

Devotion to Jesus - Part 3

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos' sermon emphasizes the importance of devotion to Jesus through worship, generosity, and continual prayer.

Duration: 1:26:45

Scripture: Psalm 100:4, Isaiah 55:1-3, Matthew 6:6, John 4:14, Romans 8:26, 2 Corinthians 8:2-3, Ephesians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Hebrews 10:24-25, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Jesus", "Devotion", "Generosity", "Worship"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the importance of devotion to Jesus, encouraging the congregation to bless the Lord and express gratitude for His presence. He highlights the significance of worship and prayer, urging believers to seek a deeper relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Koulianos reminds the church that true satisfaction comes from being in communion with Jesus, and that generosity should flow from a heart filled with gratitude. He calls for unity among believers, emphasizing the need for a humble and loving heart as they worship together. The sermon culminates in an invitation to lay down burdens and receive communion, symbolizing a commitment to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

Transcript

Why don't you just bless him? Come on, open your mouth. Begin to bless the Lord. Thank you for ever, Lord.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you for your mercy and your grace upon us. Thank you for your presence here, Lord.

Thank you for your presence. Guys, this is a special morning. This isn't normal everywhere.

Begin to thank him for his presence. Thank you for your presence, Lord. Thank you for your presence, Lord.

Worthy are you. Would you just join hands, but not across the aisles? Father, we've come this morning to thank you. To enter the holy courts by the Spirit.

We come to Zion, the heavenly hill. We come to the throne by the blood. Surrounded by ten thousands upon ten thousands.

Innumerable hosts of heaven. All crying, worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb who sits on the throne. Who reigns forever and ever and ever. Worthy is the Lamb. Holy Spirit, we want to join that cry this morning.

By the Spirit. We cry this morning, worthy is the Lamb. Who has not only made a way, but is our way. The veil has been torn, your very flesh. Has been torn, you are the way. So we say worthy. Worthy is the Lamb. Thank you for this invitation. Thank you for your presence.

Make every hard heart soft. Every broken heart healed. Every confused mind clear. He who is truth, we worship and adore this morning. Therefore, there is no room for lies. No room. Give us eyes to see Jesus this morning. Give us hearts that are burning and thankful. Beating out of our chests with gratitude.

Worthy is the Lamb. Just lift your hands. Just say that out loud, worthy is the Lamb. Let's just join heaven this morning. Say worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb. Who was dead and is alive forevermore. Worthy are you, oh Lord. You're the only worthy one. We give you all the glory. All of it. I want you to purpose in your heart right now. To give the Lord the glory. Say Jesus, I give you all the glory. All the glory. All the glory is yours forever and ever and ever. You are so faithful. In Jesus' name. Now I would like you to just hold hands once again. Just say this out loud, Father. Make us one. As you are one. With Jesus. That's what you promised. And that's our prayer. Jesus, you prayed. Father, let them be one. As you and I are one. Give me a humble heart. A soft heart. A burning heart. A loving heart. In Jesus' name. Amen. Can we thank him, church? This is beautiful. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Come on, thank him. Oh, we love you, Jesus. We love you, Lord. We love you. Just find three people. Find three people. Share the love of God with them. That doesn't mean preach the gospel. It just means give them a hug. Around here, probably would preach the gospel to them. Thank you, Lord. Then you can be seated. And don't you just love the presence of the Lord? Can we just thank him one more time? Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

I do want to remind you, tonight, we're actually going to be a special night. Tonight, we're going to be celebrating baptisms as a church. There's something so beautiful and charged when those take place in our church.

You won't want to miss tonight. But we're going to continue worshiping the Lord. Key word, worshiping the Lord with giving.

As I was praying this morning on what to say, I heard that line from that song. That it's my joy to thank you. And this idea of giving to the Lord, it's our joy.

Don't you know that it's our joy and it's our honor to be able, on this side of eternity, to offer him what is costly to us? And as I was thinking about that this morning, this scripture in 2 Corinthians 8 kind of came to my heart. This is the Apostle Paul talking. And it says, Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done to the churches in Macedonia.

They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But catch this. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.

For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. Catch that. They could not afford this, but they gave far more.

And they did it on their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege and sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we hoped for.

Their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. Let's skip down to verse 7. Since you excel in so many ways, in your faith, in your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, your love for us, I want you to excel also in the gracious act of giving. I'm not commanding you to do this, but I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.

For you know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor. So that by his poverty, he could make you rich.

And I love that perspective shift. What does Paul go right to? Look at Jesus. Look what he did.

That's the model to follow. And I think about our church sometimes. We're known for so many things.

We're known for amazing speakers. We're known for amazing worship. But how incredible would it be if we'd be known as a church rich in generosity? Man, have you been to Jesus' image? The Holy Spirit's moving there.

The Lord's there. They have amazing speakers. They have amazing worship.

But man, they are rich in generosity because they see Jesus. They see the model that he set before us. And they emulate that.

They are Jesus' people. And what did Jesus do? He gave. He gave his very life.

The thing that was the most costly. What did the Father do? He gave his Son, who he loved, gave him for us. And so today, as you're in this posture of giving, I would ask you to check your heart.

Don't give out of compulsion. Paul talks about that in the next chapter over. Don't give out of compulsion, but give cheerfully.

Give out of a heart of worship. Out of a heart of love. Out of a heart of abundance.

Are you thankful for what the Lord has done for you? Are you thankful that he gave you his precious Son? Are you thankful that by his stripes we are healed? Are you thankful for what God has done and is doing? Then I would say today, in a posture of thanksgiving, ask the Lord to make you rich in generosity as we give to him. Amen? Why don't you just close your eyes as I pray for you. Jesus, come on, just in your own words, begin to thank the Lord this morning.

Jesus, we thank you. Oh, it's our joy to thank you. It's our honor to be able to worship you in this way.

