

Devotion to Jesus - Part 2

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the power of personal devotion to Jesus and the significance of fasting in deepening our spiritual walk with God.

Duration: 1:22:41

Scripture: Daniel 10:2

Topics: "Jesus", "Personal Devotion", "Fasting"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the power of the Daniel fast, illustrating its biblical significance and the spiritual breakthroughs it can bring, such as increased revelation, boldness, and divine encounters. He shares personal experiences of fasting and the profound connection it fosters with God, urging the congregation to pursue a deeper devotion to Jesus. Koulianos encourages believers to embrace personal prayer and intimacy with God, highlighting that true success in the Christian life is found in walking closely with Him rather than in metrics or numbers. He passionately calls for a revival of personal devotion, inviting everyone to ignite their hearts and seek a transformative relationship with Jesus.

Transcript

Now, most people really devalue, in the church setting, the Daniel fast. They think it's like, you know, kindergarten fasting. But in actuality, it's a very powerful fast, if you look at it biblically.

The Daniel fast, if you look at Daniel, for instance, as an example, opens the revelation of the scriptures. It opens our hearts to God's voice. Daniel hears the Lord, right? We see that it, that fast, actually releases the ministering spirits, the angels of the Lord, over our lives.

We see that happen with Daniel. Remember, the angel comes to him, but there was a wrestling match and it delayed. How many of you know the wrestling match is over because Jesus has overcome and killed the Lord? It never really was a wrestling match, but anyways, there was a resistance.

And all of this happens in Daniel. Boldness comes through that fast. You see, like, a restoration of youth to him physically and emotionally.

So, it's a very powerful fast. And what I've discovered is, the Lord gives me many more dreams when that fast begins than when I'm not on it. Okay, now, what I typically do on this fast, again, I am not telling you to do this part.

Disclaimer. Okay, am I telling you to do this? No. Judy's like, we know you well enough.

No, I'm actually not. I'm telling you what I do. Okay, I will often add a 19-day fast on the back end of the 21-day Daniel, where I'll do liquids, typically.

And I'll add vitamins and other, like, you know, shakes and stuff. But I'm not telling you to do that. I'm just telling you that's what I've done in the past.

And I've really seen amazing breakthroughs. So, in totality, it's a 40-day fast, but it's kind of a mix between a 21-day Daniel and a 19-day liquid. One time, I lost track and went 62 days.

Yeah, my mom goes, when did you start? We were on I-75. I was preaching in Gainesville. Of course, jazz.

Yeah, Gainesville. All right. So, I was preaching there on the way home.

No, it wasn't 11. It couldn't have been. It was earlier.

I preached. I was tired. My mom's like, well, I'm hungry.

She said, are you hungry? I said, I've been hungry for 60, or I thought it was like 30-something days. I said, I'm still on my fast, Mom. It's not over yet.

She goes, well, when did you start? And I told her. And she goes, your fast ended 20 days ago. And I'm not exaggerating.

We were literally passing a Chick-fil-A when she said that. I said, do you turn now? And I made the dumbest mistake after that long. I ate three of those spicy ones.

And I ended up in a fetal position in the back seat, groaning. Like, seriously, sweating and groaning. Another time, I finished a 40-day fast, and I knew the exact minute that it was over.

Because I remember when I started it, I did all the math. 15 minutes prior to the fast being over, I called an Italian restaurant and had an order of gnocchi and a margarita pizza. I called it in, and it was done the minute my fast was over.

I went in to get it, and the plan was to eat it at home. I never got home with it. I sat in the parking lot and just crushed it.

Paid the price for that as well. My brother once, my brother did like a 21-day fast, and he had to, it ended on a Saturday. He had to preach on a Sunday morning as a guest speaker.

And he finished his fast with 50 wings and had to cancel. He couldn't preach. He had to cancel.

He's like, I'm sick. So funny. So in all honesty, I am burning in my heart right now.

These last three or four days, I feel like I have a revival in my skin. And I am going to burn. I want you to burn with me, but if you don't, I'm going to burn.

And I'm going to burn in front of you, and I want that to provoke you. But I feel a newfound grace that I feel is actually connected with the fast. That God was speaking to me last night.

He's been waking me up early with incredible dreams of great detail. The other night, the Lord spoke to me. He woke me up at right around 3 a.m. And I thought it was, I think I shared this last week, but I thought it was 9 or 10.

And it was 3. And I had so much energy going through my body that I just couldn't go back to sleep. And I finally thought, this must be the Lord. So I went to be with the Lord, and the Lord started speaking to me about two cities, international cities.

Over and over, I was almost hearing an audible voice in my dream. And I don't want to give you the cities yet, because we're going to roll it out. I can just say this, our team is going to get ready to take what the Lord is doing here and what He's been doing in our events here to the nations of the world.

And I'm so excited that it's led of the Spirit and not just our own idea to go do it. But it's time to take Jesus to the nations. Amen.

And so I'm hearing this city over and over again while I'm praying. And it was just wild. And then I begin to see in like these night visions, these dreams, these cathedral-like buildings filled.

I mean, I could hear our choir singing. And it was beautiful. And so I went back to bed and woke up at nine, finally.

And I got a text message as soon as I woke up. And so did Jess from the same person. And they said, we just had a dream about you.

Or I just had a dream about you. I must share it with you. And I heard these two regions.

And they were the exact regions I was hearing. So God is speaking. And all I can say is, I am not hitting the brakes.

I'm going a million miles an hour at the face of Jesus right now. If I feel that grace, I'm getting the most out of it. And if you don't feel that grace, ask him for it.

