

Jesus Destroyed the Fear of Death

by Michael Koulianos

Jesus is the central figure of the Gospel, and the resurrection is the destruction of death and the fear of death.

Duration: 40:37

Scripture: Hebrews 2:14

Topics: "Jesus", "Overcoming Fear", "The Resurrection"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes that the gospel is fundamentally about Jesus Christ himself, not merely a series of events or initiatives. He argues that the resurrection of Jesus is central to the gospel, as it destroys the fear of death and offers believers new life. Koulianos warns against the dangers of focusing on metrics and initiatives that can become idols, urging the church to prioritize a relationship with Jesus over mere activity. He highlights that true ministry flows from intimacy with God, and that the fear of death should not bind believers, as Jesus has conquered it. Ultimately, Koulianos calls for a return to the simplicity and power of the gospel, which is Jesus himself.

Transcript

I'm about 99% done with the book that I'm writing on the resurrection. I finished two or three chapters in the last couple of days, and as I was writing, I felt to begin sharing what I believe the Lord has given me. You've heard me say this before, I think it's really important that the gospel of Jesus is seen again, not only by the world, but by the church.

When we say gospel, you probably immediately think of an altar call. And then what we do is limit our value for the gospel to that five to ten minutes of an altar call. But at the core, the gospel of Jesus is the person of Jesus.

So I want you to say this out loud, the gospel is the Lord Jesus himself, and Jesus himself is the gospel. Say it again, Jesus himself is the gospel. Say it again, Jesus himself is the gospel.

What we've done, and it's really, I don't, I mean it's not like one person's fault, it's probably just the nature of humanity that's not satisfied in Jesus, that hasn't landed there yet. Even within the church, it's oftentimes very difficult to get people to land on this truth that Jesus is enough. There's just something in the fallen nature of man that just doesn't want to receive that.

And what you'll get is, well, I know, but, and then there's like two or three sentences, but you have to do this. Especially in the ministry context, especially in a church context, or launching a school. You have well-intentioned people who come and they want to give advice, or they'll want to launch an initiative.

You know, initiatives are really huge right now, metrics and all of this stuff. And the excuses, for instance, well, the Bible mentions numbers. Yeah, it mentions numbers, but the Bible isn't centered on numbers.

The pulse of the book of Revelation, for instance, it mentions the masses, the 10,000s upon 10,000s, of course, but that's not the thrust of the book. The thrust of the book is the Lamb on the throne. And so, let's just say initiatives, for instance, that are well-intentioned, once they're severed from the vine, they become idols.

So you can take this good thing that's no longer connected to the vine, that is Jesus himself, even if he may have birthed it, but if it's no longer fighting for the connection, even though he birthed it, it's severed, and then it becomes the thing. And we would say, well, we're not worshipping that, but we actually do without knowing. How many of you think the Great Commission is a Great Commission? Both hands.

Both hands should go up. Absolutely. It's dear to the heart of the Lord.

Absolutely dear to him. But if the Great Commandment doesn't fuel the Great Commission, the Great Commission becomes polluted and idolatrous. And then at that point, it's no longer great, because only God is great.

And in order for it to be a commission, you've heard me say this, God has to go with you, or it's just a mission. And you raise up a mercenary culture or an employee culture that's just like, we got to get this done no matter what, and then you end up sinning to get God's work done. That isn't the lifestyle of the bride.

That's the lifestyle of Balaam, Judas, and King Saul. I mean, Saul had a devil, hung out with prophets, and started prophesying. And ended up consulting with a witch, because he couldn't hear God anymore.

So rather than repent, he was addicted to directions. God, tell me how to do it and what to do. He wasn't addicted to God.

He was addicted to the direction, and the entire time, God wanted his affection. So the how, this is going to sound like a cartoon or something, but the how is a who. Candace loves that stuff.

Still watching cartoons? Yeah. When the how is a who, when Jesus becomes the roadmap and the source, you're safe. But everything changes when you're in his glory.

Everything. Average sermons change lives. Average worship sets cause people to weep.

Average vocals usher in the presence of God. I mean, Katharine Kuhlman couldn't sing a lick. I take her ministry above all this other... I don't even know what to call it today.

It's like, wait, is that worship or a Diddy video? Is this Tupac or worship? Help me figure this out. Oh, just trying to reach people. Now you need to get reached.