To give you what costs us, Lord. Oh, Lord, we thank you for sending your Son. Jesus, we thank you for dying on the cross for us.

Holy Spirit, we thank you that you're here in the midst of us. Oh, we love you. It's our joy to say thank you.

And so, Lord, I pray for your church today. I pray that we would be rich in generosity. That we would give out of a place of love, out of a place of genuine affection and worship to you.

Oh, we thank you, Lord, for what you're going to do. It's our joy and it's our honor. We praise you today.

In Jesus' name we pray and everybody says amen. Amen. There's multiple ways that you can give.

If you're here in the room, if you need an envelope, we have ushers that are going by. You can simply just slip up your hand. Our ushers will make sure to get you an envelope.

You can also do the text to give options. If you're watching online, there should be some options there on your screen. And we'll be right back with you in just a moment.

We thank the Lord. Just lift your voice. Can we thank him? Come on, let's just lift our hands and begin blessing the Lord Jesus.

Lord, we love you. We worship you. We adore you.

We give you all the praise. Now we ask you, Lord, to speak to us, to teach us your word. Open our eyes that we would see Jesus through the teaching of the scriptures and through communion this morning.

I thank you in advance that many broken souls will come to Jesus, that many in darkness will come to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I thank you, Lord, even in advance for this evening. Oh, let your power flow as we baptize your children.

In Jesus name. We are ready. We are hungry.

We are thirsty. Our ears are open. Give us eyes to behold the lamb.

In Jesus name. Would you seal that with praise this morning? Oh, we love you, Lord. We love you, Jesus.

We love you, Lord. Amen. Come on, you can do better.

Come on. Amen. Amen.

Well, good morning, everybody. Good morning, everyone. You are born again, right? Good morning.

Be grateful for the Lord and his love. Yes, tonight we'll be baptizing people. It is one of my favorite things in the world to do.

Baptism is holy. If you've never been to one of our baptismal services, you just need to come. They are charged with the glory and presence of the Lord.

As I've said before, nowhere in the scriptures do you see the waters of baptism separate from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And there are moments... I don't know where we're putting the tank. Where do we put it tonight? Right over there.

There are moments when the tank... when people start gathering around the tank and people are baptized, you can feel the tangible glory of God just pulsating from that area. And it's just... I love to do it for many reasons, one of which is I get a front row seat to that wonderful glory. Next week, we're going to update you on the status of the building.

Yup. Yup, we're still on schedule to break ground in the spring. Carla and I meet and talk weekly about it.

The contractors and their team are meeting Carla and some of the team this week on the land to walk through it. And it's happening. Thank you, Jesus.

In the months to come, we will begin the vision campaign for the building. And I'm believing that we won't own a dime. We won't owe a dime on that thing.

The Lord has blown our minds with the amount of money that's come in already for it. And that's prior to the vision campaign even beginning. So, I'm in faith.

And as I've said many times, may we see our children's children's children grow up in the glory of God there. Amen? Amen? Imagine walking down the prayer trails. A little warmer than today, hopefully.

I would assume they'd be pretty empty on a day like today. My son played in a golf tournament. He's there right now.

That's why Jesse's not here. But I was there yesterday and we swapped. Drove for hours.

And it was so cold out there. And I actually looked at him. I'm like, dude, unless you play really amazing, I'll be in the clubhouse because this is crazy.

One year, I played in a professional event in Nevada. And my caddy bailed on me after the ninth hole. It was so cold because ice was falling.

And he looked at me and he goes, I'm out of here. I'm going to have chili. Quit on me and my caddy.

So, I kind of understood after yesterday. All that being said, imagine walking with your family or alone, waiting on the Lord, meditating on the Lord's beauty and passion. It's going to be a beautiful, beautiful property.

It already is. But it is going to be glorious and a place to call home. Amen? What we want most is for the Lord to call it home.

And we believe He has. All right. I want to get into prayer again.

Did you enjoy last week's teaching? So, I would certainly take notes on this. And to review, what is prayer? Prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit turning our hearts and affections towards the Lord. Prayer is the activity of the Holy Spirit.

It's really important we understand that. Prayer is something He does and something we join. Until you discover this, it's okay to be taught this, but the only way to really learn this is to experience it.

And probably the best way to learn it... I'm getting a little ring here, a little feedback here on the left. Yeah, it sounds like a bell or something. It's not an angel.

And the prophets rebuked me just there. It is an angel. No, it's not.

That's a speaker. The only way to really learn it is to go in your room and shut the door and get in and not be hard on yourself. Don't judge how you're doing, but to get in and allow the Lord to teach you.

And since prayer is the activity of the Spirit, you have to yield your time and being to Him and trust Him to walk you down the road. Teaching is important. I believe through the Scriptures that Revelation sets us up to understand a life of prayer, but at the end of the day, it is the Holy Spirit Himself who loves to teach us how to be with Jesus.

Amen? Part of the challenge with prayer in the church, and I would say that one of the areas the church is really weak in, is prayer. Because we've been shown all of these different models that aren't all necessarily wrong, they're just incomplete. It's one aspect of prayer.

Let's say you grew up in an extremely Pentecostal home or environment. Prayer is active and loud. And if I were to say, pray in the Spirit, you would instantly pray in tongues.

Now that's okay, but there's more to praying in the Spirit than your tongues language. In fact, the only way to pray is in the Spirit. It's not prayer unless it's in the Spirit.

Do you understand? I didn't just say it's not prayer unless you speak in tongues. You have to, your vocabulary has to change. Being in the Spirit does not mean screaming in tongues.

Now I believe in praying in tongues. I believe in speaking in tongues. And there's a lot of people watching right now who are in the ministry who speak in tongues but are afraid to tell your congregations.

And you know you do, and I love it. I'm on to you. I studied the surveys.