Because only the Holy Spirit can do it. And honestly, just give him a little firewood. There's no, how many of you know there's a great supply of fire in the Lord's nature? He's a consuming fire.

You just need that little spark. Give him something to work with. It took me two days of fasting.

Two. And God slammed me. I feel like I'm born again again.

Really, I feel like there's a full-on tent meeting in my heart right now. I've been so pent up to preach this message today. During the offering while y'all were giving, I asked Carla, can I go up now? Can I go? Can I go? She said, two more minutes.

I just felt like I was locked up in a cage ready to come out. I'm going to burn. Your pastor is going to burn.

And I want you to burn. I want you to burn. Let's get in on it together.

What we need are a few thousand little grenades going off at the same time. That's how you have something that changes the nations corporately. I feel like last year I spoke culturally to the house at a corporate level.

But I've really felt the Lord last week say, I want you to begin speaking to individual hearts. Because if each individual is set on fire by the Lord, you have a corporate issue in the best way. And that's what I want.

I want us all to find the beauty of personal devotion. Not just this year, but until the Lord comes back. Amen? A few years ago, I was deeply touched.

I don't have time to get into it all. But I had an encounter with the Lord. It was probably my last real dignity-destroying encounter.

How many of you know the ones I'm talking about? But, you know, even if you tried to explain them, you wouldn't be able to. And they'd probably offend people. But I remember thinking, Lord, I know this is real.

Could you give me a sign? Here's the sign, that when I travel, I won't tell anybody what happened to me. And then when I get behind the pulpit, would you begin to touch people the same way? And He did for like a year. And I mean in some of the most docile environments where this should not happen.

I remember being in Nashville once, and I had literally come, I was on the heels of this experience with the Lord. And I stood behind the pulpit, did not tell them anything, just grabbed the pulpit. And when I did, the power of God hit the place.

People were crying and screaming and running to Jesus. And miracles started happening. I feel like I'm on the cusp of that again, personally.

And these things come seasonally. Of course, we want to live in it. But if we lived in it, we wouldn't be able to like go on a date or anything.

There'd be no golf. How could you putt if you were shaking? God would never do such a thing. Anyways, let's go in together.

Amen. Okay. I've been teaching on Jesus in the Old Testament.

But I'm going to, I touched on devotion, which is really a life of prayer. Last week, I want to stay there because last night I was awakened again. At four.

My son, Benny, and I take a day occasionally, but we'll spend the night somewhere locally and hang out. And it's supposed to be a restful time. That was last night.

And the Lord woke me up at four without an explanation. But the spirit of prayer hit me where for hours and hours, I was in the spirit praying. And I felt the Lord tell me last night, I want you again to discuss personal prayer and personal devotion to Jesus.

And then we'll get back into Jesus in the Old Testament. Amen. Has anyone ever wondered why the Lord took Enoch? And by the way, that word took can mean to take, Hebraically, to take as you would take someone in a wedding.

It can mean that. Typically, we look at that verse and consider it a snatching away or an escape. But the answer is, the reason the Lord took Enoch is because he walked with God.

It's in the Bible. Remember, the scriptures should answer the scriptures, right? There's something powerful about walking with God. Say this out loud.

I want to walk with God. Say it again. One more time.

This verse has always, in the most beautiful way, mesmerized me. Since my earliest days in the faith, it really began here in this room, which is still crazy to be here. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Lord. Since my earliest days, more than wanting to make some metrical or this numerical impact, I always just wanted to walk with God. I remember being in Reading once, and a young student asked Bill during a Q&A session.

They were meeting at the Civic Auditorium, which is a local auditorium there that BSSM uses, and so does the church occasionally for conferences. You know, like most of you young people would, most Christians in general who want God to use their life, it's really easy to get caught up in the reach. You know what I mean? In the reach.

And I think that's really dangerous. Now, the proof text or the justification, biblically, to live according to that culture is usually, well, they mention the numbers in the book of Acts. Yeah, a couple times.

But the book of Acts is all about the activity of the Spirit. The Bible is not about numbers. The Bible is about Jesus himself.

Now, does he care about what would Jesus burn? And does he burn in his heart to see if there are four people born again in a room? Would he burn to see the fifth saved? Of course. But all that to say that flows from his heart. So what it is is a natural byproduct, but it cannot be the fuel by which we live by.

Metrics. It's dangerous. Whether you're a songwriter, an author, a pastor, an evangelist, a missionary.

We can't say that the missionaries of the last generation were not successful or less successful than us because we're seeing greater breakthrough in their nations. If numbers determine success, then Calvary was less successful than Galilee. If I have to choose between the two, what happened in Calvary or what happened in Galilee, I'm choosing Calvary.

Amen. When in fact, the Bible says because of David's sin, the Lord allowed the devil to tempt him to take a census. The Lord allowed David, listen carefully, allowed David to even think the thought.

He did not tempt David, but he allowed him to walk through that because of David's failure. He took the census, in other words, began to glory in something other than the presence of God that was in that tent. The Bible teaches that we should glory in the Lord and the Lord alone.

Paul is so whittled away by the spirit where he literally says, I glory in Christ and I'm crucified. I have nothing left to say. He's forgotten more Bible than we remember.

Amen. Okay. Before I go any further, tonight is a pivotal, listen to me, whenever I say this, how many of you are blessed? I don't never mess with you.

I'm not here to tease you. You will need to be in this room tonight. I'll just say that.

You need to be in this room to hear what will be spoken and the power of God that will be released. I believe there will be a divine encounter that will touch our hearts tonight that could carry us for months to come. Okay.