God doesn't need compromise to impact the nations. He doesn't need our sin to accomplish the great commission. Am I right? Yes.

We all agree that the nations need Jesus. I mean, gosh, we just need to open our eyes. I mean, it's pretty obvious now.

It's just so clear. The nations need help. They need a king.

America needs a king. Absolutely, 100% I'm with you, but I guess the question would be, how is that accomplished? How do the scriptures teach that should be accomplished? And so if you are addicted to initiative and metrics and numbers without knowing they become your Christ, and then in the name of the initiative, you grieve Christ because of compromise. That's what a lack of simplicity births.

And that's part of the reason we're starting this pastoral conference or this leaders pastors conference, because we want to show that it is possible to build according to the scriptures. And it's very important that we understand this doesn't just go for church or I should say gatherings because we're the church. It's very important.

We understand that if we want God to live there, we have to build it according to his pattern. And this is the mosaic pattern where Moses goes up the mountain in intimacy with God. And when he goes up the mountain, God shows him a pattern.

So the how matters, how we do what we do matters. It is not just about the metrics at the end, because God can use you as an employee to bring in a massive harvest and then you burn in hell forever. Once you love those little subtle kidney stabs, that's what they're meant to do.

Numb you for a little bit and then you still love me because I smile after them and make you laugh, but I want it to hurt. You can go to hell and lead millions to Jesus. In fact, I don't know anyone in my life, and I know so many of our heroes personally, I don't know anyone who witnessed with their eyes what Judas witnessed when he was sent out two by two.

Cleansed the leper, healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils, preached the kingdom. He saw it all and did it. Did it all.

And the scripture says of him, it would have been better that he were never born. Or how about King Saul? The Bible says of Saul that he died as though he were never anointed. I want you to think of that because if you know what the anointing means, that statement should rock us in our bone marrow.

To be anointed, hands had to smear you with oil. So another way of saying that passage is this way, Saul died as though he never was touched by God. Another way would say like this, Saul died as though he never encountered God.

Is this to say that God doesn't want a great harvest to take place? Of course not. Does God want churches to thrive and see more people saved and filled the spirit and healed? Of course. We've seen that for three years now.

Of course. We've seen that this last year for this Sunday morning community that you're barely a year old and look what God is doing. But that's not the point.

The point is, how does God want to do it? And what I would submit to you this morning is that God's way is more beautiful. It doesn't destroy families. God's way has a fragrance about it where you can actually enjoy what you're doing and God's way lasts.

Listen to me, God's way lasts. There are many conversations I have with young leaders and they're more than welcome to disagree with me. I don't know everything.

And to be honest with you, if I'm in a relationship and the person can't disagree with me, something's off. I want to be disagreed with unless I'm right. It's funny.

You have to strengthen yourself in the Lord and I make myself laugh all the time. It's wonderful. Bill said, it's the one thing I need to learn to do.

Strengthen yourself in the Lord. So you just become your own comedian. But when they disagree, and I know the word says otherwise, and they still don't latch on.

In my heart, this is what I hear. I'll see you in 20 years. We'll talk in 20 years.

Oh, but my church is exploding. We'll talk in 20 years. We'll talk in two years.

I'll talk to your children. Wow. You have an amazing resume.

Now let me meet your wife. We have 42 campuses. Okay, cool.

I would just like to meet your wife for an hour because I don't care what you've planted until I talk to her. Wow. Because that tells me more about you than your leadership skills outside the house.

I remember Michael Miller in Houston, Jessie was preaching, and she would get really gone back then, especially it was before we had our team traveling with us. Upper room, she used to love having upper room, kind of back her up. And when they got on the platform together, it was, she even made me nervous because she didn't even know which way the crowd was.

She'd start ministering to the drum cage, which the clock's over there. And I've got like, you know, Reinhardt on deck or somebody, and Jessie's just gone. I'm thinking, oh my God, she's never going to stop.

But Miller walked over to me and he said, you're a great husband. And I said, what? He goes, I'm watching how free your wife is to worship. She's free to be herself.

That tells me something about you. It makes me trust you more. So there is a more glorious way.

There is a more beautiful way where God does the work and we partner with God rather than asking God to join our plans. And then God gets the glory. And you'll be standing in 20 years in his presence.

And 20 years from there, rather than I'll see you in 20 years, what I probably should start saying is we'll talk at the throne. Let's talk at the throne when the books are open. We'll chat there because man's accolades can deceive you.