Prayer is not just about getting something done, though there is this realm of prayer that demands answers. Well, not from God. You're not demanding answers.

Let me say that another way. There's a realm of prayer in which we should expect answers and not have, we should expect answered prayer if we ask the Lord. And whether it happens or not is a different conversation.

But we do know that the Lord is returning and looking for faith when He returns. So there is this aspect of prayer where you talk to the Lord, you are making a request to the Lord, and the Lord actually expects you to stay in the pocket until the breakthrough comes. That's one of the beauties of marriage is that

oftentimes one of the spouses will have faith for something the other one doesn't have.

Like us being here right now at OCC. Jesse would say, I don't know, for 15 years, one day we'll be preaching in there. And I'd say, you're crazy.

Had no desire to be here. I had moved on. That's kind of my nature.

God did it then. He's doing something new now. I'm moving on.

Then we didn't have a building and Jesse said, you watch, we'll get OCC. And here we are. And to be honest with you, even Pastor Benny would say, Jesse, relax, move on a little bit.

No, not moving on on that one. She had faith for it. It's one of the beauties of marriage.

It's that power of agreement. Two do put 10,000 to fly. So it's very important.

Now, that's an aspect of prayer. But there is more to it. There is a depth that, gosh, probably less than 1% of the church has even heard or understands.

And that is continual, unceasing prayer. And that's what Paul talked about. We're gonna get there.

Hopefully experientially as well. That's my goal in life. It's a greater goal than building the building.

It's a greater goal for me than having events that a lot of people come to. Finding continual experience of God or continual prayer is the goal for me. I would call that union with God.

Once you understand what prayer is, again, it doesn't mean I'm talking all the time. We talked about that last week. When you pray, say.

I'll say it again. When you pray, say. In other words, praying is bigger than saying.

The saying is a part of the praying. When you are praying, say. In other words, allow prayer to kick in in the heart, then verbalize.

That's what the Lord did. The Bible says He looked up to heaven and sighed and then loosed the tongue. What was He doing? Why would He look up to heaven? Some would say, yes, He was grieving over that person who was suffering.

Sure, that could be true. But I also look at it in that the Lord Jesus looked up to His Father in heaven, communed with the Father, and then released the power of God. Huh? When you pray, say.

He touched His Father's heart, His Father touched Him back, then the Lord declared, and the healing came. That's the way to live. As a man, think of in his so is He.

So meditating on the Lord, being aware of Him in the heart, actually gives me a platform to stand on of authority and faith to declare the Word of God. People talk too quickly in prayer. I'm going to give you a bunch of scriptures.

Let me just break up the fallow ground here. I'm going to tell you something. You mark my words.

The day is coming where the church will be more quiet, yet ten times more powerful. In our gatherings. I don't mean you should shut up with the gospel.

No, we need to declare the gospel more loudly. But I do miss the people who acted like Jesus and preached the gospel. That'd be refreshing.

But our gatherings are going to become very much like this. You know, we had a beautiful pocket in worship this morning. I don't take it lightly.

It was beautiful. The Lord's here in a very special way this morning. Specifically here to heal broken hearts.

To heal those of you who are wounded. Let the Lord do the work. Let Him heal you.

A friend of mine, he's probably watching right now. They live in Switzerland. He sent me a text yesterday.

How do you know when to stop praying? And when I first read that, I was like, oh, I wish you were in church Sunday. But then he said, in the secret place. That's open to conversation as well.

Because if the secret place is in the heart, that means it goes everywhere with you. Now I do think you should have a place to pray because Jesus said you should. Go into your room and shut the door.

That's prayer 101 at Jesus School. If students come in, how do I do this thing? Do you have a room? No. I share one.

Do you have a curtain? No. Go buy one from Target for eight bucks. Put the curtain between you and your roommate's bed.

I can't afford a curtain. Can you find a tree? How about a car? Can you shut the door? That's so beautiful to the Lord. I remember one time somebody said, hey, I have a condo in Myrtle Beach if you'd like to use it for a few days.

Now I've been to Myrtle Beach. If you're watching from Myrtle Beach, I'm sure you are. Don't take this the wrong way.

I have other places in America that I love more than Myrtle Beach. Myrtle Beach is kind of like the theme parks of Orlando meet a beach town. Not my vibe at all.

But I said, you have a condo on the water? Yeah. It's like a nine hour drive, I think, from here, isn't it? Or eight? How far is Myrtle Beach? Anybody know? Eight hours? I said, I'll be there to pray. I could find a quiet place.

Eight hour drive? Sure. Sure, I'll drive eight hours to be with Jesus. The first day was okay.

By the second day, I forgot I drove eight hours. It was awesome. The Lord loves that type of effort.

If you don't have a place to pray, find one. Make one. It's not religion.

It's beautiful. And don't, as I said before, do not, I said this two weeks ago, do not fall into, or three, two, sorry. Do not fall into the trap that you can just find continual abiding prayer if you do not steward secret prayer.

He who dwells in the secret place shall abide. The abiding life is a promise only experienced by those who dwell in secret. You have to live there.

Now, I believe everything we're experiencing is by the grace and mercy of God. I believe that. But I do have to be honest.

Many people who were touched on this platform, I'll never forget the night. You know Jesse and I were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the same night here in 1990? Yeah. There's a little girl in a Jordan jersey with a little mustache next to me.

All right? And when we talked about the night we got filled with the Spirit, she goes, that was right next to you that night. That was after we got married. We figured it out.

Years later. Now, around Jesse and I were dozens of people my age, some were older, some were younger, all had the same opportunity. We all got touched by God.

But I noticed a common denominator among those who faded out. My bedroom door was shut. They very frequently visited the secret place.

I'm sorry, very rarely visited the secret place. I'm not saying you can obtain it by works, but clearly some say yes and some don't. And in that place so much is worked out in you.