You need to get in this room. If you're watching me on, on live stream tonight, you need to get to church tonight. Doors open at five o'clock.

God will be here, but a word will be released that will shift our hearts. I've heard it. I know the word that's coming.

You need to get in the room. Amen. All right.

Now in Genesis chapter five, the scripture says in verse 24, and Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him. It's a good way to go. I said, that's a good way to go.

Amen. In the garden of Eden, we see Adam walking with the Lord. Now you have to understand biblically walking is not about cardio biblically.

Okay. It's about proximity. Listen, listen carefully.

Intimacy, dependency, lordship. How many of you know Adam was not leading God around the garden? Amen. It's about voice.

It's about touch. It's about the rhythm of the spirit. When you walk with God, you learn that there are moments where you feel his holy anticipation.

It's why Philip runs to the Ethiopians chariot rather than walk. How do you even know to do that? Because you are literally possessed with the Holy spirit. You feel not only the assignment, but you feel the anticipation in the heart of God.

You feel the excitement of the spirit in certain moments. And you're literally caught up and yielded to what the spirit is doing. And if he doesn't run, if he chooses to walk, Ethiopia doesn't get the gospel.

A nation. It ends up being the first official Christian nation. Never, never, never, never, never devalue the power of childlike obedience.

Why am I even talking about this? Because this is part of walking with the Lord. Lovers love to walk with God. They do not merely glory in taking orders.

Orders are important. And when he gives them, obey them. But God wants to, God wants more with you than to give you direction alone.

I tell our students this often, while we're looking for direction, God is looking for affection. Then we find direction in the affection. When the affection is birthed within us, we would rather die than lose it.

So it becomes our fuel for obedience. Amen. Jesus tells the disciples, I have food you don't know about to do the will of God.

What's he saying? When I say yes, I am filled with nourishment. Yes. Yes.

So walking with God is holy and important to God. All right. Now, I'm not going to go too far here, but I just want to mess with your brain and hear your brain crackle here.

The Bible says that you could hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden. I want you to contemplate what that verse means, and we'll talk in a few weeks. The sound, the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden.

So meditate on that. Pray through that. I don't want to give it to you.

Now, I also want you to think about the Lord's heart in walking with us. While Adam missed his appointment, God was on time for his. And God had to ask Adam, where are you? Not because God was lost and needed a guide to the garden.

The whole point was, well, there were many points to that question. One was to reveal Adam's failure, of course. But it's also to say, hey, I showed up and you didn't.

What is at stake here? It's so much greater than just heaven or hell. Though both are real, regardless of what people preach today. I said both are real.

Okay, you hesitated. Both are real. Maybe this section believes the Bible.

Both are real, regardless of what people preach today. This section, okay. This is the purgatory section.

All right. Both are real, regardless of what people preach today. Good, there you all are in.

All right. You know, in the last days, the issue is not going to be, the main struggle will not be the blatant opposition of Jesus. What is antichrist to the core, however, are those who claim to know Jesus and disconnect from his words.

That's when you'll know the cat is out of the hat and to make yourself ready. And it's happening. It's happening right now.

People have the audacity to believe that because they heard from God, that their ability to hear from God overwhelms and overpowers the scriptures and what the church and the church fathers and the apostolic age, what it thrust forth for the last 2000 years, that they are hearing more clearly than those who are martyred. It is pride of the nth degree to think that they found something that polycarp missed or that Ignatius missed or that Athanasius missed or the apostle Paul missed. That's the age we're in.

It's a salvation with no cross. That's what it is. No, really.

It's kingdom with no king. I don't even know if you say you're my king. That means I listen to you.

You're the boss. We just need basic Sunday school teaching again. You know what I mean? I'm not sure we need to equip our kids all the time on like how to get words of knowledge.

I would just like them to like obey. I don't care if you're prophesying to me. If you don't just do what I ask.

I tell him about Jonah and the whale again. Daniel and the lion's den. Basic Bible.

Can we get that back in to a generation? It's not boring. It's actually electric in the heart. Noah walks with God, the Bible says.

Adam walks with God. Elijah walks with God. Elisha walks with God.

Samuel clearly walks with God. Abraham walks with God. He has a meal with the Lord.

Tells his wife to cook the Lord a meal. Better get that one right. Quick, kill the fatted calf.

And yogurt. Okay, Lord. The Lord loves Greek yogurt.

I knew I was on to something. Abraham walked with God. So much so that the Lord wanted to discuss his judgment upon Sodom with Abraham.

And actually said, shall I do it and not talk to my friend? I wonder if we realize what we're missing by forsaking friendship with God. Salvation is free. Friendship takes time.

Is there a price involved? Of course. But I don't want to focus on that this morning. I want to provoke you with the glory that's available in that devotion.

I feel like I'm eight years old today. I'm all happy. I didn't sleep all night.

But I met with him last night. And there's joy in his presence. There's grace in his presence.

There's this ability to fly higher than all this stress. And you don't think you pastor without stress, right? There are issues galore. I'm telling you, people do amazing things and dumb things.

Say amen. Let's say but not me. Mm-hmm.

I'll just look to the other side. No, I'm joking. You can teach people for years systematically, methodically, in a heartfelt way.

You can live before them in a heartfelt way. You can love them. They won't love you back.

It is just part of the Christian life. You do not have to get pulled into that pit. Now, you can feel the pain of a father.

You know, when our students, for instance, do something that I know they're better than. If they adapt the perspective that I've taught them, that our whole team has taught them not to adapt. Of course, it crushes you.