And if our measurables are off, if the measurement itself is off, you can start believing God is happy when he's not. Does that make sense? Like if your kids start believing that it's holy to not make their bed. After a while, somebody needs to tell them, I actually want you to make your bed.

But if they start believing after a while, this is what mom and dad want. They love sloppy rooms. And then they create a whole culture around what we don't actually want.

And we create our own standard of reward. And so a generation burns for what God isn't asking for. I have seen more people destroyed by taking on a ministry burden that God never handed them.

They authored it. They birthed it. They had to sustain it at that point.

And instead of stopping it because of reputation, they continued to grow it and throw the fertilizer of their own fleshly work upon it to keep it going. And then the monster bit back that they created. You build a monster, that monster will come after you.

What does this have to do with the resurrection? Something. I don't know. All right, let's get in here for 10 minutes.

So yeah, I'm writing this book on the resurrection. And it's been really moving me deeply. The gospel is not, the foundations of the gospel are not, Jesus will help you along, or Jesus will join your team.

They are not, Jesus fixes stuff. No, that's a Western perversion of the gospel. The gospel is simply this, that Jesus raises the dead, specifically those who take up the cross of Calvary and die with him.

You come to Jesus, he offers you a cross, and he raises you from the dead in newness of life. So Jesus cannot be part of any story. He's the whole story.

What we've done is, even as we look at the scriptures, and it's a tragedy, is that we have this, and this is, it's so important because people, people, I'm so grateful that so many people have been moved by the teaching that comes from this house, not from me, but from this house, the teaching that flows from this house, and the value we have for the word. And when they ask me questions, how do you see that? It's so important, listen carefully, that you know how to read your Bible, how you actually read it, what are the lenses that you put on to read the holy scriptures. The most common lens is to kind of make Jesus part of this chronological timeline, where we start off in this garden, and everything's perfect, and Adam and Eve are naked running around, you know, eating.

Wow, okay. Sounds like a resort, you know, it's like, wow, okay. I said that thinking, wow, that's pretty crazy.

Okay, so there they are, and everything's perfect, and they're walking with the Lord, and they mess up, and they get kicked out of their garden, and now everything's really bad, and now all of a sudden, all these wild things happen in the Bible, like these genealogies, and sacrifices, and animals have to die, and leaders arise, and then you have these covenants, the Noahic covenant, you have the Mosaic covenant, Moses shows up, you have this age of the kings, that really begins with King Saul. God visits his friend David, and David takes Jerusalem from the Jebusites, and sets up the kingdom there, that no other king could take. By the way, David found waterways into Jerusalem to defeat the Jebusites, that even Joshua could not defeat, because David understood worship, and worship will take you much further than war.

He went through the waterways, the internal spaces of the Holy Spirit, the secret flow of the water gave him the city. So, and then you have your prophets, and they speak of one to come, and Israel, and everything that's going wrong, and then part of the story is this baby's born in Bethlehem, yeah, and then we have Christmas, and the wise men are part of the story, and Mary's part of the story, and you know, some people love her, half the church is freaked out about her, they honor Elijah more than her. She can't be all that bad, if God lived in her womb, say amen.

So yeah, Jesus is just part of that story with Joseph, and Mary, and then not much is said to us about his childhood, and then all of a sudden he comes on the scene, he has a cousin named John the Baptist, who eats bugs, loves honey, wears camel's hair, he seems to be really wild, and baptizes the nation in the River Jordan, and then he baptizes his cousin, and his cousin is launched into ministry. That took three and a half years, finally people get mad at him, he suffers and dies, he's raised again, he goes up to heaven, and sends the Holy Spirit, and to Pentecostals, the story in many cases starts right there. Yeah, we love Jesus, but man, give me tongues.

I want the fire. I'm glad Jesus did what he did, okay, yeah, but what I really want is the fire. My God, help us.

And then we read the book of Revelation, and Paul just kind of tells us what to do when we hang out, right? And then the book of Revelation, we don't even touch it, because we don't know what to do with it. Really, here's the funny part. If you read the Bible that way, which most of the Western church does, you go into a doctor's office, and you see a little, by the way, we have a children's book coming out, the Jesus book for kids, so I think your kids are really gonna love it.

