

# Friends of the Bridegroom (Pt. 4)

by Michael Koulianos

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*To be a Friend of the Bridegroom, one must love Jesus and His presence, the Word of God, His Church, the lost, and family, and live a life of consistency and holiness.*

**Duration:** 55:32

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:24-25, Luke 10:38-42, John 3:16, John 17:17, Romans 10:14-15, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Ephesians 1:22-23, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Bridegroom", "Friendship with Jesus", "The Importance of the Gospel"

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## Description

Michael Koulianos continues his teaching on 'Friends of the Bridegroom,' emphasizing the essential qualities of those who are close to Jesus. He highlights the importance of loving Jesus and His presence, the Word of God, and His church, while also stressing the need to love the lost and family. Koulianos warns against the dangers of compromising one's faith and the necessity of understanding the core of the gospel, which is Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. He encourages believers to prioritize worship and to recognize the significance of the cross in their lives. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper revelation of Jesus and a commitment to living out the gospel in every aspect of life.

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## Transcript

I'm going to continue in our Friends of the Bridegroom teaching. Have you been enjoying it? I hope you have. I'm going to quickly rip through, these are not, I don't by any means claim to cover every quality that a Friend of the Bridegroom has, with these eight qualities, there are many more.

And I also want to say that they're not in a particular order of importance. Okay, but I just want to give you eight, and then I'll continue with these as well, and I'm going to give you some scriptural support, which is very important, say Amen. The first quality of a Friend of the Bridegroom is that they love Jesus and His presence.

They love Him. And I added His presence because for some reason, some see a difference between the two. And there is no difference between the two, any more than there would be a difference between the presence of Nathan and Kathleen, and Nathan and Kathleen themselves.

We're asking for the actual Nathan and Kathleen to be with us and dwell with us when we request their presence, right? So say this out loud, He is His presence. Say this, His presence is Him. The actual Him.

Now that's very, very important. That's very important. I thought you'd repeat that, but I'm proud of you.

You didn't do it this time. It's very important because some people agree with the Lord's bio, but they're not familiar with the Lord Himself. And let me say this very clearly.

There is a biblical, doctrinal, theological deficiency and train wreck right now in the body of Christ. Absolute train wreck. Now, I don't think the day will ever come where we agree on every single thing.

But there are some things you just have to get right. You cannot get Jesus wrong. If you want to argue about the peripherals and this and that and pre-trib, post-trib, all this stuff, you want to do all that, okay.

But you can't get Jesus wrong. You can't get that wrong. We cannot get the infallibility of the Scriptures wrong.

Now, they may be open to interpretation, but they are not open to our deconstruction and argument. They constructed us. It's quite hilarious.

Man loves to deconstruct what he doesn't understand or has fallen away from. I remember Billy Graham said to a man, I think somebody said, explain God to me. He said, do you think ants are pretty smart? The guy goes, yeah, yeah, yeah, they're pretty smart.

Why do you say that? Well, they get in line. They can build cool little, whatever those are called, hills with tunnels and all kinds of stuff. And they're very orderly.

And they pass food from one another. And they're quite intelligent for an animal of that size. And then he said, well, try teaching it algebra.

And he said, friend, there's a greater chasm between you and God than between an ant and an algebra teacher. We often try to tear down and deconstruct what we don't understand. The scriptures are God-breathed, the Bible says.

You can live your life on the word of God. In fact, Jesus told us to. Jesus said, do not build your life on shifting sand.

But build your life, he said, on what I've spoken. So when the storm comes, your house is built on a bedrock and you will not move. And what I can attest to, especially over this last 18 months of my life, is that the word of God is stable, more stable than the heavens, the Bible says.

It is more stable than the earth. Heaven and earth will pass away. But my words, Jesus said, they will never, ever pass away.

Amen? You can't get that stuff wrong. He's not only the center of our faith. He is the fullness of our faith.

It is he who fills everything with himself. So I know we all have said it before. Jesus is the center.

True, but he's much more than the center. You cannot read Ephesians chapter one, or through the book of Ephesians, to be honest with you, which is, in my opinion, one of the most clear, riveting explanations of the relationship of Jesus and his church. And when you read that book, you discover, you read Colossians chapter one, or Hebrews chapter one, you discover that he's much more than just central.

He's everything. He holds our breath. He holds the world with the word of his power.

Amen? You can't get Jesus wrong. You can't get the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus wrong. You cannot get the fact that he is fully God and fully man wrong.