Then you remember what you were like at 19. Or 29. Some of y'all still like that at 59.

Which is proof. Age or time saved is not maturity. Time in the presence is maturity.

It's true. I know people that got born again the same year I got born again. They're like 70.

They still act like they're seven. I hope they're not watching. Spiritually, they're like that because they haven't gone in.

And they had the same invitation of others. Same opportunity. Same sermons they sat under.

A few said, I heard the knock. I'm going to open the door and let them come in. There's such beauty there.

My heart breaks. I'm just going to be honest with you. My heart breaks over what certain worship leaders burn for.

How certain worship leaders live their lives. Not ours. I'm talking about in general.

How certain pastors live. The grind they're under. My God.

The first thing out of their mouth is how many attended that week. Or they plant a church and say, this is how many came Sunday morning. In my heart, I go, it's breaking.

You have no idea the rat race you're signing up for. It's going to destroy you. You're glorying in the wrong thing.

Don't take the census. There's judgment on the other end of it. Taking the census means you're touching the glory.

You're saying, I want to know what I built. David forgot he was just a little shepherd boy. Who am I? And who is my father's house? He forgot that.

That's why the Lord had to tell him, I pulled you off the sheepfold. Do you remember when I called you? There's such danger there. Same with whatever, like the books I write and stuff.

There's so many more ways to sell them. But there's a higher way. There's this plateau that belongs to those who are saying, Lord, build the house and then live in it.

Come build it. But you won't live there if you don't build it. He only builds in houses he constructs.

The goal is to walk with God. Not feel needed. That's important, but that's not the goal.

What if this church saw success as walking with the Lord? All right. That was a good intro. Luke 11 too.

Let's get in there. Let's talk about prayer. Now, the church's message is not prayer.

I want you to hear me. That is not our message. You may have an assignment to build a prayer house, a prayer environment.

This whole movement is a prayer environment. But the message of the kingdom is not prayer. The message is Jesus.

Prayer is the means by which we connect with the Lord. But it is not the gospel. I'm not devaluing it.

But remember, this cannot be a house of prayer unless it is his house. My house. And that my part is conditional.

You know what that is. We come and enter in his name. We gather in his name.

The condition is met corporately. Once that condition is met corporately, he then begins to invite us into communion with him. And a very common name for that communion is prayer.

Okay. But the gospel is not prayer. The gospel is Jesus Christ.

The way you learn and know the Lord is through prayer. And that's what I want to discuss today. Luke 11 verse 2. Actually, let's look at verse 1. Now, it came to pass.

Underline this. As he was praying. Underline that part.

As he, Jesus, was praying. In a certain place. That is important and it is not law.

When he ceased. That one of his disciples said to him. Lord, teach us to pray.

As John also taught his disciples to pray. So here the disciples look at the life of the Lord. They see him walk on water.

Multiply bread. Multiply fish. Lepers are cleansed.

Blind eyes open. He answers those whom nobody has the guts to answer. With such accuracy and wisdom.

That they're afraid to even talk to him anymore. Isn't that amazing? I love that about him, by the way. Everyone always says, be silent.

No, no. What is the Holy Spirit saying? Because sometimes you have to speak up. You need to be silent.

That's holy. But if someone comes against the Lord in pride. We see the Lord schooling them.

It's beautiful. Just trashing. Not trashing in a bad way.

But just destroying them. And I love that. I love that about him.

He's like, I think it's beautiful. I love everything about Jesus. I don't know about you.

So the disciples see all of this. And they don't ask, teach us to be smarter. Jesus, do you have an eight-step plan for healing? How many of my friends do that? And I love them.

I love them. We just don't see in the life of Jesus. In fact, he never preaches a single message on healing.

Because he is healing. It's why when Pilate goes, what is truth? The Lord doesn't answer. There's nothing I say would more properly represent truth than me just standing in front of you.

You're looking at truth. In fact, he's skinned alive at that moment. Beaten, brutalized, beard plucked from his face.

And he's telling Pilate, you are staring at truth. Amen. So that being said, the disciples don't ask him how to do that.

How do we cast out demons? Jesus, do you have an activation track on water walking? Can you activate me in water walking, please? Links in my bio. We're activating crazy people, by the way. Not here, but the church needs to stop activating people who need to read their Bible.

Because there are some wacky people who've been activated. Jesus loves them though. I'm growing in it.

All right. They don't ask any of that. They said, you know what, when you go up that mountain, something always happens when you come back down.

And we're not interested on the technique. Tell us what's going on up there. Teach us to pray.

As John taught his disciples to pray. So that tells me that discipleship 101 is teaching people to commune with God. When did they ask the Lord to teach them to pray? After he was praying.

Now listen carefully. How many of you would love your children or people you love or friends to pray more? Then you become the message. His prayer life triggered a hunger in theirs.

That's the best way. The best way is to be exposed to people who know the Lord. Because something about them triggers a curiosity in you.

Now, I'm going to share something with you personal and vulnerable. I have probably seen as many healings as anybody else I know my age. I'm not saying through our ministry alone.

But traveling with my father-in-law and being in the meeting since 89, I've seen real miracles. Like stuff that is from like the Bible. Never once have I had a desire to sit with him and learn to see more miracles.

Not once. What I have had the desire to experience, and we haven't done this yet, but maybe we will at some point. When he slows down eventually, when he's 170, probably when he'll slow down.

I would talk to him about, walk me through the first 30 minutes of your time with Jesus. And then I'd make him say it again. And then I'd slow him down.

And I would ask him more annoying questions. I would ask him about, from a corporate perspective, I would ask him what's going through his heart when he's ministering to the Lord on a platform. My hunger is not directed in the actual work of the ministry.