We didn't do it that way, side note, but you go to a doctor's office, and you open that little Jesus, little colored Bible thing that all the doctor's offices used to have, and Jesus is like 1/20th of the story. He's right up there with Noah. Seriously, there are more paintings of giraffes than the cross.

All right, and if, for instance, if you read the word that way, if you read something in the book of Revelation, which you open once a decade, because it freaks you out, because you have no idea how to read it, and you see that there's a tree of life somewhere up there whose leaves heal the nations. So to get healing in the New Jerusalem, you have to come and nibble. You just take a leaf and nibble on it like a little deer, and that's how you get healed up there.

Or in the age to come, you just gotta find this tree, and everyone has to eat off it. It must be massive if the nations are gonna eat off it, and that's how you get healed. Could there be a better way to read your Bible? Okay, there's hope.

There is. Okay. Okay.

Your lens must be Christ Jesus Himself. That's how you open the book. I should say, that's how you open the leather.

Only He can open the book. Who was found worthy to open the scroll? The Lamb. So He walks through the verses of the book and is the only one who can open the book.

Okay, example. Some of you don't believe me. How many of you think Saul of Tarsus knew the Bible? You should raise your hands, because he had memorized it.

He had memorized the Torah. This is my question to you. Did his memorization alone cause him to fall in love with Jesus and His church? No.

What did he do with the knowledge he had? He killed Christians. Right? Now he has this encounter with the One, who is the Word, and the One opens the Scriptures to him. And what is the first thing Paul does after he is saved, healed, baptized, and filled with the Holy Spirit? He goes to the synagogue, listen, and proves Christ through the Scriptures that he once used to kill the Bride of Christ.

So in saying that, when I talk about the Gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, I am not talking about part of the story. I am giving you the story. So the resurrection is not peripheral.

It is central. And what we want Jesus to do at times is deal with our symptoms. You know, you have the flu, you have sniffles.

If all you do is wipe your nose, the flu will stick around a long time. But how many of you know there is a better way to get rid of the symptoms? You go to the root. You get after that thing at a cellular level and blow it out of you by the root.

Right? Right? Are you here this morning? That is what the resurrection has accomplished. The destruction of death, listen carefully, and the destruction of the fear of death. I have read this to you before, but I want you to hear it again.

Go to Hebrews chapter 2. I am going to keep you to 11.10 this morning, and you are going to love it. 12.10, sorry. I am in Dallas.

No, I am not. All right. Thank you, babe.

We are becoming one. Do any of you spouses finish your spouse's sentences? Does your spouse get mad? Yeah, that is called interruption. Not that she just did it, but I needed that one.

That one helped. But we are working through that right now. We will be in a staff meeting.

I will get three sentences in. She will go, and I am like, I am just going to go hit golf balls. I am not needed.

Verse 14. If you are wondering here, listen carefully, why we do not have a massive LED behind me with a massive promotional of our church and all of these other savvy ways to get you in the building. Let me tell you why that is not here.

It is not here because if I start that way with you, I have to keep that going to keep you. What you are getting right now is the true food that will keep you at the throne. So what I want to say to any doubtful thoughts is, I will see you at the throne.

You will be glad we talked about this. I promise you. Hebrews 2.14. In as much then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same, that through death, say through death, through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Oh, hold on here. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus destroyed death to such a degree that he wants you to be completely free of the fear of death. Now, these are sermons we do not hear much of.

Yes. But if you are into life application, this is probably the most applicable sermon we are all going to hear because should Jesus tarry, we are all going to close our eyes. We start all of this stuff in church that like 20% of the people like or might experience, and we try to cater to it.

This is about as practical as a sermon gets. We are all going to breathe our last. Now, the world lives in constant fear of that moment, and so does much of the church.

What the early church saw as a womb, the grave being a womb that would birth them into newness of life, we dread. There is that old saying, we spend our whole life making sure we are ready for heaven, and when it is time to go, we fight tooth and nail. Don't we? Now, I am not telling you that you should sign up to die of sickness.

I am not talking about that. But I am saying this. There is no reason we should fear death.

Jesus went to the end of it all and destroyed the great tyrant who held the fear of death, the devil. But I want you to notice what the Scripture says. He accomplished this through death.

Through death. That is why he is the only one who has walked through the valley of the shadow of death. That is not speaking of David.

Now, we can claim it in Christ, of course. But had David really walked through the valley, through death? And when you begin to see the Scriptures in this light, everything starts to make sense. Example, Jonah.