I'm all about counseling. I think it's wonderful. We believe in it.

We've been counseling. We have counselors. Many of them for my own life, for Jesse and I. But they cannot do what God can do.

When you think of what really attacks environments like this all over the world, and I've been behind the veil at the ones you love, they all face the same thing. People groping for power, people not feeling celebrated, people wanting more, people wanting an opinion that God hasn't given them. People want to comment on realms that they've never been entrusted to steward.

That's everywhere. But what's the core issue? The lack of satisfaction in secret. That's the lack of satisfaction.

I mean, one of the things a worship team needs to learn is who the anointing is flowing through in the moment and back off. If God sneaks up on one of the vocalists and begins to flow through them, the right thing for the rest of the team to do is to say, I see authority on that person right now and I'm going to honor that. And they do it gladly because the moment is not the source of satisfaction.

His presence in private is. So, I told you at the beginning of the year, I'm going to speak to you more on an individual level than a corporate level in the beginning of this year. Because what we've been doing is watching the Lord speak to us corporately, invite us corporately and teach us corporately.

But, a corporate gathering is just a bunch of individuals. And if each person can find satisfaction in Jesus, unity is at hand. So, the way you don't see a difference between being on the prayer team and vacuuming is because you're both satisfied.

Do you get it? Right now I'm saying no to 80% of the invitations I used to say yes to. Not partially because of my voice, but, I am no less at peace than I was when I was traveling everywhere. Why? It's a satisfaction issue.

He's available. And He needs to be found daily. So, you've got to get in your room and shut the door.

Matthew chapter 6. Go into your room. Close the door. This is prayer 101.

It is elementary. And once you get in, it's okay to say, Father, I don't know what I'm doing. In fact, it's probably the best thing you could say as you respond to this invitation.

Remember what Jesus said? Those of you who think you're in the light, but you're really in darkness. How deep is the darkness? The toughest people to teach are the ones who think they know what they're doing. I told my son one time on the driving range, he's telling me that I was wrong.

When he was like seven. So I said, hey bud, what we're going to have to establish here is that I know what I'm talking about and I'm giving the lesson. So what I need you to do is be quiet and swing the way I tell you to.

Well, I don't like that. He did that at Disney one time. He said, I can clear it over that lake.

I said, oh really? Yeah. Each ball is like six bucks now, I think, or five. No, like four.

They're expensive. So when a ball goes in the lake, it's like bye-bye. And he goes, hey bud, I can hit that shot.

I go, in your dreams. That's what I thought. But you know, a good father goes, all right, go for it.

He hits it in the lake. So as a dad, I'm going, hopefully, he says, I'm not going to try it. Drops another one, pssh, in the lake.

Once we're like 15 bucks in, I go, hey, I don't know if you're going to need a sozo after this one, but you can't do this right now. You're too little. Hit it over there.

Prayer's kind of like that. The Lord lets you get involved. He instructs you, but the worst thing you can do is stay out because you're intimidated.

Don't stay out. Dip your toe in the river. And you'll discover I can trust the current.

And then once you can trust the current, just jump in. The Lord is excited to teach us how to pray. I just want to clarify that because there are these deeply spiritual truths that I'm about to get to, and I don't want them to intimidate you.

I want the scriptures to provide a framework by which you can experience the Lord. So prayer is the activity of the Spirit turning the affections of the heart, the mind, and even the body to the Lord Himself. One man wrote, Prayer is God doing all things in us.

Now, and last week I gave you Luke 11 too. When you pray, say. Then I used the example of David saying, I believe it's a messianic utterance as well, that when those accused him, he became prayer, or he had given himself to prayer.

And that's Psalm 109, verses 1 through 4. And then we discovered it is the Holy Spirit who is the spirit of prayer. So prayer is really the activity of the Spirit, as I just said. And that is Zechariah 12.10. He is the spirit of grace, or empowerment, and supplication, or prayer.

Now if I asked most of you who grew up in church, I said, what is prayer? You'd say, a humble request made known unto God. That's a small percentage of prayer, though it is part of it. At the core of prayer is a

person, the spirit of grace, and supplication.

The spirit is willing, that's Matthew 26, verse 40, speaking of our spirits. And then I gave you Romans 8.26. For we do not know what to pray, Paul writes, as we ought. Oh no, that's bad news.

We don't know what we're doing, but God has a plan. Comma, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep to be uttered. Alright, now listen.

How many of you ever heard groanings in a meeting? Come on, don't freak out. Okay, I know many of you have. How many of you were freaked out the first time you heard that? Alright, now, people go, how could you be around stuff that's, do you think it's all real? I go, no, but some of it is, and if some of it's real, it's the Lord.

It's a great way to look at things. However, there are also groanings that can't be uttered. It's not the best proof text.

When the lady sounds like she's in labor, I'm not, I've seen things, look, that have shaken me up, where the Lord moved, I'm not judging that. But there is a groaning that you can't put words to. Paul's getting at this.

It's the activity of the spirit. Something I wrote in the Jesus book, when Jesus becomes, when Jesus himself becomes my prayer, at last I am praying. In other words, there's a place in the depths of prayer where my pores start screaming his name, and I cannot put words to it.

It's the entirety of my being. It's like a pulsating sponge with these little, this hunger cry, give me Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, and it can last for hours and hours and hours and hours. It's after you get through that whole prayer list, you get through all the stuff, and then you're left to this, him and him alone.

Now you're praying. That's the bridal cry. That's the Maranatha cry, come Lord Jesus.

It has to be by the spirit. The spirit and the bride say, come, that is future and now. All right? So that was last week.

Now, who initiates prayer? Can someone help me? Ryan, David, maybe you two, could you all grab mics? Who initiates prayer? And this is such wonderful news, by the way. Psalm 36, verse 8. Ryan, would you read that one? They are abundantly satisfied. But keep going, yep.