But my hunger is aimed at his communion with God. Because I know if I get that, that everything else will fall in place. Because I've seen too many people who've built massive structures, who don't walk with that dripping moisture, moisture, that tenderness, that heart.

I don't want that. I want that fragrance in my heart. I want that fragrance in my life.

I want that saintliness, that inexplicable mystery. You know, when the Russian delegation was looking, hundreds of years ago, looking for the faith for their nation, they tried every faith. And finally they stumbled into Saint Sophia, which is now in Istanbul.

At the time it was Constantinople. Before the Muslims took it. And it was the epicenter of the faith.

And this Russian delegation walked into a worship service during the communion that was being served, which we're going to take today. When they walked into that building, after studying every other faith, they sent message back to Russia. We have found the truth.

We have found the people who seem to live in heaven while they're on the earth. There's something about the presence of Jesus in a people, in a person, in an individual that provokes hunger in those that God puts around them. Everything you see corporately here, listen to me, started in a room with the door closed.

Everything. Our value for worship started in a room with the door closed, all alone. Me coming up here, I remember one time I was on a panel and somebody said, there were like five speakers on the panel and

somebody said, how can I flow in the Holy Spirit better? I'm a pastor.

And the four speakers said, they pointed at me, as though flowing is a topic. As though you can answer that in an answer to a question. It's like saying, teach me Jessica.

Can you answer that? How could I teach a person to a people as a sermon? But it's a matter of history. The way you know to change a song is because you learned to change the song in your bedroom. Did you understand? The way you know when to preach and when to wait is because you learned in your bedroom when to read and when to wait.

The only way to know that the set's over is to be incredibly sensitive to the person of the Spirit. We don't time our sets here and we never will. And if the next generation does, if when I go to heaven that happens, may the Lord just, I don't know, do something.

I don't want to say it. Something. Something beautifully violent.

All right. The only way to know when to end the set is because you learned in private. Do you understand? The only way to stick to a clear gospel is because you realize the Lord is in the room and he's watching and trusting you.

You learn that in private. The reason you have tough conversations and difficult confrontations is because you're protecting something that's more sacred to you than what the world sees. You don't want the Lord's glory to walk away.

You don't want that. I'm not talking about the anointing or gifting, but the glory is like a slippery, it's him, but it's like it's a gentle walk. Yes, you're holding his hand, but it's, I've never seen anyone lose that fragrance and regain it.

Maybe one. I've never, I've never. I've seen ministries continue.

I've seen ministries grow. I've seen reach continue. I've seen reach grow.

I've seen social media numbers skyrocket, which to most of Gen Z and millennials means God is happy and it has nothing to do with following. I've seen that continue, but when you talk to them, the tears don't flow anymore. The tone is different in their voice.

They're not burning. They're not up early with Jesus anymore. They don't, they don't, their free time doesn't prove their love for Jesus.

It's directed in other areas. They don't talk about him the way they used to or as frequently. That's what I'm talking about.

That's what I'm afraid of losing. With everything in me, that sounds like a nightmare. Oh Lord, never let it happen.

I pray that some of you in your hearts, even now are praying, Jesus, don't do it here. Don't do it in me. Don't do it here.

And here's the most sober, not the most sobering, but here's another sobering perspective. I've never seen it transcend a generation. Never.

I know a lot of people in the ministry. I've never seen, in my experience, I'm not saying they're not out there. I've never seen the next generation pick up a baton from a father and a mother and break into more glory.

Never seen it. There's so many reasons for that. One is entitlement.

The kingdom doesn't operate that way. This isn't a family bakery. You don't just get the family business.

As much as we believe in legacy and generations, of course I want my children to step into everything God has for them and to lead. But they're going to fight their lions and bears. And they're going to have to fall on the right side.

They're going to have to fall on his side. This is the kind of stuff that goes through my mind. So here we see the prayer life of Jesus provoking his disciples, that next generation.

And so this is the greatest way to provoke prayer in a people. Look at Psalm 109. Is this good? Psalm 109, verses one through four.

Do not keep silent, O God, of my praise. For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful have opened against me. This is speaking of false accusation.

They have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They have also surrounded me with words of hatred and fought against me without a cause. Listen carefully now.

In return for my love, they are my accusers. Obviously David is writing here. But I believe this is speaking of the Lord Jesus.

In return for my love, they are my accusers. Now what's the answer? But I give myself to prayer. The Hebrew actually reads this.

But in the Hebrew, it would say it this way. I have become prayer. So now I want to get to what prayer is and what it isn't.

And then we're going to pray. Now go back to Luke 11. Because most of you are saying, I have a job.

There's no way I can pray. Or I do this. There's no way I can pray all day.

I'm not a pastor. Just hold your horses. Look down at verse 2 of Luke 11.

So he said to them, when you pray. Is there a comma after pray there? There should be. When you pray, say.

I'll say it again. It'll land. Just say, Holy Spirit, help me understand this scripture.

And we know you will, Lord. When you pray, say. Or let me say it another way.

Don't say until you've begun praying. Don't say until you pray. It tells me praying is much bigger than saying.

Wait for the activity of prayer to begin in the heart. Then speak. Most of us speak and never begin praying.

Because we don't know what praying is. We have limited praying to saying. And speaking is a small portion of the life of prayer.

Now, we'll get into that more deeply. So here we see in Psalm 109, that there are many accusers that speak falsely. And the answer is, I have become prayer.

I'm not just saying one. I have become a prayer. I am embodying prayer.

