

Friends of the Bridegroom (Pt. 5)

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the importance of cultivating a deep friendship with Jesus through prayer, speech, and spiritual fruitfulness.

Duration: 35:49

Scripture: Genesis 5:24, Genesis 6:9, Exodus 33:11, Leviticus 10:1-3, Isaiah 6:1-7, Matthew 12:34, Luke 6:45, John 15:15

Topics: "Bridegroom", "Friendship with God", "The Power of Words"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the significance of being a friend of the bridegroom, urging believers to cultivate a deep relationship with Jesus through prayer and the Word. He highlights that true friendship with God is demonstrated through our words and actions, as they reflect the condition of our hearts. Koulianos warns against gossip and negativity, asserting that our speech should be a testament to our intimacy with Christ. He encourages the congregation to seek a genuine encounter with God, which will transform their lives and produce Christ-like fruit. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to holiness and a deeper awareness of God's presence in our daily lives.

Transcript

Okay, friends of the bridegroom, let's pray. Holy Spirit, help me there, Joel. Would y'all pray in the Spirit just for 10, 20 seconds? 20 seconds.

Thank you, Lord. Praise you, Jesus. Come on, pray out loud.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Now, just keep praying. Now, Holy Spirit, I ask in Jesus' mighty name that the word of God would be seared in our soul, that you'd renew our mind and feed our spirit, and that even our bodies, Lord, would live in divine health because your word brings health in life. It is health to our bones and health to our flesh.

Quicken us today in Jesus' name. Amen, amen, amen. All right.

Say this out loud. I long to be a friend of the bridegroom. Say it again.

I long to be a friend of the bridegroom. One more time. I long to be a friend of the bridegroom.

Now, say this. Forgive me for lying if I don't. If you prayed in an art longing, the Lord may forgive you.

Okay. I want you to go to John 15 and go to verse 15. You happy today? Yes.

Okay. Verse 15, no longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends. Listen carefully now.

For all things that I heard from my father, I have made known to you. Say this. His voice to me is a sign of his friendship with me.

The people you are closest to and trust the most are the ones you share the most with. Keep that in mind. Exodus 33, verse 11.

Turn there. Go, go, go. I want you to get to know your Bible.

Just hang a hard left. Just hang a hard left. Hang a hard left.

I remember years ago, my father-in-law was doing a Bible study on Monday nights in California when we lived there and there was a pastor who used to sit next to me and he asked the pastor to read the verses. He used to do that back then. He'd have like three people read the verses because it helps it go quicker.

And this guy struggled to find one of the minor prophets. I think it was Habakkuk. And the guy was like flipping left, flipping right, couldn't find it.

He's like, I know, it's close. And Pastor Benny's like, just waiting. And finally he goes, how can you be a preacher and you don't know where Habakkuk is? It's a great way to grow up, I tell you.

Verse 11. So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face. Wow.

As a man speaketh to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of none, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle. Say face to face.

Face to face. There you go. Genesis five, verse 24.

Move left, still. Genesis five, 24, listen. And Enoch walked with God.

Wow. How's that for your resume? What if that came through the email? Somebody looking for a job, resume. He walked with God.

That's pretty good. And Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him. Hebraically, some of the picturesque nature of the Hebrew language can imply in that text that God took him as a man takes his wife.

Or as a wife takes the husband. It's a marital vow. Do you take this man or woman to be your lawful wedded husband or wife? So here we see Enoch walking with God in such a way that the Lord says, I can't wait a few thousand years.

Get up here now. And he was not. Yeah, we got up our game.

Genesis six, nine. Now before we read Genesis six, nine, I just wanna say to you, I felt prompted by the Spirit to do this right now. If you get what I'm talking about, not only will your dreams come true, God will

do so much with your life that you wouldn't have been able to ask for it even if you could.

If this becomes your goal, God is going to blow you away with what he'll do with your life. Because there are many, many voices and very few friends. Genesis six, nine.

This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

Here we hear that again. Say, I wanna walk with God. No.