Jonah. What is the sign of Jonah? Now, many theologians think Jonah died in there. There is a good chance that happened.

It would be hard to stay alive in a fish's stomach for three days. We are not talking about a living room. It is a fish's stomach.

There is a good chance that happened. And Jesus said, you receive no sign but the sign of Jonah. How about this? All right.

This one is going to cause you to slap your neighbor. And that is what we are going to do right before we leave. But we are not liable.

Your neighbor is. All right. Now, when you read it this way, what is your lens? Say, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for the whole book.

So, Moses takes a staff that is Christ because he is called the rod. I said he is called the rod. And when Moses says, how am I going to do this? I am slow of speech.

You must give me a sign. The father says, take the rod and throw it down on the ground. And what does that rod turn into? Say, a serpent.

What did Jesus say would be lifted upon the pole? He said, as the serpent was lifted on the pole, so the Son of Man will be lifted up. You say, I do not feel comfortable comparing the story of Jesus to the serpent. Well, Jesus was comfortable with it.

He said, as the serpent was lifted, as Moses lifted the serpent, so too the Son of Man will be lifted. Speaking of Jesus becoming or taking upon our sin. And by the way, Jesus never sinned.

There have been some swirly teachings that Jesus became this to a biblical. You cannot be a sinner and be the pure lamb of God. I want to clarify that.

The Greek word is, he took it upon him. Way different. That is what the scapegoat does.

It is what the sacrificial lamb does. So, Jesus becomes our sin that is shown as the serpent is lifted on the pole. And Moses here actually throws the staff down, showing prophetically that one day the staff, Jesus

himself, would become our sin, go into the ground, listen, and die.

And then what Moses does after that is he picks it back up again. That is the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus. Say hallelujah.

He is wonderful. That is how I want you to read your Bible. Listen.

Now it is game time. And Moses has to appear before Pharaoh, who symbolizes the devil. You would think he would need a different remedy because this is a bigger scenario than practice.

But God calls Moses to Pharaoh. He says, do what you did before. In other words, preach Jesus again.

It does not matter who is in front of you. I started, as you know, in women's aglow meetings. I preached Jesus there.

They used to give me pies as an honorarium. And I do not eat pies. They are like, oh, we are so happy to have you.

Here is a pie. I am like, my God. Okay.

Thank you for the pie. So, I preached Jesus there. When I go to a stadium, and I know there are devils and people on stretchers, I preach Jesus there.

Now Moses is there in front of Pharaoh. He throws his staff down again. Death, burial, resurrection.

He took our sin. He grabs the, I should say, the magicians offer a counterfeit gospel. Two snakes come.

Moses' rod eats the two snakes, sin and death, consumes them. Yeah, you almost slapped her. Consumes them.

All right. What does he do? After he consumes them, Moses says, I will take that staff back, come up out of the grave. And then he lifts the staff multiple times.

That is called worship in the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. If you lift him up, the sea will part. That is the gospel.

That is how the church used to read the Bible. And that is how I want you to read the Bible. Okay.

Say this out loud. Help me, Joel. Say this out loud.

Jesus is alive. Say it again. Jesus is alive.

Say it again. Jesus is alive. There you go.

I like the communion elements, please. Don't you love him? Don't you love him? Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Oh, gosh, before you take this, just get it ready, and I am going to talk to you a little bit. So, how many beams on this cross? How many beams? This is a trick question. How many beams? Two.

Okay. Let's try that again. One, two.

Okay. It is supposed to be two. We have a few pieces here, but that is not how they did it in that day.

Two pieces. Two poles. When Moses received the pattern of the tabernacle to carry the ark, that is the Lord's presence, that is the mercy seat, where the two cherubim faced each other, facing down.

I will get into that in another teaching. The only way to carry the ark and not die was to hold two poles. Those poles were made of acacia wood that speaks of two things, the incorruptibility of Jesus because that wood is incorruptible.

Number two, it speaks of the cross, two wooden beams. It tells me this, that without a revelation of the cross, without living dead to Michael and unto the Lord, the glory becomes dangerous to me. I cannot carry the glory without the cross, without the two poles.

The cross will never get old. Because that tree of life in the age to come is Christ crucified. And it is the revelation of Christ Jesus crucified, hanging on a tree that heals the nations.

Hallelujah.

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