Look at Zechariah 12.10. We're going to move through these quickly. Thank you, Jesus. You like this? Yes.

Zechariah 12.10. Can somebody help me with my voice? Is Dion here? Can you grab a mic? Can we get him on real quickly? Just need your help here. I don't want to wear my voice out. Zechariah 12.10, there's Dion.

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication. All right, stop there. Say that again.

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication. Okay, what is grace? Grace is the supernatural empowering ability and presence of the Holy Spirit. It's not a getaway free card regarding sin, because the grace of God was on Jesus.

Jesus did not need to be forgiven of sin. We're talking about the animating capability of the spirit that turns you into an avenger when you're just average. Okay, God is talking about the spirit of grace and what else, Dion? Supplication.

That word supplication is prayer. To beseech the Lord is the actual translation. So the Holy Spirit himself, don't miss this part, is the one who prays.

Wow. That's good news. He is called the spirit of grace and prayer.

So prayer is not so much something I do and accomplish, but something I give myself over to. Oh, I want us to go so deep. Prayer is God working, doing all things in us.

What do you call somebody who runs? What do you call somebody who gardens? What do you call someone who prays? When you get this, you will give your heart over to prayer rather than try to generate prayer, which you cannot do. Prayer is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8, 26.

Read that, Dion. Oh, I'm getting excited now. I don't know why.

Maybe you do. Tell me later. All right.

Read it. Likewise, the spirit also helps in our weaknesses, for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit himself. We'll say it again slower.

Likewise, the spirit also helps in our weaknesses. Say, I'm too weak to pray. Anybody ever felt like that? What's the answer? Read it.

For we do not know what to pray. Well, hold on. I'm too weak, and I don't know how.

And none of you do, and neither do I. Nobody does. Only the religious think they know how to pray without God. Keep reading.

But the spirit himself. Hold on. What's the answer? But the spirit.

But the spirit. The Holy Spirit is the answer. So you're too tired to pray? Welcome to the club.

You don't know what to do when you start? Welcome to the club. What's the answer? But the spirit. Prayer is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, not your ministry.

Oh, I'm gonna upset some people. I don't want to. There are only two intercessors mentioned in the Bible, Jesus and the spirit.

Now, many intercession meetings look like CrossFit. There are shoes flying, shovels, prophetic act. Sweating, can't breathe, screaming.

It is wild. Then at the end, you go, what did y'all do in there? You won't believe it. But what did you accomplish? Is your heart full? No, I'm mad at every principality.

You did not pray. If you left that meeting more aware of principalities than Jesus, you didn't pray. I'm not saying you can't be used for intercession.

But let's be really clear. We dare not steal the office. From the spirit and Jesus, whoever lives to intercede for us.

It's not about taking the office. It's about yielding into the activity of the one who's interceding. Can I keep going? I didn't know if y'all were, you know.

Prayer is a river. That is not generated. The spring that fuels that river flows from the heart of God.

You just got to get your raft that we call surrender or yieldedness and get in the river. So I don't know what to do when I'm what? You don't know how to lay on a raft and a lazy river? Just get in. What do I say? Well, we'll get into that later.

But first steps first. Dip your toe in the river. I guarantee you dip your toe in.

It'll sweep you off your feet. An hour will go by and you're beaming with joy and have no idea why. Prayer is his ministry.

He is the high priest. Paul says he knows how to help our weaknesses. Here's a good one.

I'm afraid to pray in the mornings because I don't want to offend God by falling asleep. And that's the excuse to remain asleep. It's amazing.

I don't want to. I'd get up now and I would just fall asleep on you and I know you'd be so offended. So I'm just going to sleep here.

That's what's going on. So if you fall asleep, wake up. People ask me that.

Pastor Michael, I want to be intimate with Jesus. But I fell asleep. And what do I do? I go, wake up.

Keep going. Do you think he's infuriated at the thought that you dozed off? Or does the scripture say he knows our frame? He knows that we're but dust. And do you know, if you're faithful when you're awake, he'll invade your sleep.

I'm telling you. If you're faithful when you're awake and you doze off like it's some mortal sin. If you doze off, he'll invade those little doze-offs.

He'll speak to you. I've had it happen many times. Can I give you one more verse? Yes.

Say the spirit. Go to Matthew 26, verse 40. Would you read that, Dion? Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Whoa. Okay, read that again.

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Okay, now.

There's your answer. If Jesus Christ were in a garden with you and he were sweating drops of blood and he looked at you and said, please pray for me. You would think you'd stay awake for him, but you wouldn't.

Neither would I. And Jesus tells them why. The flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing. Now, he is talking about Peter's spirit there that is now one with the Holy Spirit.

We're going to get into this next week. Are you all enjoying this teaching? I feel like it's for us right now. The Bible says he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with the Lord.

So when I was a little kid here, my father-in-law would take a bottle of water, two cups. I don't have clear cups, but he'd take them and pour. There would be a one cup in the middle and he'd pour water into that cup.

That would symbolize our spirit. And then he would pour another bottle of water into the same cup. And the water would obviously unite to the degree that you couldn't tell where one batch began and where the other ended.

So is our spirit with the Lord. We are married to the Lord. He who is joined, in other words, he was born again, belongs to the Lord, who is under the Lord's beautiful yoke, is one spirit.

We call that marriage. The Lord now is pointing Peter away from his physical capabilities to the capability of the Holy Spirit, who is the only one who gets us through prayer. Prayer is not the price to be used by God.

That's such a tragedy. Prayer is the reward of Calvary. Communion with God.

