all, all the prophets have spoken.

That means the entire prophetic utterance of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus. Now where does the Lord begin? Let's get even more specific. Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things? And to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, that means Genesis.

Moses wrote Genesis. The word Genesis comes from the Greek word Yenisei, which means beginnings. So beginning at Genesis and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures, listen carefully, the things concerning himself.

What's your Bible about? Say it again. What is Genesis about? What is Exodus about? Are you sure? What is Numbers about? Is the Song of Solomon about Jesus? How about the Psalms? As I said a couple weeks ago, if you don't know this, you start stealing promises from the Messiah and claiming them for your own. Get some young radical missionaries and he goes, ask of me, God said, and I will give you.

I said this two weeks ago. The nations as your inheritance. Bro, you don't get the nations as your inheritance.

Let's read it properly here. It is the father speaking to the victorious son. I mean, all you have to do is read the subtitle.

It says the messianic reign or the messianic kingdom. This is the father speaking to the victorious, worthy son who not only came and suffered and died and was buried but raised again because of his perfection and then ascended because of his glory and perfection. The father says, now you get a reward.

It's called the bride of the nations. Now, does that mean that you don't get to go to the nations and offer Jesus his reward? No. But the only reason we step into these promises is because we are in Christ Jesus.

So if I think the Psalms are about me, well then the entire text is gonna be all about me. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? But I wanna become more specific here. Yes, the scriptures are all about Jesus, 100%.

But I wanna sharpen the tip of the spear. I want the sword of your focus to be even more pointed and more specific because this is where the good stuff is, right where I'm about to go. A few weeks ago, I was preaching at an event.

I think it was in Reading. And I said, because when I travel, and it happens here, it happens, it's everywhere. I hear a phrase that I would love to see become more pointed because pointedness in your pursuit is a sign of first love.

Vagueness is not. And this is the phrase I would love to see sharpened. You ready for it? The presence.

My question is, whose presence are you talking about? The presence of God. Which God? Which one? Because when I just speak of the presence, you know, rarely will you be martyred for believing in a vague God. But you sharpen this thing down.

You can even say spirit of God. You can say that to a Buddhist or a new age person. You can say that to somebody who's a witch.

Which God are you talking about? Because I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a Christian, not a vague spiritualist who likes to feel a certain way when the Lord comes into the room. I must be specific when I describe him.

No more than you should be specific when you talk about your husband or wife. It'd be nice to mention their name. Now I'm not saying anyone's intentionally sinning, that's what I'm saying.

But this thing must be sharpened. We are the ones who follow the wounded risen lamb of God. And he has a name.

His name is Jesus. That name provokes people. Some for the good, some for the bad.

It was the name of Jesus that the martyrs held on to. And by the way, the word martyr means to witness. This one will make you laugh, which is why they sing a song about the holy martyrs in some of the ancient church liturgies at a wedding ceremony.

They're like, you're about to get martyred, you're getting married. When in reality, it speaks of offering and witness. That's why the church forever has honored the institution of marriage, because it causes a death to self if walked out and lived out properly.

That friction of us not always being right is so needed in life. So when I say the presence, I'm talking about the presence of the presence of God. The presence of Jesus.

Now according to Luke 24, I want to become more specific. Look at verses 25 through 27. O foolish ones in slow of heart to believe, and all the prophets have spoken, but not the Christ.

Listen, yes, it's about Jesus. Let's go a step further to have suffered these things and entered into his glory. Let's clarify it even further.

I'm not talking about a vague Jesus. The one who's made up. I'm talking about the Jesus who suffered.

Who died on the cross. Nobody will take this cross out of this church. I don't care what books or strategies people read.

This cross sends a chill and a tremble through hell. I said the cross sends a tremble through the depths of hell. The cross is meant to be a stumbling block because the cross doesn't tell you to live the way you want to live.

The cross tells you to die. Do you know in ancient church ordinations when a pastor got ordained, he would have to turn toward the entire congregation and get on his knees and wrap his head in a white cloth. That cloth was the cloth taken off of the sacramental table of the body and blood of Jesus.

What did that typify? They would take the cloth off of the sacraments that would cover the wine and the bread and then put it over the person who was being ordained as presbyter or pastor and wrap his head and he would get on his knees before the congregation. In other words, that offering that was on the sacramental table, the pastor must wear and become, listen, a sacrificial heartbeat before his people before he can offer anything to them. His life must be an offering before he can administer an offering.

And that's what the cross tells us. He carried it, we carry it. He marched in shame, we march in shame.

Gladly, because with every step we take, we die another death and Jesus said, if we lose our life, we gain it. In other words, every step we take carrying the cross, we are filled with the life of the Holy Spirit. It is a step of death and he answers with life.

Another step of death and he answers with life. That's why we're so joyful, because we're not our own. You take the cross out of Christianity and you don't have one.

Christ crucified is the gospel message. You say, what about the resurrection? How do you even get there unless you die? So where, listen, I want, this has gotta land because it will change your life. If Jesus walked in to your room and you did not know him and he wanted to introduce himself to you, just like those disciples on the road to Emmaus were blind, we are all blind, we all live in darkness.