Now go to Matthew 12, verse 34. Now you go right. Matthew 12, verse 34.

So what we've established here is that proximity and voice speak greatly regarding our friendship with the Lord. If we walk with him and he speaks with us, that is an awesome sign. What we've also established is some walk closer than others and some hear more than others.

That's that whole Mark four teaching I've done here. Take heed what you hear for by the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. The context is hearing.

So the ones who walk the closest and hear the most are the closest. We love to hear that all of us are just as close as the other with the Lord and that God has no favorites. I think we're confusing that with being a respecter of persons.

But if the Lord has no favorites, then how can he bestow favor? Because the favorites carry favor. He said of David, he's a man after my own heart. He said of Abraham, there was nobody else like him.

How can I judge Sodom and not talk to him about it, right? So certainly some people walk much more closely with Jesus than others. Now all of us have the opportunity. I said all of us have the opportunity.

I'm gonna say it again until that gets in you. All of us have the opportunity to walk with Jesus should you want to and I highly recommend it. But now let's talk about the fruit in a life that claims to be a friend of the bridegroom.

Matthew 12, 34. You ready for this? Don't you love the Lord? Look how this begins. Brood of vipers.

I'm leaving that church. Has a pastor ever called you a brood of vipers? Jesus here calls them a brood of vipers. Listen, how can you being evil speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, here we go, get this, the mouth speaks.

My words are an indicator of my heart. Well, now you're freaked out. Now you're freaked out because you should be.

For you to say, well, I said that, especially if you say it consistently, but my heart is pure, it's a lie. Well, words are a revelation of the heart. So if somebody has a talking issue, they have a heart issue.

Now, when you put on a display and a facade, at times you can kind of breach the flow of what's really in the heart. But what I can promise you, like if you came to Jesus School, for instance, you would do that well for like maybe the first two weeks. But if you sit under that worship and the word and stuff starts getting unearthed, and then you're in a comfortable setting in your presence groups, those are smaller groups that meet, how many times a week, once or twice? You really just can't hide it long.

Because God's presence is a light. He's a light. And the best thing you can do is repent when that's revealed rather than try to hide it.

So I have really struggled, like eventually, I'm good to talk to people for a while, but eventually our convos get to Jesus. And I used to be embarrassed of that until a leader go, I love, a leader said, I love that you talk about Jesus all the time. That means that's burning in your heart.

So I think, one of my kids walked in today when I was getting ready, and they said, what are you gonna preach on? And in my head, I thought, how long shall I suffer? How long have I been with you? I thought to myself, you know what I said? I'm gonna preach on, I just wanted to see what they do. I'd say, I said, I'm preaching on squirrels. And their kids were walking, and then it stopped, he goes, squirrels? I said, what do you think I'm preaching on? Jesus.

Well, when the Lord is on your heart, you're gonna speak of him. Ah. All right, give me permission, just say please.

All right, now I feel better, so you can't get mad at me. If the Lord is on your mind, you'll speak of him. If you're gossiping, it's proof that he's not in your heart and not on your mind.

Well, not that he's not in your heart. It's proof that you've turned your attention away and that your thoughts are not on him. And so here, Jesus is going, of course you speak the way you do, you brood of vipers, because your heart is dirty.

Luke 6, 45, go there. Can I have a few extra minutes? Come on, are we gonna need a double dose because of last week? Hopefully you're hungry for the word. Luke 6, 45, a good man, listen, out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil.

For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. Now notice what the Lord's saying here. He's calling speaking, bringing forth.

That's how to look at this passage, contextually. He's saying when you talk, you are bringing something forth. You may not be able to see the words, but they are creative in nature or deconstructive in nature or destructive in nature.

When you talk, something is coming forth. Now I love what Bill said. I thought this was so powerful.

If thanksgiving gives me an audience with the Lord, who does complaining give me an audience with? Oh, I'm glad he said that. He said it and not me, but I'm glad you just heard it. You complain around me long enough, you won't be around me very long.

I'll walk you through it for like 15 minutes, but if you're gonna live a life of complaining, you will not be my friend. I don't have time for it. I have a lot to complain about, but I have a lot to rejoice about.

