

Friends of the Bridegroom (Pt. 6)

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the necessity of prioritizing God's presence and humility in ministry over mere attendance and personal ambition.

Duration: 38:05

Scripture: Numbers 16:1

Topics: "Bridegroom", "Humility", "The Presence of God"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the importance of honoring God's presence over the idol of time management in church services, arguing that the feelings of the Holy Spirit should take precedence over the comfort of attendees. He warns against the spirit of Korah, which seeks power and recognition, and stresses that true ministry is about serving rather than seeking a platform. Koulianos calls for a lifestyle of faithfulness that prioritizes the glory of God and encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with Him in the secret place. He highlights the need for humility and the dangers of rebellion against God's appointed authority, reminding the congregation that true growth comes from being in the presence of God rather than merely filling seats.

Transcript

All right, go to number 16. Anytime you go to numbers, you're like he didn't call light, yeah. Go to number 16, verse 1. You know, last week I actually apologized for keeping you and I just want to say I'll never do that again.

The Lord really convicted me and people are being ministered to and I'm just not going to do that again. So, I love having you here but we follow the Holy Spirit and to me it's been a massive idol that's been presented to the church that maybe started off with a good heart to reach people but then became an idol in that the feelings of people became more paramount than the feelings of the Holy Spirit. And so we timed everything and we didn't but the church did.

I'll never forget a man sat, a very famous guy sat down and started talking to me about a friend of his who's super famous that you would all know. Even if I just said his first name, you would know it. And he said, do you know what he told me the secret to their services are? Because their church was exploding.

I said, what? He said that their meetings are only 70 minutes. And so let me say off the bat, I've said this before. Long meetings that are not anointed are torture.

So it doesn't mean that a long meeting is godly. Until all the BKs, you have great vivid memories or those of you who grew up in church. But to think that a pastor of great stature would glory in the time and not the move of the spirit and the teaching of the scriptures is a plague.

And that thing needs to be uprooted. An American church life, if we cannot sit in the presence of God, stop praying for revival. Because you are signing up for it.

Okay, that was the nice part. That being said, we are stepping into something here as a church that we've never stepped into. I've never felt a glory like that that last night at the pastor's conference.

I've never seen anything like that. My father-in-law called us again last night and he's been in some incredible meetings. He said, I've never experienced anything like that.

Never in my life. Just the reality of the Lord's presence, the beauty of his presence. And then Sunday morning, Steph came out here that following Sunday and just wept and it was anointed.

That's when you know you're a good worship leader. And then that night, we just tabernacled with the Lord. And I told my friends, I think when I went out to Reading, I told Bill and Bethel, the entire church, I said, I honestly believe, had I told that Sunday night crowd that night that we will be here for three days, y'all would have stayed.

And that's the grace of the Holy Spirit ensuring that the Lamb of God receives the worth and the honor that's due his name. This is very important. It's very sacred.

And so what we need is a lifestyle as a church. Listen carefully. That proves us faithful before heaven so that we do not lose the glory of God.

I'm speaking beyond gifting. And I'm speaking beyond anointing. And I'm speaking beyond attendance.

I think we've confused church growth with church attendance. The two are not the same. It's possible to fill seats and not fill heaven.

And I'm not interested in the former. Do you follow me? I want the glory of God. And so if God has called you here, you may not even know you want the presence of the Lord, but you do.

And that's where we're going. That's where we're going. If I have to do it alone in my room with Ryan playing the box drum like we all started, he couldn't even play the cajon.

He just jumped up there and started doing it, right? If we have to go back to that, that's where we're going. So I want the scriptures to help point us, to challenge us, to purify us, to sanctify us so that we can continue to walk in a greater presence of the Lord. Amen? Number 16-1.

Now Korah, the son of Ishar. Korah is Moses' cousin, by the way. The son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan, Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peled, sons of Reuben, took men.

And they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel. And 250 leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown, they gathered together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, you take too much upon yourselves. Listen carefully.

In other words, you think you're better than you are. In other words, you are functioning in a weight of authority that doesn't belong to you. You take too much upon yourselves for all the congregation is holy.

In other words, you don't get to lead us. We all are holy, which is true, but it's a perversion of the text. Every Christian is made holy by Jesus.

And you also grow in holiness, which, by the way, is the point of the Christian life. Holiness is beautiful. I said holiness is beautiful.