That's why Jesus says, if you live in darkness but you think you can see, how great is the darkness? It's hard to work with that, but how many of you know he can work with the blind who go, I can't see you, I wanna see you? One of the most powerful things and difficult things regarding deception is that people who are deceived don't have any idea they are. But if you are and you know it, he'll open your eyes. And that whole passage, and I'm gonna get there in a few weeks, that whole passage is all about the opening of the eyes.

They were blind, they could not see the Lord, he's walking with them. You've heard me say this before, they are so blind that when he shows up, they ask Jesus if he has ever heard of Jesus. And he, they said, have you not heard about the things that have happened? And I love that he just goes, what things? We need a new vision of the Lord.

And some, he's so wonderful. Even that side of him, I love. I love that he calls them fools.

It just means they don't own him. We need more missionaries, more preachers, more business owners who aren't for sale. Who aren't for sale, who preach the word of God in love and let it land.

And if we're hated, we throw a party. For such were the prophets who went before us, Jesus said. Maybe.

So Jesus is all about opening their eyes. How does he do it? That's why you have communion elements in your hand. Two ways, he opens the scriptures and gives them communion.

Here's my other question. Why do we receive so little communion in church? It's why the church is blind. It is literally the two methods by which the Lord goes, you can't see me now, do you want to? Here you go, here's the scriptures, the word of God.

Let me open them for you. And once I open them, let me convince you they speak of me. But let's go a step further.

Where would Jesus begin in his Bible study with you should not the Christ have suffered? Eight of you got it. I want you to get the beginning point. Because what we've done regarding the cross is made it part of the story.

But that's where Jesus starts in his Bible studies. I'm going with his Bible studies. I don't know where yours begin, but I'm starting with his.

I'd like to be part of a small group that Jesus leads. Now if you were, and none of us could see him properly, he's starting at the cross. All right, hold on now.

If he doesn't start at the cross, then that means we make the cross part of the equation. And we lose the power of the gospel. Because then it's like, well, we have Adam and Eve.

And then God had an emergency. This big emergency, he didn't know what to do. And it was beautiful, they were all naked, walking around, didn't know it.

That sounds pretty amazing. Sounds like some of your kids, right? And then things got really bad by Genesis chapter six and women are sleeping with angels now. That's a big problem, say amen.

Now I've got these big guys walking around the earth called Nephilim, like some of your cousins. All right, now. And then they're gonna, God just didn't like that.

And people were really mean by that point, by the time you get to Genesis six. And the Bible says God was vexed in his spirit and wished he didn't even ever create man. And we don't even know why he ever got there.

Which is for another teaching. And so the Lord's like, I'm done with these people, they're nuts. And so he just wipes them out with a flood.

We have no context, we're just kind of going with these vague stories, just gonna flood the earth. He's really upset, picks this really great guy named Noah. Noah becomes the manager of a zoo that is a yacht at the same time.

And we hear these stories so repetitiously, we even get our numbers wrong. We forget that there are actually seven of the clean animals. But we're so programmed because of children's church, not this one, hopefully, hopefully y'all are watching.

Well, then just two by two, we don't even get to the proper facts at some point. And then by the time the flood was done after God killed everyone, Noah got off the boat. And then Noah started a new family, right? And then he meets a really good friend named Abraham.

Abraham has a bunch of kids. They start this nation named Israel. God wants to torment them, sends them into Egypt, brings them out of Egypt, have no idea why or what any of it means.

So now I'm just following this narrative, right? I'm just following this narrative. And then when God is done, he wants to institute this thing so that it can be religious. And he just wants us to celebrate this thing called Passover which the early church called Pascha.

And they lamb, they mark their houses with blood. This death angel flies over them and smokes all of Egypt. Egypt is a nuclear waste zone.

Israel leaves with all of its money, which they did by the way. They lose every bit of their natural resources. God takes them out.

They go through the wilderness. They're really bad people. They drive Moses crazy.

Moses gets tired and dies. God raises up Joshua, right? Now the wars begin in greater measure. Now we have these kings.

The kings are nuts. They're crazy. Some are good, like two are good.

Most are bad. And then it seems like God's confused. Prior to that, you see the Lord talking about Joseph the whole time.

Joseph goes back into Egypt. And then it seems like the Lord can't tell a story and then points you back to Judah and Tamar. And by the time you get there or to one genealogy, you close your Bible.

Because the starting point is wrong. Origin is everything. Because your origin determines your trajectory.

It determines the whole direction of your life. Journey. But if you discover that Jesus starts with his death, burial, and resurrection, every genealogy makes your heart skip a beat.

Because you're looking for him there. Then you realize the whole reason Matthew would ever offer a genealogy is to prove that this one is son of David. You gotta start there.

Start with the tree. There was a tree in the garden. And there is a tree in the holy city that is coming.

That heals the nations. Do you really think that that is an actual tree with different leaves on it that you can just come by, make your way to the holy city, and you just come by, and hopefully the branches are low so that you can just see the tree. Just nibble on it like a little koala bear and get your nation healed.