There's never a moment in time, there has never been, where Jesus ceased and being the Lord God almighty. Never happened. Not for a single moment.

Never, ever, let me be very clear, never, ever, ever, ever was there a millisecond where the word was not God. All right. Now, the glory of the Lord, one of the glorious revelations of the Lord's love is the fact that he put on a body at a moment in time.

We call that the incarnation. When the incarnation, by the way, is much more vast than the manger. Whenever I say incarnation, you start smelling or hearing jingle bells.

You think Christmas time. Yes, but there's so much more. So much more took place in the incarnation.

And something we commonly forget is that the Lord did not only become man, but still remains a man. Fully man still to this day. You do know that.

If not, that's okay. If you don't know that, that's why we're having this pastor's conference. I don't know how you can learn to give a prophetic word and not know that Jesus is God and man fully.

That whole thing has got to shift in Jesus' name. We will see it shift. Amen.

He's still a man. And as the God man, he secures as high priest the relationship between God the Father and mankind. We call this the priestly ministry of Jesus.

You can't get this stuff wrong. You cannot get the cross wrong. If you didn't hear the cross, you didn't hear the gospel.

Part of the gospel is God has a great plan for your life. But that is not the entirety of the gospel. You can't get the resurrection wrong.

If Jesus isn't raised, we are still in our sins, Paul said. You say, what's the big deal about that? That means you're going to hell. It's a big deal.

If you don't think it is, you will when you get there. It's a huge deal. That's what Paul writes.

If there be no resurrection, he tells the Corinthians, you're still in your sins. And he said if there be no resurrection, how could Christ be raised from the dead? And there is no disconnecting the resurrection and Calvary. It's only, you know, in the early church, they did not celebrate, as I said last week.

I think I said it on, did I say it here or on a Sunday night? Sorry, they're all, no, or did I say it at school? I am 45, clearly. Did I say it at school? I don't know when I said it, but it was pretty good. Because it's the word of God.

Let's read. Go to John chapter 17. You know, I've been tempted at times, because I have this Bible, it's pretty bulky, to just walk up with my iPad, because I can have a Bible in it.

And lately I was like, no. No, a generation needs to see a Bible. A Bible at the pulpit.

Don't we? Our children need to see us holding our Bible. Certainly we need to see Bibles in church, on the pulpits. And then, John 17, verse 17, this is Jesus speaking.

And sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth. Your word is truth.

So what is truth? Say the word of God. Say it again. What is truth? So Jesus says here, sanctify them with your truth.

How are we sanctified? And I've spoken about this before on Sunday morning. Sanctification is to be taken out from the darkness of the world, of the blindness of the world, the compromising nature, and the law of sin and death, all that lives in this darkness that the world is under. And I don't mean only people.

I'm talking about this world system. We're removed from it. That is one half of the sanctification coin.

But the second half of the coin is not only being taken out from, but being dedicated unto. Now, if you grew up in a religious critical environment, you were a master at telling everybody why they're wrong. And there are entire movements and camps that are dedicated to pointing the finger as to why everyone is wrong.

And in many cases, they're right. Those people are wrong. But when you have the wrong heart, you're wrong the whole time.

I don't want to be known for pointing out what's wrong in everyone, even though that's part of the ministry. It actually is. But remember what Jesus said, how can you see a speck when there's a plank in your own eye? I've discovered I'm too busy dealing with my plank than to create a ministry around your speck.

And the anointing of the spirit does not come upon us to merely point out what's wrong, though there's a time for that. I want to be very clear. The anointing of the spirit comes upon us to preach the gospel.

And I don't want my tombstone to say on it, gosh, he told everyone off. In fact, I just wanted to say Jesus on it. Not that Jesus is in that tomb.

Or he loved Jesus, or Jesus loved him. I guess that would be better, Jesus loved him. Are you following me? You don't want that, but you need to be wise in these days.

You need to be wise in these days. But Jesus gave us the answer to knowing when a thief and robber comes. He basically said, my sheep are masters at my voice.

They didn't get a master's in the thief and robber's voice. So I'm so addicted to the Lord's voice that every time I hear another, that's not him. But how can I say that's not him if I spend all my time focusing on what thieves and robbers sound like? There is a time to correct error.

And if you've ever been to Jesus school, you've heard a lot of it. But you don't want the pulse of your life to be that. You want the pulse of your life to be Christ crucified.