Now, if Jesus were bleeding, sweating drops of blood in front of you and said, pray for me. The fact that Peter fell asleep there shows his need for someone, the Holy Spirit. I heard a preacher say, now, how many of you would be different than the disciples if Jesus walked up to you in the first century, you're a first century Jew, you're drinking coffee on the shore of the Sea of Galilee there at the Ritz.

And here this man just walks by who's from Nazareth. And I heard this theologian say, how many of you would say, oh, that's Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. And all these preacher's hands went up because he was training preachers.

And he said, congratulations, you now enter the company of the demons because they're the only ones who recognize Jesus as being the Son of God there. He said, good job, you're in their company. Then they all put their hands down.

The point was this, only the Spirit, only the Holy Spirit could reveal Jesus. Only the Holy Spirit awakens us from spiritual slumber. There's the Son of Man bleeding in front of them.

And they can't even pray for an hour, an hour. So what's the good news? The Holy Spirit is the good news. The Holy Spirit is the good news regarding prayer.

He will teach you. And may he teach us over these next few weeks. This is just the beginning.

This is the appetizer. We're going to go deeper. Because I want you to step into continual prayer.

Unceasing prayer that Paul talks about. Paul told the church, I pray for you always. Well, how do you do that when you're preaching? There's a way.

And that's where the Lord's going to take us. Amen. Joel, would you help me? With every head bowed and eye closed.

Maybe, actually, can we pray in the Spirit here just for a minute? Blessed be your name, Lord. Blessed be your name forever and ever and ever. Blessed be your name.

Just pray out loud in the Spirit. Praise you, Jesus. Blessed are you forever and ever.

Wonderful Lord, we love you. We give you all the glory. All the glory.

All the honor. All the power. All the praise is yours.

You're beautiful, Lord. You're beautiful. Reveal your beauty to your people.

By your Spirit, reveal your beauty to your people. Would all of you stand, please? And just remain praying, though, with your eyes closed. No one looking around.

Nobody moving around. I believe there are many in this room that have never known true communion with God. I want everyone just to keep praying.

True communion with the Lord. Jesus became a fire escape. He became a ticket to heaven when he himself is our heaven.

Jesus died. Listen carefully. Jesus died.

I want our whole team just praying in the Spirit. Jesus died to commune with you. To be one with you.

To invite you in to the very same love that is shared between the Father and the Son. Yes, he died. Yes, he did die to shed his blood and wash away every sin you ever committed.

Yes. You don't want that on your account. No, you don't.

But he also died to fill you with himself. To take your heart and your body and make it his home. So that you could walk with the Lord.

So that you'd walk with him, hand in hand, by faith. So that you would know what it's like to live in this crazy, fallen world. With joy.

With peace. With the sense of his presence. This is prayer.

This is a life of communion. Or this is the Christian life. To walk with the Lord himself.

To truly know him. And listen carefully and allow yourself to be known. I feel in my spirit this morning that many of you, you've been holding, I just feel so strongly.

These walls up between you and the Lord. Because you feel like you can't trust his people. This isn't about his people.

This is about Jesus, friend. My question to you is, what has Jesus ever done to you? Was it his death? Was it him shedding his blood? Was it him offering his face to those who beat it and mocked him? Who spat upon and hated? He did that because he loves you. Don't hold Jesus captive to what his people have done.

There's such beauty on the other side of this thing. And maybe there's others. This thing's been just so robotic.

It's been, it's been like, I prayed that prayer. I got it done. I did that.

My sins are good. And I've gone about my life. That's not the Christian life, friend.

The Christian life is a life of love. It's a life of walking. It's a life of giving him your all.

The Christian life is a life of turning away from everything and coming to the lamb and knowing him, knowing him. Listen to these words. Matthew chapter 7 says that Jesus looks upon these people who possibly were preachers.

And on that last day, they said, we cast out devils in your name. We healed the sick in your name. We prophesied in your name.

Jesus said, away from me. I never knew you. See, the point is knowing the Lord and him knowing you.

It's not that a mental knowledge he's talking about. No, no, no. It's a marital knowledge.

It's a bridal knowledge. It's the two becoming one. And if while I'm speaking, listen, if while I'm speaking, you feel.

You sense the Lord's presence. You feel you're thinking right now. That's what I want.

I want you to get out of your seat and come down here. Maybe you've fallen away from the Lord. Listen, maybe you've just walked away.

Maybe your heart is cold. Maybe it's you're not burning anymore. I want you to come as well.

You come. Come. God bless you.

God bless you. You come as well. Make this the Sunday where the Lord's presence you have come in.

Thank you, Father. Let this be the Sunday where the Lord's presence ignites a fire in your heart. That the slavery, that slavery that just keeps you numb and dead inside.

Some of you have been so burned by church, you blame Jesus. And you bit the hook. There's a distance now between you and him.

Refuse that. Come to Jesus. Step out of that thought.

Don't blame the Lord. Because no one is beautiful. And as they're coming, I want the moment they get down here, I want team members around them.

Yeah, this whole front row. Yeah. Worship team, would you help as well? Thank you, Father.

Nobody praying by themselves. Thank you, Lord. They're still coming.

I give you all the glory. If you're visiting this morning, maybe you came in from out of town. Maybe you've watched us.

I don't know. I don't know how you even found out about us. But I feel in my spirit that Jesus is offering himself as he really is to you.

And you've never even really known that. You've known the culture around Christianity, but never truly met the Lord. Today's your day.

I want to invite you. Just feel that strongly for somebody who's visiting. Forget what comes with Jesus' image.