Rather than build ministries, we should cry out to be saintly. I'll leave it there. All of the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.

In other words, it's not just you. Look at all of us. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? It's so interesting.

If they even knew their cousin, they would know he would never ask for the job that God gave him. So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face and he spoke to Korah and all his company saying, tomorrow morning, I love this. He's like, I'm not going to defend myself.

Tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is his and who is holy and will cause him to come near him. In other words, the test is not what you're saying right now, Korah. The test and the proof of who's walking in with God will be settled in the presence of God.

Let me give you a modern day vernacular. If you've got it like that, show up tomorrow in the glory and we'll see who survives. And he put the test on the Lord.

He refused to defend himself. He put the test on the Lord. So parents, when your authority is challenged, realize that God has given it to you and the house is not meant to be a democracy.

You're welcome. We'll receive the offering later. The one whom he chooses, he will cause to come near him.

Notice the reward is a greater proximity and a closer nearness. Do this. Take censors, Korah and all your company, put fire in them and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow.

In other words, do what we do. We'll both do the same thing. And it shall be that the man whom the Lord chooses is the Holy One.

You take, and then he turns it on them. You take. Too much upon you, sons of Levi.

Listen now. Listen carefully. This is for us.

Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the entire congregation of Israel? So remember, Israel's about three million people at the time, which is the size of the Orlando metroplex. A big city. Now the Levites that Korah was a part of, the tribe of Levi, had been set aside to minister to the Lord.

And so what Moses is saying here is, hold on a minute. You've been separated as Levites. That's not enough for you? You're the one who's taking too much upon yourselves to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to serve them.

And that he has brought you near to himself, you and all your brethren. Listen. The sons of Levi with you.

Oh, this is so powerful, this next part. And you are seeking the priesthood also? In other words, you want more? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord. And what is Aaron that you complain against him? What a good brother.

He ends it with, don't touch my brother. Let me stop here for a moment. The Bible says that we have become a kingdom of priests.

A kingdom of priests. Notice it's both. It's a kingdom of priests.

If you preach kingdom without priestly ministry, you begin to preach conquest. And it's not biblical Christianity. We are here to take over society.

You can do that on your best day. On your best day. And you actually justify all you do.

I'm not talking to you directly unless it fits. You justify all you do and call it all sacred. Even if you're not engaged with the presence of God while you do it.

And so everything is just the same. And so rather than washing the feet of the mayor, you argue with the mayor. Rather than serve your city, you start to do these wild prayer meetings and start cursing your city.

You follow all of them on Facebook. Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about. And you subscribe to their channels and build them up.

And it sounds mighty and bold. It's just not the nature of the Lamb. Did you ever see Paul doing that? What did Paul preach when he stood before Felix? What did Paul preach when he stood before Herod? He preached the gospel.

Not his agenda. You see the highest place here, listen carefully, the highest place I should say in the spirit is the lowest place here. So Moses is here saying, hey Korah, you've already been separated.

You've been chosen. And now you want our job? In other words, you have a satisfaction problem, Korah. You're acting like you're all about Yahweh.

But you're all about you. You want more power, Korah. You want your brother's job.

You say, why is this important in such an atmosphere like this? Because that spirit of Korah that cries out for more attention, more platform time. Whoa, whoa, whoa, I felt that one. I'm gonna say it again.

More platform time. More time up here. As though God's eyes only see the platform and that He's blinded to your ministry from the seeds.

More notoriety. More favor. I'll never forget somebody who used to come to our school said, I go to so and so church now because the pastor remembered my name.

I thought, that's because you wore a name tag. It's really easy. They just look down and say hi and then look up real quick like you're not looking at the name tag and the people feel really special.

What undergirds all that stuff? The reality that people want influence and proximity to people they look up to. It's idolatry. I told you.

Swing on the sword. Do you remember what Jeremy preached that Sunday night? If you haven't watched it, go back and watch his session from the pastor's conference as well on building a house of worship, the glory of the priesthood. If anything hit the room that Sunday night when Miss Kathy led, it was this, the people, you stepped in to a ministry that God has given you.

You felt like she was leading you but she was serving you. She was serving you. She was catching a wind that was already flowing.

There was a procession already taking place and she was just helping you along. You see, this is why I'm so big on the secret place because it slays these dragons. You're in there all, is this okay? Who cares if it's not? It's coming more, four times more.