Be addicted. So, number one, they love Jesus and his presence. Number two, they love the word of God.

And that is John 17, 17. Let me just visit this quickly before I go to number three. Regarding this statement, this prayer Jesus prays, sanctify them with your truth.

He's actually giving us the means by which God sanctifies us. So take them out of. Remember, he's praying for his disciples, his followers.

Take them out of this world. That's what the word is. And then dedicate them as holy vessels unto you.

Which is a process. What is the means by which he accomplishes that? Thy word is truth. Sanctify them by your truth.

What is the truth? Thy word is truth. Reading, digesting, and praying the scriptures is vital to living a life of Christlikeness. Which is another way of saying holiness.

Which is not a curse word. It's a wonderful thing. People who are free from sin are quite happy.

Quite happy. Sin. Habitual sin is a doorway to depression and anxiety.

It just beats you down. Jesus said, he who sins is a slave to it. We don't want to be slaves.

But love slaves. Bond slaves. Number three.

Friends of the bridegroom. Let me revisit one and two. They love Jesus and his presence.

Number two, they love the word of God. Number three, they love his church. They love his church.

Why do they love his church? Because his church is his bride. Imagine if you told a guy who is deeply in love with his wife. And let's just say you've been married for 2,000 years.

And you're aging. You're quite old at that point. Let's just say you said, I love you, but her, she drives me nuts.

My guess is he's not going to appreciate that very much. Probably not going to trust you as much. Probably not going to want to hang out with you in his spare time or let you super close.

If you want to find deep friendship with the bridegroom, you must learn to love his bride. Even if they're a little different than you. Now, here's the best part about it is they all think you are different than them.

Fall in love with his bride. And there are multiple, multiple passages. I won't give you them all right now.

I can. But the church is called the bride in the book of Revelation. Go find all these.

They're there, I promise. We see the parable of the 10 virgins. It refers to them as the virgin bride.

The entire book of the Song of Solomon is an allegory of Jesus and his church. I used to say type and shadow, but I see it differently. Type and shadow speaks of a bit more hollow nature.

An allegory is a hidden meaning within the text. It is the actual meaning. And the Shulamite here you see emerges as the bride who loves the bridegroom.

And whom the bridegroom comes looking for, listen, when it's wet outside. And he says to her through the door, open for me, my love, open. My locks are wet with the dew of night.

In other words, when the weather was bad out there, he wanted to talk to her. And he was willing to wait at the door until she opened. We see that in Revelation chapter 3. Jesus knocking at the door and he says, if any men hear, hear and open, I will come in and dine with him and he with me.

Oh, that's fellowship. I said that's fellowship. Number four, they love the lost.

They love the lost. Unfortunately, I hear a tone at times. A tone.

I'm not saying I've actually heard it just like this. But I certainly hear the tone. And it kind of sounds like it's the church versus the lost.

For the life of me, don't understand that. It is the church versus the world system, of course. But the Bible says God is not willing, Jesus speaking of his father, that any should perish.

John 3.16 is proof that he loves the lost. For God so loved the world. And again, that word so is descriptive more than it's quantitative.

It could be read like this. This is how God loved the world. By sending his one and only begotten son.

That whosoever will believe in him will not perish but have everlasting life. It's not the church versus the lost. It's the church preaching the gospel and showing the love of Jesus to the lost.

So number four, friends of the bridegroom love the lost. I'd like to add just a little side note to that point. And that would be this.

The church should not become like the lost to win the lost. There's a better way. How do you win them if you become like them? When we were living in L.A., this thing emerged in L.A. We lived in Orange County, which was much easier traffic wise.

This thing emerged in the ministry where preachers became known for the by how many famous influencers they could hang out with. So bizarre to me. And, of course, a whole generation followed them on social media and it became like their claim to fame.

This guy or girl is so and so's pastor. And what ended up happening, I watched it. I watched it for 20 years.

Literally 20 years. In the lives of my friends. Not people I don't know.

These are friends. Some of you wouldn't even know their name. Most of them.

You would not know their name. But they lived out in Orange County or L.A. They started going to nightclubs and getting VIP booths to minister to the people that they were partying with. And you gave it like 18 months to two years and the next thing you know, their family gets blown up.

The wife of the preacher is like, dude, I didn't marry you so you could be in the club every night. That was what you did before you got saved. Blew their marriage up.