Keep reading. Whoa, this is loaded. Loaded.

There is a river of delights, whose name is the person of the Holy Spirit. So imagine this river is flowing, and that river is filled with delight. You need to drink from that river of delight, because the world doesn't have it.

And we live in it. So here is an invitation, through the psalmist saying, hey, there is a river available. And it's filled with delight.

Verse 9, for with you is the fountain of life. With you, speaking of communion, fellowship with the Lord. It means when I break fellowship with He who is alive, I stop experiencing true life.

Goes on to say, it's in your light that we see light. Do you know how incredibly powerful that is? Do you know what that means? That you need Him to know Him. Let me say that again.

Unless He is in the room, you can't know Him. It's in light we see light. I have to be in the presence of God, to know the presence of God.

Now, should we respond? Yes, but I have good news for you. It all starts with Him. The gospel is His idea.

The scriptures are His idea. The move of the Spirit is His idea. His mercy is His idea.

Him shedding His blood is His idea. It's all His idea. So it's in light we see light.

That's why it's so important that there are more communities like this, I pray, that will be birthed all over the world. Where the presence of God Himself is preeminent, because if He's not there, you can't know Him that way. Do you understand? Say this, I need Him to know Him.

You don't know Him in your own strength, and then start to need Him. You need Him to even know Him. He's got to say hello to you.

Nice to meet you. It's His idea. I said it's His idea.

Say thank you, Jesus. Isaiah 55, verses 1 through 3. David, would you read that? Are you all liking this? Oh, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you have no money. Come, buy and eat.

Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to me, here and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the sure mercies of David.

My word. Everyone who thirsts, come. Come to the waters.

Is your soul parched this morning? Are you dry, broken? Do you feel like you're in the wilderness? Come. When people tell me they're in dry spells, my first, the economy of my thoughts is this. You're not praying.

I'm not saying you cannot go through a season where the Lord begins to reveal Himself to you in a different way. So maybe it was through song and worship in the secret place, and He's attempting to show, to open a well, per se, through the text. So He's leading you away from singing in that moment to the Scriptures.

That's not necessarily a wilderness. But the Scripture says, it's the rebellious who dwell in a dry and weary land. That's not new covenant promise, dryness.

So I tell our students, how can you be in a dry spell if there's a river in your belly? Imagine the Lord's going to ask us one day, why didn't you have more? Well, you were far away. Really? I was in you. Where were you? In your belly.

Right here. From your, not your real stomach. I'm not talking about your gummy bear collector.

I'm talking about your carb collector. No, no. I'm talking about, I'm talking about your innermost being.

How in is He? In your innermost being. You can't be anymore in. In the deepest place.

And He's asking you to come to Him. And He's not far away. In fact, He's a thought away.

But you have to know, listen, where to find Him. How and where. St. Augustine said this.

You ready? I spent years trying to find Him without, only to finally discover He's within. Oh my. Now, theologically speaking, and theology matters, theologically speaking, there is an eternal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Gifts will cease in heaven, but the Lord Himself will never leave us. Thank you, Jesus. He will never leave us.

He is in us to stay. He's not leaving this temple. Thank you, Father.

He left the prior temple when the veil was torn. That said two things. Please come in, and I'm getting out.

Because instead of Jerusalem's stone, I want to fill living stones. And I want to be the chief cornerstone. And what happens is, is when I fill living stones, they become living epistles, living letters.

And they're a body tightly knit together. So, you've got to understand this. Run from gossip.

For this reason, it divides what the Lord wants to be one. Run from it. You say, how much patience should I have for it? None.

None. Now, I play a lot of golf, and sometimes I'll bump into guys who have issues in life. And that they're, you know, they're working through.

There are no, like, Christian country clubs or Christian golf tournaments. If there were a Christian tournament, I don't know how good that would be. But I just like to win, whether you're a believer or not.

I don't care. But, I'll hang out with a lot of people who have issues. I don't, they're not my, like, I'm not one with them.

But sometimes you can't control who's hitting balls next to you and driving me. And I'll talk to them. They'll talk to me about their issues.

And many have gotten born again. I have led so many people on the golf course to Jesus because they're with me for five hours. They can't go anywhere.

And plus, we're walking green pastures. So, it's so easy. Have you read this verse? Look at this.

They hit in the lake, I go, he's leading you besides still water. Come here, I put my arm around him. He's restoring your soul now.

Don't worry. Let the anger go. But let me tell you who I don't kick it with.

Gossipers. Ever. Because it's poison.

I used to travel, I used to, well, I used to travel a lot with a big group, a team. And one of the people used to gossip a lot and I would run the other way. I could never talk to them.

I gave them a few chances. But every time they talked, they talked badly about someone. I was just like, dude, I don't want to talk to you.

I wouldn't sit next to them on airplanes. I wouldn't do any of that. Because I felt like after I was with them, I needed to get baptized in water.

Like my mind, I wanted to put my brain in a baptismal tank. And anoint it with oil. But the reason that's an issue is because the Lord puts, He's putting together living stones through His abiding presence that is within them, the internal dwelling of the Spirit.

And He knits us together as His body. Which in a few minutes, we're going to receive communion. And hear me carefully.

If you have an issue with someone that you can't let go of, do not receive the communion. Like I actually want this to be a church where you are in fear and trembling when you're holding the body and blood of Jesus. I'd rather you say, I'm not taking it today, than you just take it haphazardly.

So the Lord leaves the temple to occupy a people in their innermost being to make them one. And then He is chief cornerstone of that whole building now. It's a spiritual dwelling.

All that to say, no matter where you go or what you do, He is in you. So here's the deal. That gift, the gift of Himself, the person of the Spirit, we will give an account for.