You're in that room all alone. Nobody knows you. People think you're crazy for being in there and you actually set a time.

I'm not leaving until 4 p.m. Do it. You'll see how much further we all need to go in the spirit because the flesh starts whining. If you can't conquer your body, you really want God to entrust you with a city? If you can't sit on a chair, you think you're going to shift nations? It's hilarious.

St. Michael loves me. It's all hilarious to me. We steal passages that belong to the Messiah.

Ask of me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance. We run around and claim them. That promise is not to you.

That's to Jesus. Psalm 2 is all about Jesus. That is the Lord God, the Father saying, Son, because you died the death, even the death of the cross, I'm going to give you a reward, the nations.

You don't get to steal them. Now you can join the inheritance by being in Jesus. True lovers of Jesus have no problem casting down their golden crowns.

You serve him. You offer him the nations that are already his. He gives you a crown for his work through you.

I said for his work through you. And then he gives you the crown and the only rightful response is, this isn't mine. I'll throw it at your feet.

And you do that over and over and over and over and over and over again. Not unto us, O Lord, but unto you. For the Lord has done the work and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Are you tracking? You get into that room and these dragons are destroyed in private. That secret place is like a great Colosseum where the sword of the Lord begins to destroy them and you're liberated from you, liberated from the need to be recognized and known. So if an altar worker or somebody I'm shocked that this hasn't happened here.

I don't know if it has but maybe it has but I'm shocked someone would leave or come to a church because somebody greeted them the right way in the narthex. The narthex is that part of the building. We're in a high school so I don't even know what you call it but whatever that is.

Think of what we use to say I'm going to go there or stay there. What about his glory? What about the faithfulness to the scriptures? When Peter was restored at the Sea of Galilee Jesus didn't say do you love

me? Yes, you know I love you. Good.

Then go shake hands. Hold the sign perfectly in the parking lot. I'm glad our teams do the way they serve.

It's beautiful. But if God was moving in a broken down rusty warehouse that's where I'm going. I want someone to feed me the word of God the bread of life.

This thing's got to shift. May God entrust us. It's when you're alone in secret that you die to all of it.

Because if you say hi to me or not or you promote me or not I'm being filled. You're not my source. Jesus is my source.

And you don't learn that in public. You learn it when the door closes. I've never met anybody who gave extended hours to Jesus and God didn't do something mighty in their life.

The most frustrated people not the most some of the most frustrated people I've ever met in the kingdom are people who think they have words over their life that they never step into because God cannot trust them in private. He refuses to only be discovered up here. He refuses no more than we refuse to only be known by our spouse when we're on a date in public.

So he tells Cora Cora now you want the priesthood? That's just proof of where your heart is. What about the words of Jesus? I have food. You don't know about boys.

We need more people with that type of verbiage. I am secure in his presence. Better is one day one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

Better to be a doorkeeper in your house. Just put me somewhere on the grounds. I don't need to preach at the new building.

Put me in a tree house. We should have them by the way. Sounds awesome.

Just get me there. If God's moving there, drop me off. Give me a little nook out in the woods with a Bible and a fishing rod.

Let me just keep going. A few more minutes. I'm not apologizing.

Therefore you and your company are gathered against the Lord. Oh, this is so important. Pastor Tommy's family is here this morning.

Tommy reads. They would echo this. Jesse would echo this.

Anybody who's been in the movement of God would echo what I'm about to tell you. If you touch God's authoritative structure, you touch the Lord himself. He's not, God doesn't have like a mind from like Winter Park or Beverly Hills or Dallas.

We serve the King of Israel. He thinks properly. He knows what it means to come in someone's name.

We don't. We're too individualistic in the West. We don't understand what it means to be under a covering or to be given something or to live in an office.

We don't see the way God sees. Are you hearing me? We need to start seeing the way God sees. My friend Dave, who's preached here at Pompavisi just a month ago or whatever, two months ago.

He moved to Iraq. God is using him gloriously, as you know. And one of the reasons is he came out of a gangbanger lifestyle in the south side of Chicago.

And before he even left, I knew in my spirit God's going to use him in that part of the world because they're very tribal. You understand covenant. You understand order.

You understand if I touch Dave, I'm touching like 20 guys behind him. I hate to tell you, but God thinks that way. Moses said, you think you're coming after us.