And in many cases, I'm talking many, left the ministry and in some cases left the faith. I had someone tell me recently, what are you so afraid of? You need to trust people to make the right decision. I said, that's true, but I don't trust the devil.

Now, if the devil, listen, could put a wedge, listen to me carefully. If the devil could put a wedge between Adam and God, don't you think he could put a wedge between you and your destiny? I'm always amazed. And part of me laughs on the inside.

I'll hear preachers go, I ain't afraid of the devil. And I'm not saying you should be afraid of the devil. But I hear like a language and a verbiage and a vibe that comes from him.

He's under my feet. I wish he'd walk through this door. I'd put him in a headlock, roundhouse him.

He'd be out of here. Roundhouse, then headlock. I guess that'd be the more realistic progression.

But when I hear this slightedness that actually Judah dresses in his epistle, towards powers of darkness in my head, I go, you have never faced off with a true spirit of darkness. You have no clue what you're talking about. Because if you did, it's the last thing you'd want to do right now.

Now we should not be afraid or intimidated of him. But I want to let you know very clearly, you make foolish decisions, it is not the Lord's fault. The Bible says, come out from among them.

And be ye separate. Or be sanctified. Be ye holy.

Compromise, listen, compromise weakens you in your battle against the devil. So let me be very clear. Yes, love the lost.

But the greatest way to love the lost is to passionately burn in love with Jesus. And then allow his holy love to flow through you toward them. Getting hammered at night doesn't help that person come to Jesus.

Believe it or not. Maybe the gospel would do a better job. All right.

I hope you worship leaders are listening. Number five, friends of the bridegroom love family. They love family.

They honor mother and father. They love their spouse. Beyond loving Jesus, their spouse is just everything to them.

Friends of the bridegroom discover the great revelation of Jesus and his bride through their earthly marriage. And then they allow the Holy Spirit to remind them of Peter's words. If you do not treat your spouse correctly, God will not hear your prayer.

It's an amazing revelation and keeps you repenting to God and each other. I once had a preacher tell me that he did not want any children because he felt like it would slow down the ministry. And I love this person, but I said, Go have a child and your heart will blow up in the love of God and give you an entirely new perspective of ministry.

Or I can't spend time with my children because I'm busy in the ministry. See, that's what happens when you make witnessing more important than being a witness. The Bible doesn't say that the Holy Ghost will come upon us to merely witness.

The Bible says that when the Holy Ghost comes upon us, we become witnesses. We embody the life and power of the resurrected Christ. And the longer I do this, listen, the longer I do this.

So I've been full time in the ministry since 2003. Full time. I preached my first message in 1994.

I know, you're like, gosh, you are 45, yeah. That was my first message. We started with six people in my parents' school.

They had a little Christian school with six people in that school and that was my first crowd. And then in a few months we had about, I don't know, a few hundred coming. And that began my love affair with preaching the gospel.

But over the years, I have discovered and I'm still discovering the power of consistency. The power of doing a few things every day really well. And while somebody might go like this and become well known, and by the way, being well known does not, it does not mean the same thing as favor.

It does not. That's allowing worldly metrics to become our own. Here's a question.

Where did Jesus have a bigger crowd? Did he have a bigger crowd in Galilee when he was working miracles or a bigger crowd on Calvary when he was dying? Which, which one? No, not Calvary. Galilee. He had a few.

He had a crowd of enemies on Calvary. But we're talking about, in some cases, 15 to 20,000 people total just when he fed them. Which moment is more vital to our faith in eternal security? Calvary or the multiplication of food? Calvary.

I'm grateful for what he did there. I'm grateful for the miracles. I'm grateful for the healing, but make no bones about it.

Christ crucified and risen is the core and the full breadth of our faith. So was Calvary less successful than Galilee? No. Calvary plundered the underworld.

Calvary shook the heavens. Calvary caused literally the rocks to explode and the earth to quake and the sky to grow dark. Calvary purchased your soul.

Calvary destroyed the claws of the devil. Every prince in power bowed its knee. Never had they seen such a sight.

Could the God of the universe go so low? That's greatness. I said that's greatness. That's greatness.

That's what the church must embrace again. The crucified life is greatness. Lowliness is greatness.

Humility is greatness. Jesus is the first martyr, not the first superhero. He's the first one to come and die and show us, listen, the perfect revelation of God.

I want you to get that. I want you to see Calvary as being so much more than just something Jesus did. It is not just something he did.