And the same with you. You actually, listen, you actually get to choose who you hang out with and who you listen to. I don't care if you're related.

I don't care if it's your culture to whine. I don't care if that's just what we've always done in our family. Shut it down.

You want an audience with demons? Well then don't do it. Jesus didn't say you company of people on a journey. He said you brood of vipers.

You ever seen a brood of vipers? It's a cluster of them in a dark pit. He said that's what you are. And so in Luke six, it takes it a step further and illustrates that to speak is to bring forth.

Talk about Jesus properly with a heart connected to him, he'll come. If you were to say what's been one of the keys to meetings filled with the presence of God? Worshiping Jesus, preaching his word, and being aware of him and talking to him. And he just starts coming because he has ears.

And he hears it when his name is called with a heart that really burns for him. You need both. So maybe you ask what's the big deal with just saying a few things? My heart is pure.

Well, your word issue is a heart issue. And why is this important to be a friend of the bridegroom? Well, if you wanna be his friend, you must learn to tame the tongue. If you speak of encounter and your tongue has not been tamed, you need another encounter.

I think one of the most marking things that has happened to me since that Friday night at the pastor's conference is the awareness that he's there. I've been overshadowed with the awareness of the Lord's presence since that Friday night. I don't know how to explain it.

Dave Papavisi texted me this morning. I thought this was so powerful. He asked me, what has shifted since that Friday night? What is the fruit of this move of the Holy Spirit? And I answered, a habitual awareness of his presence throughout the day and a deep desire to feed on his word and respond with worship.

A boldness to declare his will regardless of pushback and at the same time, a broken lowliness. He said, what else? I said, at the end of the day, it's his presence quickening us all. We find less and less to glory in it seems.

He goes, that certainly sounds like a move of God in the midst of his people. Say amen. Amen.

But what I've been stricken with is this awareness of his presence and the fact that he's listening to what I say. I don't know how else to say it. And I've never, I don't ever curse.

I would never say those, like I don't talk like the world. I joke all the time, but I just think that's horrible and if something like that comes on, it gets turned off. You cannot steward the move of the presence of the Spirit in a manifest measure in your home and you be lackadaisical regarding what you allow to come through a screen.

And any teaching that says you can and claims position to justify it is to prostitute the position and negate the beauty of encounter. It's called using God. Well, I can do this because I'm under the new covenant.

And the reason you shouldn't do it is because you're under the new covenant. And so in Isaiah's vision, something happens. And you have to understand why one of the reasons this is so important to me, because in our world, I am surrounded by people who tell me I'm shutting away to pray, I'm spending time with the Lord, I am in his word and I'm having dreams and visions and encounters.

I say, okay. And then instantly, as a pastor, I'm looking for fruit. So if you're becoming more and more sinful, and claiming encounter, I'm gonna question it.

Unapologetically. You can't have a team in this environment and not do that. Do you follow me? So all of us need to be looking for fruit in our own lives, in the lives of our families, especially in this type of environment where we long for the presence of Jesus and a highly valued prayer.

But if our prayer lives are not birthing a more and more Christ-like nature, in us, our prayer lives need help. And that's not an indictment. It's just to say, we need help.

What are you really doing in that room? Do you know what you're doing in that room? There's a difference between waiting, for instance, and napping to music. Now we've all done it. Somebody said, what happened? I'll never forget our first year.

He goes, I'm still like, I wanna seek him. Come on, they're the best, the first years. I wanna seek him, but I'm just, I'm so tired in the morning.

I've never been an early morning guy, and I'm more of a night guy. And I go, uh-huh, uh-huh. But the biblical pattern is morning.

And I can tell they're always waiting for me to go, well, God, why are you differently? And I never do that. I always go, turn in your Bible. And then they go, I said, well, what's the fear that you get up and seek the Lord? They go, one of them goes.