And that's my opinion as I look at the text that the implications will bear weight in the age to come. Because our idea of maturity in God's are different. It's like this.

Who's God going to give the earth to? The meek. Not the most organized. Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the? That makes no sense, especially if you're in the flesh.

Why would God entrust the earth to the soft hearted? Because they're pliable and they can be led. That's only found in the glory. You have to get in the rain and let the presence of that, that beautiful outpouring of the Spirit daily fall on the distractions of the heart that are like little burning coals in the soul.

Offense, pain, this and that, jealousy, striving, all of these things. They get in the soil of the heart. They're like these burning coals.

And they pop up daily because we're human. And what happens is when you come into the Lord's presence, He begins to just rain that mist that was in the garden like. And that one goes out, that one goes out.

And you leave and you're at rest. You don't care about it. And two hours later, you don't care anymore.

Right? What happened? He stole the show. He stole the show in your attention. He stole that internal show.

He took the stage. I don't care anymore. You follow me? Come all who are thirsty.

Come. Come to the waters. Listen to this.

And you who have no money. Come. Come.

Buy and eat. What's he talking about? A different food. I feel the Lord now.

A different nourishment. A different satisfaction. A different fullness.

Come. Buy wine. What does wine do? It cleanses.

We see that in the Good Samaritan. It destroys the infection. What is poured upon the wounds of the man who was pillaged and beaten? Oil and wine.

Wine first, then oil. Right? Fellowship. The nearness.

The drinking. The reception of the Spirit. Come and buy milk.

Speaking of the Word. And the movement of the Spirit. What did Job tread his feet through? Milk that became butter.

I've tread my feet through butter. And speaking of the work of the Spirit. But milk in the Scriptures also speaks of the Word.

You want the Word to come alive? Come. Listen, listen. For some reason that part didn't land.

I can feel it. You have to come to Him to know His Word. He's the Teacher.

Say this out loud. Jesus is the Word who teaches me the Word. There you go.

Say it again. Jesus is the Word who teaches me His Word. The Word will come alive when you come into the presence of God.

Look at verse 2. Why do you spend money for what is not bread? Wait. What is Isaiah talking about here? A purchasing. Stay with me for a few more minutes.

You've got to get this. A purchasing. An exchange.

An acquisition. This is mentioned in the book of Revelation. I counsel you to buy from me pure gold.

These purchases take place in private and through the testings of God. What you gain in there cannot be stolen. It can only be relinquished.

You can't steal it. You can only give it away. The kings lost the treasure.

Hezekiah loses the treasure with the Babylonian envoy because he showed him the treasure. And that invited them in. But if God gives you something in private, it's yours to stay unless you mishandle what He's given you.

I'm telling you, there's treasure in there. Buy it. With what? Your heart.

I would say with time, but I know a lot of people that go in the room and nothing changes. And they come out more prideful. It's always shocked me.

They come out less teachable, more prideful, more hard-hearted after they seek the Lord for a season. They're not seeking the Lord. They're seeking status as someone who looks like they're seeking the Lord.

Their motive is off. But to be honest with you, if you have bad motives, seek the Lord. But some people want to look very spiritual.

Oh, I can't, I can't, I can't honor that request even though it's biblical. I heard from the Lord in the secret place. You have a different Lord and you're not finding Him in there.

If you're not nicer, calmer, more gentle, more patient, more forgiving, more supple, more teachable, more dependent, more blown away by Jesus, if that's not happening, something's off in there. You're not coming to the waters. No, no, no, no.

If you're not more like Him when you walk out, there's a breakdown in there. And that's what I want to help you avoid. Why do you spend money on what's not bread and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me.

Listen to this. And eat what is good. When you are full, there is no room for the world.

You've got to eat in there. Aren't you glad the Lord wants to be consumed? That's what we're going to do in about five minutes. Doesn't that tell you something about Him? You know, one of the hot topics today that's been going on for a few years is because a lot of people come to me and want advice.

I don't look for this stuff on social media or anything. One of the most liberating things you could ever do is get off social media, by the way. But big church is bad.

House churches are holy. I'm like, bro, I grew up in a house church and met plenty of jacked up people. They'll get you in the house.

They'll get you in a big room. Your perspective is actually idolatrous. You're making the wineskin the Lord.

So that's to say that the Egyptians who meet with 20,000 people present every Sunday are less holy than people who have a house church. Why am I getting at this? It's because we look to the wrong cisterns and not the water. No.

We must not allow our preference to become our gospel. So were Jesus' meetings in Galilee with 20,000 less holy than His smaller meetings? Yes or no? No. Who makes something holy? The Lord.

What makes something unholy? The lack thereof. There are house churches charged with the glory of God. I'm friends with them.

I serve them and love them. In fact, I've preached in house meetings for Upper Room when they started. My mom and dad have been pastoring a house church for, I don't know, 25 years.

My life was radically changed there. But the setting, or I should say the physical structure with a backyard does not make it more holy than an auditorium. It's His presence.

It's the scriptures. It's the people's response to the Lord in the moment and as a lifestyle. That is a holy people.

Why am I getting at this? It's because there's food that satisfies and it goes even beyond our preference and strategies. It must. It must.

What I don't want to happen here, ever, is for us to take our culture and make it the gospel. That's how you get some culture. The root word there is cult and that's how you kind of become one.

That's not allowed here. So we don't say our way is the best way. We say Jesus is the best way.

So what can happen in a worship environment is go, I know what we do. We come through and we thank Him. And we can thank Him any way we want.

We just have to thank Him and then we sing fast songs because fast songs are praise songs. And if we get three in, He made a promise. He'll come.

He's not a genie. If I teach that more than I teach Him, I start teaching on thanksgiving and the way to praise Him. And you become robotic and forget that He has a heart, desires, and wants to do something spontaneous.