It is who he is. You've got to get that. Let Calvary begin to frame your revelation of who God is.

This is a game changer. It will change our churches. America needs what I'm saying.

It's very commonplace to the teaching, preaching of the gospel in the Middle East and the East. That's why you get around Brother Yoon, you're like what is it on him? What is its godliness on him? It's the true character of Jesus, the true nature of Jesus. He is the lamb of God.

The lamb. Lambs come to bleed. Lambs come to die.

They give their life away. Are you following me? This is vital. It's so important to get this because this would help you when you're sitting, you're sitting at the table.

Anybody have lost family members that are just a trip to sit down and eat with at a holiday and they're just, raise your hand, and they make you laugh but make you nervous? You know those? Anybody have family

members who love to debate? All right. Well, here's one point of debate. If there's a God, why could there be suffering in the world? And the answer is very clearly, I don't know what God you're following.

This is the tree of suffering. He didn't strap a sword to his back. He carried a cross, naked up a hill.

The greatest revelation of God the world has ever known, Christ and him crucified. And this is the core of family. The core of family is laying your life down for one another.

Let's just be honest. Does it not take decades to just move a foot forward relationally? Like you look at yourself, you go, I'm the same way I was 15 years ago. In relation to your spouse or however, and you want these things to go, right? You're like, I don't like that about me.

I wish I would go. And when that's challenged, we defend ourselves. We defend the way we are.

And what we're actually doing is making paramount our defense. And I think we would go much further if we made paramount humility. Lowliness.

Amen? They love family first because, well, not before the Lord, but they understand the grand economy of God. And what I mean by that is God created family before he created ministries. And if you are grasping for self-induced, self-created promotion, and you make a way for yourself, and you don't have what I'm talking about, all that you grasp for will eventually crush you.

I've seen it. I mentioned this earlier. I've seen guys I started off with or knew years ago, and they would, some would skyrocket, some wouldn't.

But then there was this consistency in something. They just did the same old thing over and over again because they had a different value system. If your value system is being known, you will do whatever you have to do to be known, even if you go on a trip that God's not telling you to go on.

If the voice of Jesus is success to you, if obedience is success, you will find his presence at the table with your family. And if he says go, you will have a grace on you to go that makes no sense to those who never go. It's obedience that matters.

Say this out loud. I do not have to lose my family to please the Lord. God, say this, God created family before he created ministry.

I can and I will, by God's grace, serve the Lord in my family and my assignment. Amen. Amen.

Number six, they love to worship. Friends of the bridegroom love to worship. And that's Luke chapter 10, the great story of Mary of Bethany.

There is Jesus sitting and Mary's sitting at his feet. Well, let's just read it. You know when you read scripture, the reading of it alone is powerful.

Luke 10, 38, this is probably, oh gosh, it's up there for me. It's one of my favorite portions of the whole Bible. House of Bethany was named after this passage.

Now it happened as they went that he entered a certain village. A certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.

Those two go hand in hand, by the way. If you sit in his presence, you must love his word. Verse 40, but Martha was distracted with much serving.

And she approached him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me. And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha. Oh man, when he says it twice.

You are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed. Say one thing.

And Mary has chosen that good part. Say this, say I must choose. That one thing.

You have to choose that. Mary has chosen that good part and it will not be taken away from her. Worship, hear me well.

Worship is never a waste of time. It came to me that somebody said once about our students, they just sit and worship all day. I'm thinking, well, we actually teach the Bible, but we've discovered how to worship and preach at the same time.

It's quite powerful. It's actually the biblical way. Paul said, I shared the gospel with you through my priestly ministry.

That's another teaching. The devil is after busying you so that you forget to worship. Because he wants you to be troubled about many things.

Trouble and multiplicity are walk hand in hand. Have you ever been overwhelmed because you are just thinking about Jesus too much? I'm just thinking all day long and it's just such a burden. I just can't worship this much.

I don't know what to do. It's just so stressful. I need counseling.

Oh, what's wrong? I can't stop worshipping. I've never heard that. When someone's troubled, usually I'll say what's up and I get 15 things.

We all do it. And the whole time the Lord's saying, one thing's needed. One thing's needed.

One thing's needed. I'm right here. I haven't moved.

Busyness deafens the heart. It just deafens the heart and you can't hear the invitation until finally, eventually, the Lord waits on you to slow down and he goes, I'm right here. I haven't moved.