Which is, what do I do if I fall asleep? And I say, you wake up and keep going. Do you think God would rather you fall asleep in prayer or stay sleeping in the bed? Do you think he's freaked out if you just doze off for a moment? No. So you wanna look for markers for people who claim intimacy with God.

Markers. Here's one of them. Isaiah 6, one.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. Wow. Sitting on a throne.

High and lifted up. And the train of his robe filled the temple. So now you're gaining a majesty for Jesus being disrobed, stripped naked, and receiving the purple robe of mockery.

You realize what he traded? Above it stood seraphim. Each one had six wings, with two he covered his face. That is basically the Lord's way of making sure that Isaiah did not glory in the angelic.

In other words, the angels are going, don't look at us. I'm not even gonna tell you what I look like. With two, they covered their feet.

Speaking of the purity and the walk of holiness. With two, they flew, speaking of a life of ascending worship. And one cried to another and said, listen.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Behold, earth is filled with his glory. Which is another invitation to live a thankful life rather than a complaining life.

Notice, it was clear to Isaiah that heaven was filled with the glory of God, but the seraphs say, you know what? Put your head on a swivel, Isaiah, and say, I can see the work of God on the earth. Look at creation, look at the goodness of the Lord. Don't get, he's saying the glory of God's being manifested all around you.

Verse four, and the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out. And the house was filled with smoke. And listen to Isaiah's response.

So I said, woe is me, for I am undone. For I am undone. That's what the presence of God does to us.

I've known such moments. Not like as glorious as this, but I've known such moments where somebody would say, what happened? I'd say, I don't know. How do you feel? I'm undone, I've been unraveled.

I've been short-circuited. He went deep, he touched me deep. He grabbed me in the deepest places that I didn't even know I had.

Messed me up. I talked to Michael Miller last night. He said, I still haven't recovered from that Friday night.

He said, and the Lord's glory came to the upper room that following Sunday. He said, I flew home and they started worshipping and the Lord just filled the upper room. He goes, he said, I'll never forget leaving worship to go use the restroom that Friday night at the pastor's conference.

And I used the restroom and I come back in right when that wave of worship hit the building. He goes, I fell on my face when I opened the door. He said, I didn't even get near my seat.

I didn't even get close to my row. The moment I opened the door from backstage, I felt the presence of God. I hit a wall of presence and fell on the ground worshipping.

And then last night he goes, and I still have a rug burn on my head. Woe is me, for I am undone. Because, listen, I'm a man of unclean lips.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Notice that the first thing that's being targeted here is what do you talk about? I'm a man of unclean lips, and that's connected to his vision of the Lord. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

And then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And what did he do? He touched my mouth with it. And said, behold, this has touched your lips, your iniquity is taken away.

Do you know what iniquity is? Inner sin, iniquity. That's why Jesus was bruised for our iniquity. He bled internally for internal sin.

But from God's perspective, the lips are connected to the internal life. Because it's from the abundance of the heart. The mouth speaks.

Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged. Let me just read one more passage to you. I'm gonna need next week too.

But don't worry, we're gonna talk about Jesus until we die, and then we're gonna do it in heaven. So, and we're gonna do it through the scriptures in heaven too. So if we don't finish it all on earth, perhaps the Lord will give me a Bible study in heaven to lead.

Not that you'd want to be part of mine up there, but I'd be happy to help. All right, let me knock this quote out real quick, then we'll receive communion. You've heard it once before, but I want you to hear it again.

Criticism, or criticizing that which we have no God-given authority in is a sin that is hated by God. This destroys churches and brings division. And destroys families.

It often shrouds itself in kindness, in tears, in concern. And what seems to look and sound spiritual, and often begins with this statement, have you discerned? I would love to lovingly invite you that if you're gonna take that route, rather than say I'm concerned or have you discerned, to just begin your statement with, I'm about to gossip to you. And then I'd like to give you full permission to be a powerful Christian and shut it down, rebuke it in love, use the Scriptures, and say find somebody else to gossip to.

Okay, because if your unity, you say, well, what about unity? Your unity depends on Jesus. The presence of Jesus is what and who unites us. So it's only when we live in the light, in fellowship, John's epistle tells us, in fellowship with the Lord, that we have fellowship with one another.