That's how you speak corporately and forget about the moisture that's needed individually. If we do this, He'll do that. Yes and no.

Because there's room within the text. There's wiggle room there for Him. He can do whatever He wants.

He'll not break the Word. But there's room in the Word for Him to come on the fourth song. Or the fortieth song.

Or before the song. Like what if He comes before you start your thank you list? You're going to kick Him out? No. What's the point? The point is this.

He is the source of satisfaction. I told Jesse, tell the team to stop saying our culture. I don't want a culture that's not in the Bible.

Let's just talk about Jesus. Give me a verse. I don't want to ever get prideful about how we do it.

I want to talk about the one who does it. There's a big difference. It gets really jacked up.

If there's pastors here, listen. It gets really jacked up when you think your culture encompasses the kingdom. Then you start calling it kingdom.

But you don't have chapter and verse for it. So it's not kingdom. It's just your preference.

Now if you want to say around here we do it like this, that's fine. But that's not the gospel. I said that's not the gospel.

Never let your preference replace the gospel. Is this helping? How many of you are called to missions? You feel like a call to missions. Either domestically or internationally.

Put your hands up. Okay, your message is not missions. You getting it? Like you will not plunder or destroy the work of hell in a region if when you arrive your message as a missionary is missions.

The devil is not afraid of your topical message on an assignment. No, no. I've been in missions for 20 years.

Straight. I did 40 countries in 10 months. That's a country a week.

Or 38 countries in 10 months I think. Somewhere around there. It was a lot.

And I learned something. When your feet hit the ground you talk about Jesus. Not your ministry.

If people know more about your ministry than Jesus when you're done that means the Holy Spirit wasn't flowing through you like He wanted to. Alright. How many people here feel like you will pastor a church one day? Raise your hand.

Students, raise your hand. Come on, put them up, put them up. Both hands up high.

Okay. Your message is not this is how you pastor. Your message is not church growth.

Oh, it got quiet there. Your message is not church planting. Because churches aren't... Churches are birthed and planted.

And birthing hurts. That's not the message. The message is this is Jesus Christ.

How many of you would say you have a prophetic inclination? Okay, come on. No one thinks you're weird. Now everyone stare at them.

There they all are. We're going to take just a few extra minutes this morning. There they all are.

Put your hands back up so everyone can stare at you. There's all the ones. Michael wore black today.

He must be in mourning. His pants are khaki. That means he must be humble.

His feet are white. He must be living a pure life. That's what all your prophets are thinking.

The platform is blue. There's revelation coming. Oh my.

God bless you all. The message of the prophet is hey, this is how you get a word. God forbid.

God forbid. I said God forbid. Prophets are not slot machines.

Hey, give me something now. Call in. Subscribe.

You get a little membership here. I'll give you a word. That happens.

God forbid. It's a tragedy. It's a tragedy I said.

What is the message of the prophet? According to the Bible. The testimony of Jesus. And that doesn't mean every testimony.

The testimony of Jesus is not I got a check in the mail. That's a testimony. Now if you want to send a check in the mail.

We'll talk after service. That is not That is not the spirit of prophecy. You got to read your Bible the right way.

The most prophetic thing you could ever say is this. Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the son of the living God who lived perfectly, died, was buried, raised again, seated at the right hand of the Father, He's coming back again. You say that's not prophetic.

It is the most prophetic utterance in heaven and under it. If you get that right, you will never be void of miracles. That's the most prophetic thing you can say.

He's the chief prophet. Is this helping you? Let me just keep going. An evangelist.

The evangelists, there are two sides to these coins because every one of these offices should equip. But the message of the evangelist is the gospel. Not, it's the primary message of the evangelist is not evangelism.

Now I've met many people who are equipping people who don't know the gospel. It freaks me out. Like I say what is the gospel? And they'll say God has a great plan for your life.

No. He does. But that's not the gospel.

I'm like wait, what? Well, he loves you. Yes, but how do you know? Can you give me proof? He loves you. Because I told you he loves you.

I need more. An evangelist breaks Jesus the king in through the declaration of the word and the working of signs, wonders and miracles for the power of the Holy Spirit. A teacher's message is not this is how you teach the Bible.

You teach Christ himself. Why am I saying all this? I'm saying it so that you can get to the source and start buying food in private that will satisfy. Your assignment will never satisfy you.

Help me Joel, please. This is a... Actually don't help me bud. Sorry.

They have to put up with me. I'm normal, I promise. This is a satisfaction issue.

How can you be empty if you're filled? How can you say you're free and live in bondage? How can you want your neighbor's assignment and tell me you're satisfied and drinking from a fountain that flows from heaven? Do you follow me? How can you covet if you're consumed? How can you actually be a freed child and give your members over to sin? I want you to think about this. Jesus died and has promised to fill us with his presence. And wherever we go, he's there ready to be experienced and available.

I love what John Bevere said. When was that? Was that last week? Pray for me. How could 40 million believers leave the faith? 40 million? That's... That's almost... What is that? That's... What, 11 Orlandos? Is that right? Something like that? I think it's maybe because the front door of this whole thing got twisted.

Maybe they were never in at all, some of them. Maybe the reason that is is because you've grown up hearing a gospel that's not the gospel. And nobody moving, just for the next five minutes, please.

I think that's the issue. David and I were talking about that last night. It became like this, hey, we're going to construct a door that you can fit through just perfectly.

You can come in on your own strength. You walk through this door and every bad thing you ever did just disappears. And at the door, you can just come in the whole house and do whatever you want.

And you don't have to leave your junk outside. And you can frequent the house as little or as much as you'd like. You can just... It's right here.

We built this house just for you. It has everything you love. This house is... I mean, in fact, you get to design it.

We'll have a church meeting and you get to tell us what you like. And we'll kill our staff. We'll add three extra services just to serve your timeline.