In fact, forget Jesus' image completely right now. And come meet that beautiful man who's here by his spirit. I want us all to pray right now.

Can we do that out loud? Heavenly Father, forgive my sin. Wash me in the precious blood of Jesus. I've come forward this morning because I want to know you.

I really want to know you. I repent. I turn from everything this world offers.

I turn from the devil himself. And I even lay my own will down today. Jesus, be my all in all.

Be my everything. I believe with all my heart that you're the son of God. That you died on the cross.

That you were buried and raised again. And that you're seated at the right hand of God. And that you're returning again.

You're the one who pours out the Holy Spirit. Oh, Father, pour your spirit out upon me now. Now, church, just pray, pray in the spirit out there.

Father, fill them, fill them from head to toe. Fill this whole house with your precious presence. Fill them, I pray.

Fill them, fill them, fill them. Fill them, may they know you. May they deeply know you.

As they draw near, you promise to draw near to them. May they know you, Father. May they know you.

Experientially, may they know you. May they know you, Lord. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Jesus. Guys, can we make sure each of them get a pamphlet? Do we have those? No. If the Lord's touching you, don't pay attention to me.

But if you're able, if you're able right now, I'd just like you to look, look at me. You're about to get a pamphlet that's just going to serve you, that's all. And after this meeting this morning, I'm going to ask you, listen carefully, just to go meet with our team.

There's a booth in the lobby, the New Believers booth. Even if some of you have known the Lord, it's important you enter the life of the church. It's important you are in the Word.

It's important you're baptized in water. It's important you learn to pray. It's important that you learn to preach the gospel.

It's very important that you understand the Lord's desire to empower you with the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. And we just want to serve you. So what we're asking is that you allow us to come alongside of you and serve you in that regard.

There's nobody like Jesus, amen? I said there's no one like Jesus. Does everybody have their communion elements? We're going to receive it standing up. For those of you who are here up front, stay where you are.

I want us to receive the body and blood of Jesus together. So can we make sure these precious people are served? And I'll need the elements as well. I was reading an early church document the other day.

Maybe one day we can look into some of that stuff. But it was describing the meetings of the early church. Some were in houses.

Some were not. The point isn't the building. The point is the presence of the Lord.

But basically their church meetings were very simple. They read the scriptures. They prayed for one another.

They worshiped and they took communion. And so really, historically, it's not a church service the way it should be. Without celebrating the body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

This is really the highlight of the meeting. It's to come before the Lord. Now, Father, we thank you for your healing power.

Your forgiving power. Wash us clean. Forgive our motives that are fallen.

Forgive the things we say and do. We recognize you here in this blessed meal, Lord. And we remember your words.

Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. You told us to do this in remembrance of you.

And we do remember you. Come on. Just take a moment here.

We remember your wounds. We remember your suffering. We remember your beautiful face beaten beyond recognition.

We remember your hands pierced. Your feet pierced. We remember the stripes on your back to heal us.

We remember the crown of thorns. We remember your bleeding body. We remember you being suspended on the tree to take the curse.

So that we would receive life. And now we lift this precious bread, the body of the Lord. Now, wonderful Holy Spirit, as we prepare to receive, I pray we would receive the body and blood of the Lord Jesus in faith.

We break it together because your body was torn. And now we receive the bread of life, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. And may the power of God flood our bodies.

May we live long, healthy, blessed lives. I declare that over you in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

Let's receive. Take the cup. Thank you for drinking the cup, Lord.

You drank the cup. And we do thank you for your precious blood. Without the shedding of blood, there can be no atonement, no remission.

And it's your blood that speaks a better word. And today you sit as high priest at the right hand of the Father. As our representative, the Father sees us in you.

And he sees you in us. What a treasure. As we receive the precious blood of Jesus, I thank you for your word that says the life of the flesh is in the blood.

And so, Lord, as we receive, we receive the very life of the Savior. Protect every person who can hear me right now. Protect every marriage with the blood.

Protect every child with the blood of Jesus. Protect our homes. Protect the future of our children.

Protect the businesses. Protect, Lord, our nation. Protect your people.

Protect this house. Protect this ministry. Protect us all.

Protect everyone under the sound of my voice with the power of the blood of Jesus. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for being drawn to this moment. Empower your people in Jesus' name.

Candice, would you come? Would you all stand, please? I want to pray a blessing. How many of you know blessings work? I said, how many of you know blessings work? This isn't a fancy way to end a service. I want you to grab it by faith.

Would you just lift your hands? Father in heaven, let the power of the Holy Spirit dwell upon your people. May the good plans of God rest upon them. May health be theirs.

May joy, peace, righteousness be theirs, all in the spirit. Lord, your word says, they looked unto you and their faces were radiant. Let this be the most radiant people staring at you.

May every one of your loved ones come to Jesus. Oh, yes. May every loved one come to Jesus.

May you see many family members saved this year. May every sickness in your family be healed. May it go now in Jesus' name.

May you walk in the light of his presence all your days, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Can we give the Lord praise? God bless you. Make sure, listen, before you go, just trust me. Get here tonight.

Doors open at five. We love you. God bless you.

Oh, the blood. It washes white as snow. And oh, the blood of Jesus.

Oh, the blood of Jesus. It washes white as snow. And oh, the blood of Jesus.

Oh, the blood of Jesus. Oh, the blood of Jesus. It washes white as snow.

Everyone, Michael and Jess here. We are standing in the exact location where the headquarters for Jesus Image will be. Local church, Jesus School, House of Bethany.

All of that will be located right here. In fact, the exact spot where Jesse and I are standing will be the

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