Our fellowship with one another depends on our fellowship with Jesus. And what I wanna say unequivocally is that if you gossip, you are joining the other side. And you are breaking down the beauty of fellowship.

Shut it down. Now if God's given you authority, now look, if you're part of a structure and there's sin, and it's damaging, you're a powerful person. You have a choice to leave it, report it, all that.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about judging brothers and sisters in areas that we all need to be judged in. All right, let me read this to you, and I promise we're done.

Leviticus 10.1. Now remember what they said at the wedding, Feast of Cana. I'm gonna spiritualize the fact that I've gone a little long this morning. It's an old pastoral trick.

Here it goes. The best wine is saved for last when Jesus is at the wedding feast. Leviticus 10.1. The Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, so they're sons of the high priest, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them.

So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them. That's pleasant. And they died before the Lord.

The Lord wouldn't kill anyone. He sure would. And Moses said to Aaron, this is what the Lord spoke, saying, by those who come near me, I must be regarded as holy.

And before all the people, I must be glorified. God saw this judgment as a method of glorification. Or I should say, not glorification, as bringing glory to his name.

So Aaron held his peace. These are his sons who died. And Aaron wouldn't speak up.

And then Moses called Mishael and Elzophan, the sons of Uziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, and Moses, as Moses had said, and Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, do not uncover your heads, nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord has kindled.

You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. In other words, you don't get to mourn this one. For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.

And they did according to the word of Moses. What happened here? Two sons thought that they got preferential treatment. And they decided that they were anointed.

They decided that they were ready for something God had not given them. And they copied, listen, they copied their father perfectly. Perfectly.

Did everything he did. They saw the high priest offer fire in, I grew up with these, they're little incense burners, and the fragrance would go up, speak of the intercession of the church and the nature of the Lord. And they said, we're just gonna do what our father did.

But here's the problem. God had not entrusted them yet. Now, you've heard me tell you many times, we don't call ourselves.

Of course, we all have permission in the Great Commission. Yes, go preach the gospel. Yes, there are basics to the Christian life, of course.

But it's very dangerous when somebody whispers in your ear before God is whispering, hey, they don't see your gift. In fact, this would be one of the most consistent things that happens when someone gets totally pushed away from the perfect destiny of God. Someone goes, they're blind.

Do you know how anointed you are? Here's another one. You built this thing. Oh yeah.

Or if you go, the whole thing collapses. That's called idolatry. I will build my church.

I, me, Jesus. I will build my church and the gates of hell won't prevail against it. A million pastors could fall tomorrow.

The church is moving forward. So it starts like that. And then you end up like Nain, Dab and Abihu.

You go, well, I didn't dig it out of the dirt like my dad. I didn't dig my own well, but I can copy what he did. So I'll just get my own incense and my own burner and I'll walk into the presence like only my dad is supposed to.

And they offered fire, but the scripture says it was profane. That means God does not accept all ministry. Even if you do it identical to the person next to you.

It's not about the method, it's about being entrusted. Now, what did they offer? Say fire. What consumed them? What you offer wrongfully out of God's timing will ultimately be the method and the means by which your legs are broken from under you.

And the Lord said, I must be regarded as holy to Moses. In other words, me building me and promoting me is unholy. So the next time somebody comes to you and says, or you, you, feel like you're not being used enough, the best thing you can say is, this is the Lord's house, not mine.

But notice, help me there, Joel. Notice, I don't know if I wanna say that. I will say it.

Notice the Lord tells the Levites when he addresses Korah, and this is what I'll read next week. He goes, you want to do what Moses does? And the Lord says to Korah's clan, was it not enough to be a priest? In other words, for us today, what's that mean? If we want more, and the Lord often says, wait, isn't it enough to walk into my presence and sit at the seat and worship me? Because do you know who belongs to the

priests? The Lord is their inheritance. It's a ploy from the devil.

We are train wrecked inside when we don't get what we want the whole time we have everything. The Lord is our portion.

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