I haven't gone anywhere. It's never a waste of time to worship. Listen, it is the nature of the bride.

She loves to worship. You say, well, what about the go? What about going out to preach? Of course, but she worships while she's doing it. And when you worship while you're working, he's actually working through you and you don't lose your reward.

If you do it the other way, you become an employee and then you gain a complex about yourself and your mighty ministry. And you start believing that the reason people get touched by Jesus is because your messages are so awesome. It is not by might.

I said it is not by might. It's still not. Not by power.

It's by my spirit, sayeth the Lord. And the greatest way to impact people while you're preaching the gospel is to have the heart connected to the Lord. Your heart can sing a song while you're walking them down the Roman's road of salvation.

It's a powerful, powerful thing. Number seven. Is all this okay? The friends of the bridegroom love the cross.

They love his cross. Say this out loud. Say Jesus.

Give me a greater revelation of your cross. Say it again. Jesus.

Give me a greater revelation of your cross. First Corinthians two verse one. But I determined this within myself that I would not come again to you in sorrow for if I make you sorrowful.

Listen carefully. For if I make you sorrowful then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? Listen up. Let me keep reading.

And I wrote this very thing to you lest when I come I should have sorrow over those whom I ought to have joy having confidence in you. All. Oh sorry, this is second Corinthians.

I'm reading you second Corinthians. Forgive me. I want you to hear the posture of Paul's heart.

This is verse four. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears not that you should be grieved but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you. Jess and I were talking about this yesterday.

It was three days ago. Why Paul even had to write this letter. We see this amazing man and then obviously first Corinthians too talks about him only knowing the cross.

But we see this amazing man here in second Corinthians having to defend himself to people he loved. It's heartbreaking. He's almost having to prove himself to listen to people he birthed in the Lord.

And he actually says that. You don't have many teachers or you don't have many fathers. You have teachers but I birthed you in the gospel.

If anyone could have said I don't need to explain myself to you. Leave. It was Paul.

But what in him what in him would cause him to go gosh I've been beaten, shipwrecked, striped. I've worked with my hands. I never took anything from you.

I'm jealous for you. I want you. You say I'm weak in words.

In person you say I'm weak but that I'm only mighty from a distance. What would cause a father to actually open his heart in such a way? The life of the cross. Weakness.

Meekness. I said this last week. The meek are promised the earth because God trusts the meek.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Well have you ever have you ever not been meek in an argument? Okay what did you get from that? You won the argument maybe. So congratulations you won.

And you'll forget about it in two days. You don't get a trophy for I won my argument with Aaron. You don't get a medal.

But if you're meek you get the earth in the age to come. Which one do you want? Do you want a pat on the back? Do you want to be right? Or do you want to be entrusted in the age to come? Do you know Paul tells the Corinthians I cannot believe you're suing one another. Gosh Christendom could learn something there.

And he says you can't settle disputes. You have to go to the world to settle arguments. And I love this.

I love what he says after that. Don't you know you're gonna judge angels? I would have added you bozos. You can't settle an argument and you're gonna judge angels one day.

What's he saying? You are supposed to be learning how to live in the age to come. And you're mad somebody stole two pounds of hummus from you. And you're arguing over it.

Or there's a bad business deal. And you go at it with one another and then you call in the world to settle these disputes that are meant for the church. And what he's trying to say is don't you realize the dispute itself is training? Go with it.

And then he said it's just better to be cheated. It's better to throw in the towel like a lamb. Then you gain lamb likeness.

Or meekness. And then you're entrusted with the earth in the age to come. Amazing.

I said amazing. So now if you go to 1 Corinthians 2 you're gonna realize why Paul could even talk like this. And I brethren when I came to you did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

He's saying I didn't come as a great orator or a great communicator. For I determined not to know. That's interesting language.

I determined not to know something. Okay. I determined not to know anything among you except Christ and him crucified.

Now you're gonna hear in verse 3 what we just read about in 2 Corinthians. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. God would rather you show up in weakness than in independence.

In natural strength. In earthly strength. Or in pride.

Come in weakness. A gentle answer. A gentle response.

Turns away wrath. I want you to notice that Paul determined to know nothing except Christ and him crucified. Hold on.

That means that you must determine to know zero if you want the revelation of Christ crucified. If you don't see listen if you don't see in your Christian perspective Christ crucified buried and risen it's not Christian. Throw it out.