You're touching the Lord. Now, this has been used inappropriately in the ministry. It has been used to control.

It has been used to justify sin. No, absolutely not. Never submit to a house that is not covered.

I'm not saying, but if I preach doctrine that's off, you need to get up and leave. I don't want to give you a fool, and stop watching people who don't know who Jesus is. It's bizarre.

Like if we don't know who Jesus is, why are we preaching? Forget about the rapture, whether or not it's true, post-trib preach, all that stuff. We have to get our Christology right. Who is the Lord Jesus Christ? If you don't know that, you need to take a break and read your Bible.

I'm giving you full permission. If you ever hear me say, Jesus is not God, run for your life. You're going to have to get on I-4, which is devilish in nature anyway.

Leave. Leave. If you ever hear me say, he's not fully man, leave.

If you ever hear me say that the Bible is not the perfect written word of God that is eternal, leave. Just run out. I'm not talking about that.

That needs to be, we need to hold preachers accountable. Absolutely. You need to feel safe.

And you see the plethora of fathers and mothers who are over and speak into our lives. That should make you feel safe. You can only have authority according to Jesus if you're under it.

Do not submit to lone rangers. They will twist you. They will pervert you.

And they will use you for themselves. You want to submit to leaders who have leaders in their lives that will tell them off. And I have them.

And Joy's probably telling me off from heaven. I can only imagine. Lord, can I go visit him once and just rebuke him for five more minutes.

I miss doing it. Of course, of course. Things need to be healthy to be submitted to.

Absolutely. But nonetheless, we do need a fresh revelation that if somebody comes in the name of the Lord to attack them is to attack the Lord. Where I grew up in Tarpon Springs, if you touched me, just I'm talking practically on the street, if you touched me, a hundred people are coming in about 90 seconds.

It's actually happened multiple times. And it wouldn't just be like my friends. It would be my uncles, my dad, I saw my grandfather swing a cane at someone when he was 86.

Okay? Because I came in the name of a family. I'm not telling y'all to go do that. But that part of the world thinks that way.

So when we wrongfully attack leaders, when we wrongfully attack those who God establishes, we attack the Lord. This is biblical. When we attack the church, we touch Jesus himself.

You say, give me a Bible. I'm glad you asked. Jesus rebukes Saul of Tarsus when he appears to him on the road to Damascus and says, why do you persecute me? After Paul was persecuting the church.

He didn't say, you're touching my bride. Though that's a big enough deal. He said, you're touching me.

And then he mocked him. There's a side of Jesus that actually makes fun of you when he acts stupid. Which is great.

Makes me want to follow him all the more. He says, how's it going that you're kicking against the thorns? Goads. G-O-A-D-S.

Those thorns. How's that working out for you? The harder you kick us, the harder you kick my people, the deeper your wounds are. Amen? So Jesus sees it that way.

And here, this is what happens. Korah thinks he's attacking Moses. And Moses goes, hold on.

And Aaron, by the way, who seems to be a little more quiet here. He's kind of hiding behind his brother. Who he's older than, by the way.

And Moses says, you've gathered against the Lord. All right, let me read one more verse and then we'll pray. I'm going to read you 13 verses and then we'll pray.

Almost one. And Moses sent to call Dathan, Abiram, sons of Eliab. But they said, we will not come up.

So he sent for them. Now you see rebellion hit the camp. There's a lack of honor for authority.

No, we're not coming. Who do you think you are? We are all God's people. Just a proof of pride.

I think it was Theo and I the other day, I think we were driving up to go practice golf. Oh yeah. And they were paving the roads with asphalt and we were stuck in the traffic jam.

One of the guys working, it looked like he was struggling with some substance abuse. You could just see it on his face. Didn't have much.

You could tell, it seemed like he was contracted for that. He's standing out in the heat all day long. But he had this yellow vest on.

And Theo says to me, Baba, it's amazing what a yellow vest can do. And then he said, he's got this entire lane obeying what he's saying. Like 20 cars back.

In any other sphere or circumstance, very few people would listen to what this guy had to say. But the moment that vest was put on him, it's a sign of authority. And there were guys in Bentleys obeying what

this man in a yellow vest was telling them to do.

Guys in sports cars, I don't know if I saw Bentleys, but nice cars. That's the power of authority. And God recognizes it.

We need to recognize it. It's a mark of humility. It doesn't mean we don't get a voice.