Do you really, but that's what happens when you don't see Jesus in the Bible. We sound more like the Avengers or a Lord of the Rings film. I'm not joking.

It's like, that's what some events feel like. Wait, am I in a Christian meeting or some really weird swirl here? Because I have not heard of the cross of Jesus. Therefore, I have not heard the gospel.

Be tracking. But if you realize that there is a tree, and that upon that tree, God's first fruits, first fruit, singular, was nailed to. And that tree brings healing to the nations.

Your starting point, yes, it must be Jesus. Go deeper, sharpen it up. Christ and him crucified.

That's where the Lord would start. Ought not the Christ to have suffered. Friends, Jesus is not, listen carefully, part of your Bible story.

Jesus crucified is your Bible story. Jesus is more real than Adam on his best day. Let's make no bones about it.

Adam was created in the image of God, absolutely. But there is one who is the image of God. He is the express image of God.

Adam was created in Jesus's image. I heard someone say that Adam and Jesus were exactly the same. I'm like, oh, no, they're not.

They are absolutely not. Jesus created Adam. Jesus holds Adam's breath in his hand.

Hallelujah. Now, this isn't where I think you should start. This is where Jesus would start.

Ought not the Christ to have suffered. Where did he take them? To the Moses, the law, and the prophets. How do your eyes begin to open as you read your Bible? Go to the Old Testament.

And let Jesus open the Scriptures, of course, and the new. But most of us run from the old because we don't realize it is still the story of Jesus. Are you with me? You're tracking, all right.

You bored yet? Luke 24, 49. I'm sorry, Luke 24, 44 through 49. You know what I love about our worship team? And I don't ever want like this difference between the worship community and our church community.

We're all one. I said we're all one. We're not trying to build prima donnas who have their own little clique going.

But what I love about our worship team is that they sit under the word and it comes out. What I don't like is when I see a worship team lead a set and roll and go home. How can your heart come alive to worship without the word of God dwelling richly within you? How can you even be connected to the house if you don't listen to the word that is taught? The reason, for all of you watching from around the world, the reason this is a worshipping house is because this is a house who loves the holy word of God.

The two work together. The teaching of the word creates a holy word of God. Holy doxology or worship.

Luke 24, 44, and 49, then he said to them, these are the words which I spoke to you, this is Jesus, while I was with you, that all things must be fulfilled. You're in his Bible study now, which were written in the law of Moses. Don't ever, don't ever, ever, ever, ever again let this phrase come out of your mouth when

somebody says something about those scriptures.

Oh, that's the law. You mean the one written by God? You mean the law written by Yahweh? Don't ever let the tone of your voice demean the glory of the scripture. And by the way, when Jesus said the scriptures speak of me, let me remind you, there was only Genesis through Malachi.

He's pointing to those passages. And so here Jesus says that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, there we go again, concerning me. And he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the scriptures.

Say Jesus, open my understanding. Friends, you know he's still the only one who can open the book. He's still the only book opener.

You need him to open the book so that rather than you just reading the book, the book starts reading you. That's when the intentions of the heart as the scripture says, the motives, they separate, they divide soul and spirit like separating bone and marrow. You need to get there, you need him to open it so that the scriptures when you're before them, they start purging you, cleansing you, birthing sanctification in you.

Renewing your mind so you think differently. Let the Lord challenge you in the scriptures. But you need him to open the book.

He opened the understanding that they might comprehend the scriptures. Then he said to them, thus it is written and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and rise from the dead the third day. There he goes again.

Where did he start? For the Christ to suffer, the passion of the Lord Jesus and to rise from the dead in the third day. Jesus again starts within the scriptural context with the death, burial and resurrection. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.

Wow. To all nations beginning at Jerusalem and you are witnesses of these things, behold I send the promise of my father upon you. But tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are adorned with power from on high.

Thank you, Jesus. Give me five more minutes here, okay? I've got so many scriptures, I just wanna make sure I give you the right ones. Acts 3, 24 and 26.

You can see I get excited about this topic. This will change your life. Acts 3, 24 and 26.

Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow. All the prophets, say all the prophets. As many as have spoken have also foretold these days, you are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our father, saying to Abraham, and in your seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Most people have relegated that to just the nation of Israel. But let's be really clear. Israel is blessed because of the king of Israel.

Some people are more into national Israel, the soil itself, than Israel's king. We need to ask ourselves this question. Why do we believe in supporting and standing with Israel? Because Jesus is king of Israel and he is coming to establish his kingdom in Israel.

And because he comes from the seed of Israel, make no bones about it, he is still creator of Israel. He created Abraham. This is all about Jesus.

Acts 7.37, this is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, listen, the Lord, your God, will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren, him you shall hear. Say it's all about Jesus. It's all about Jesus.

Would you help me there, David? David, just mercy, bring that down a little. Look at Acts 10.43. Look, it's so clear. It's so clear.

I'm even underlining this. To him, all the prophets witnessed that. To him, all the prophets witnessed.

I'm gonna read that again. To him, Jesus, all the prophets witnessed that through his name, whoever believes in him will receive remission of sin.

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