Think about it. And why are we adding the services? The building's not even full. So, well, Pastor, the reason we add them is because people like this time more.

Man, I didn't know it was their house. So what we'll do is just... We'll craft it just for you. And certainly, we're not singing longer than 28 minutes.

Because you will turn off your attention. I mean, it's 1219 and I'm still here. You might leave the church.

But if people leave and he stays, it's still a church. See, the front door isn't even the biblical front door. It's the church exists for you.

And what ends up happening is if a pastor doesn't have a satisfied heart, his satisfaction comes through turnout, campuses, attendance. Not his presence. And so, by default, without knowing, we twist the gospel.

Because if you leave, I'm sunk. And I can't live with me if you don't like me. If you don't stay here, nobody, nobody has to stay in this church.

No one. Now, I would highly recommend if God called you here to obey. But I think one of... Is this okay? Doesn't matter if it's not.

It feels wonderful. One of the issues... You know, I grew up in the Orthodox Church. You couldn't just go, I'm out.

I'll go to the next one. We only had one. And that forced us to like work stuff out.

But you've got like 90 like just around us right now. You can just go to a bunch of places and what ends up happening is you have this migration of the offended. Who are looking for the one church that's built for them.

Now, you get to build your living room for you at home. But this is His house. And so the gospel gets morphed.

It starts off with how we experience the parking lot. Which I think we should do it all very well and excellent. And then it moves into the worship set.

And then it moves into the right series for the right moment. And then eventually it gets to the gospel. And it has to be the door that is the most comfortable door.

But when this thing began, the door killed you. That's how Christianity began. You died at the door.

Tonight we're going to see that. This morning we're going to see that. This was the door.

I have news for you. It still is. But this says, come and die.

Yes, it says He died. But being that He is our shepherd and leader, He says, now you come die. That's not a month down the road.

You don't come in the way you want to come in and eventually get to dying. You don't come alive until you die. The scriptural pattern is you take away life and give it.

Not you give it and take. You take away their breath. They die and then they come alive.

That's what the Bible says. First the breath leaves and then you come alive. We're not really going to be alive until we leave this body.

You know what I mean. Of course we're born again. I get that.

But it will culminate at the return of the Lord Jesus. This is the front door. I hate to tell you this is the living room.

You don't think you come in through the front door of the cross and then just bounce around on little angel clouds and they feed you grapes and fan you with peacock feathers. You can't shake the tree. It's in every room.

But the amazing testimony of the Lord Jesus is this. When I'm most dead I'm most alive. It's moving.

That's the gospel. That's the gospel. Many of you have never heard it.

No. Many of you came with somebody today. Maybe you're here for the first time.

You didn't come to visit Jesus image. You came to meet Jesus Christ. That's what he wanted.

That's how he's looking at it. You didn't come to make your friend happy. The Lord used them as a mule.

I'm not saying you call your friend a mule or a donkey. But he used them as a mule to carry you in here. So that you can meet the crucified and risen king.

Now you can help me, bud. If you'd just let go you'd come alive this morning. Yeah, I'm taking my time.

I want his hand to reach down deep. That doesn't matter who's in this room. None of that even matters.

We've got to get over all that. What matters is your soul. The testimony of your life.

The witness of your life. That, as John Baviere said, it is the testimony of our life. The fruit of our life.

The way we live that tells the world or people around us in heaven itself if we belong to the Lord. It's the testimony of our life. And being a slave is just the worst state of life.

It's just the worst way to live. And you don't have to be. I want you all to stand please if you would.

We're going to receive communion here. But I think what would be beautiful is that those of you who in just a moment respond to what I'm saying actually receive communion right here at the altar with a cleansed conscience and a purified heart. Your deeds washed in the blood of Jesus.

That would be a beautiful beautiful, beautiful experience. But this is what I'm asking. I'm asking you to come lay it all down like the rich young ruler was asked to.

To let go of everything and to put your complete trust in the Lord Jesus being willing to lose all for his sake. That, my friends is the Christian invitation to lose all. And in losing all I gain all in him.

The altars are open. I want to I just want you to come forward. I don't even want to do the traditional raising of your hands.

You feel like you need to get up here and just come. Come and lay it all down. Every ounce of your being your future, your dreams.

Yeah, I mean the Lord even the Lord even addressed the career, the money of the rich young ruler. He went after it. And I believe he's doing it this morning.

He's going after it. How about your perspectives? What a tragedy for one fallen mind to train another fallen mind to train another fallen mind for generations to come. Lay those down as well.

You can get on your knees. You can stand. I mean you're leaving all for his sake.

You're saying Jesus I want to follow you and I want to come your way through the gateway of the cross. If you brought someone here for the first time I actually want you to say look, this is why you came. This is why you came.

Do you want to come and lay your life down? Do it now. That's why you brought him. You brought him here to meet Jesus.

There's no scriptural proof of like this working people in over years to come. No, no, no. It can happen that way but the gospel confronts.

The gospel is right out in front of our face. It's there. It's quick.

It's sharper than any two-edged sword the Bible says. It's cast in us and upon us. And the Bible teaches that we should cast our life.

What did Jesus say? Either cast yourself upon the stone or the stone will grind you to powder. And that's what the Lord's looking for this morning. Come and say I'm done with everything.

Jesus did not address pornography in the rich young ruler. He addressed riches. It all belongs to the Lord.

It all belongs to the Lord. Just don't leave this morning without just giving it all. The Lord didn't go around the crowd and go, oh, is this your first time? Is this your third time? No.

Where have we gotten all of these things? Come to Jesus. Obey the Holy Spirit. Leave all for His sake.

Ryan, would you come up here, buddy? I just want you to pray with Him out loud. Then we'll receive communion. But don't pass it out yet if we haven't done it already.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30078.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-koulianos/devotion-to-jesus-part-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net