It just means we understand boundaries and we need to see this thing biblically. We will not come up. Is it a small thing you've brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey? In other words, they were no longer grateful.

You know what's puzzled me? I remember casting a demon out of a guy in a parking lot. That was Evangelist Michael. Cast a demon out of a guy in a parking lot.

He got filled with the Holy Spirit for one hour being filled with the Spirit. Without any, any, and then became close to me, without any warning, I never heard from him again. Evidently, I did something that he never told me about.

You would think that if someone cast a demon out of you and led you to the Lord and you were filled with the Spirit, you would be forever thankful. We're talking about a demon not helping you go to a subway or a Chick-fil-A gift card. He cast a demon out of you and you were filled with the glory of the Holy Spirit.

Offense is powerful. Keep a short account in unforgiveness. Listen.

Keep a long count in thankfulness. You brought us out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness that you should keep acting like a prince over us. Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, in other words, they are impatient now, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards.

Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up. In other words, try us. What are you going to do? Are you going to pluck our eyes out? We're not coming.

Then Moses was very angry and said to the Lord, do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them. And Moses said to Korah, tomorrow you and all your company be present before the Lord, you and they, as well as Aaron.

Let each take his censer and put incense on it and each of you bring his censer before the Lord, 250 censers, both you and Aaron, each with his censer. In other words, same censer, same opportunity, same ability, we're all going to show up with the same firepower and the Lord will be the judge. So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron and Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation and the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron. Notice he didn't even address the rebellious. When you become prideful and rebellious, God will turn his voice off and in front of you, ignore you and talk to his friends.

You'll love it. And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, separate yourselves from among this congregation, in other words, run. Now I'm the bodyguard.

That I might consume them in a moment. Wow. And then they fell on their faces.

Listen. Listen to the heart of Moses and Aaron. They fell on their faces and said, oh God, the God of all spirit, the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and you be angry with the whole congregation? Most of us would say, fry him quick.

Then Moses cried out for mercy. It's an allegory of Jesus on the cross. Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. Those are the leaders you want to follow. Not vindictive ones.

So the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the congregation saying, get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. And then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram and the elders of Israel followed him. I'm taking more verses.

And he spoke to the congregation saying, depart now from the tents of these wicked men. Touch nothing of theirs lest you be consumed in all their sins. So they got away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and Dathan.

And Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents with their wives, their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, by this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works. For I have not done them of my own will.

In other words, I didn't ask for this. God called me. If these men die naturally like all men or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me.

But if the Lord creates a new thing and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord. Now it came to pass as he finished speaking all these words that the ground split apart under them and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households and all the men with Korah with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit.

Wow, a living ticket to hell. The earth closed over them and they perished from among the assembly. Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry for they said, lest the earth swallow us up also.

And a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who offered incense. Remember, the offering of incense is a priestly ministry. And what did Moses say? Now you want the priesthood? Get your incense altars.

It's the same thing that happened to Nadab and Abihu. Why am I saying all this? To freak you out? Yes. Yes, I want us to tread lightly in the glory.

I don't want us to play with its presence. And I want us to monitor our words. I don't care if they're weeping, crying, shy, gentle, on their knees, on their face.

If they're mocking, shut it down. If they want more power, shut it down in love. Blessed is the man, Psalm 1.1, who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, the critical, help me Joel, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.

Jeremiah 15.17, I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice. I sat alone because of your hand. You mean Michael? What if I'm all alone? Better than to be around mockers.

Jude 1.16, verse 19, through 19, these are grumblers, listen, complainers, grumblers, complainers, grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts, and they mouth great swelling words, and they flatter people to gain advantage, but you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before them by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you, listen, that there would be mockers in the last days who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. Isaiah 28.22, now therefore do not be mockers. Proverbs 19.29, judgments are prepared for scoffers and beatings for the back of fools.

It is foolish to scoff and mock. Luke 18.32, he, Jesus, will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked. Mocking is the habit of the unbeliever, not the habit of the church.

So this is closing my entire series on Friends of the Bridegroom, and this is what I want to leave you with. Friends, if you want to be a friend of the Bridegroom, he must learn to trust us over a long period of time. According to the Scriptures, one of the markers he is looking for is a trustworthiness in our words, in our desire to be lowly.

For Jesus listens to every conversation. Amen.

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