If you have all this you have this massive Christian duffel bag which is what we oh man we have a pod at this point. Seriously the church should own storage units of all this stuff that is more than peripheral. It's so

fringe I can't even I don't even know what to call it.

And it's all part of our Christian experience our Christian language our Christian culture our verbiage is all part of it. And then someone comes around and goes hey you know this thing is about the Lord Jesus and you go uh huh that happened to me at the altar. I've moved on to deeper more spiritual things like revival and the move of God.

Uh huh Jesus crucified and risen. I got that. It took me like 5 minutes and I extracted all the nectar from the wonder of the crucified lamb who by the way is the centerpiece of worship in heaven but I got it all at the altar.

And now I'm into the other stuff. Don't you find it amazing that Paul explains the spiritual gifts to the Corinthians in 1st Corinthians. He goes in detail explaining it all and then he finally comes to chapter 15 and he says and now let me remind you of the gospel I preached to you that Jesus Christ died for your sins according to the scriptures.

That he was buried that he was raised according to the scriptures. Why do you think he said that? He did not want them to get tripped up on the work of the ministry and the gifts of the spirit though he told them to earnestly desire them. He still brought them back to everything which is Christ and him crucified.

Amen. So number seven they love his cross. Lastly lastly I led perfectly into this thank you Holy Spirit we can trust him they love his death burial and resurrection.

They love his death burial and resurrection. Say that death burial resurrection. Say it again death burial resurrection.

And that's 1 Corinthians 15 I've read it to you before but let's read it one more time. Then we'll receive communion and we'll dismiss. Is this helping you? Moreover brethren I love that.

Moreover brethren is like let's let's get this straight here. I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you which also you received and in which you stand. Let me stop there.

The tragic indictment of many of our circles in the church is that we have relegated the preaching of the gospel to the moment of the altar call. Forfeiting our power. And we've substituted the glory of the Father's only sermon for self-help motivational topical series that we actually plan out a year in advance.

And we craft those series around your taste buds. What do they like? What do the people want? What do they respond to? How do I choose my guest speaker? Well I guess I'll choose the guest speaker who gets the biggest turnout. Where do I get the best feedback? What message do I preach that gives me the most views and downloads? Without knowing it you share this with your staff and that becomes your staff-wide conversations.

We're going to hit it this week in a very loving, healthy way. The next thing you know your staff, without knowing is doing everything to make people happy. Weakening their souls in the hour where our souls need to be the strongest.

Do you realize we are in the 11th hour? You can't hunt elephants with BB guns. Come on. I remember this guy was saying I'm storing 22 shells in canned goods.

It's like three years ago. Him and all his buddies were doing it. A friend of mine goes wait, what size rounds are you storing? It was 22s.

And he's like and who do you think you're going to shoot with that? And he named a specific army. He's like his army and they're going to come and they're going to do this and that. And he goes if that army comes they're dropping bombs.

Your 22 is going to do nothing. It's going to ricochet off anything you shoot at except flesh. But you're not shooting a 22 at a fighter jet.

And that's what's happening in the church. If you can describe messages and your view of Christianity is not rooted and grounded and full of and pulsating and bleeding out Christ crucified and risen you are not bleeding Christianity. You're just not.

Now you might be into spiritualism motivationalism with some moralism mixed in. And you might be super encouraging and you might be coaching people along. There's a time to help and coach people.

I'm not knocking it up but I just want to be really clear. We stand on Jesus Christ crucified buried risen exalted and returning. That's what we do.

And Paul says here I'm going to share this with you because I preached it to you you received it then look at verse 1 and it's this by which you stand. The gospel doesn't get me saved only it is the gospel the revelation of Jesus that causes me to stand in my Christian life not merely invite me into my Christian life. By which also you are saved if you hold fast the word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried and that he rose again on the third day according to the scriptures and that he was seen by Cephas that's Peter or Kepha is another way to say it Kepha then by the twelve and after that he was seen by over 500 men at once of whom the greater part remain to this present but some have fallen asleep and after that he was seen by James then by all the apostles I love this verse right here then last of all he was seen by me as one born out of due time for I am the least of the apostles who is not worthy to even be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God but by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me was not in vain but I labored more abundantly than they all I love that he said I'm not even worthy to be called one but I labored more abundantly than all of them yet not I and this is the secret but the grace of God which was with me therefore whether it was I or they so we preach and so you believe

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