

# Jesus Is Raising Up Lovers

by Michael Koulianos

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*Michael Koulianos emphasizes the necessity of focusing on Jesus and the power of His cross in our lives and ministries.*

**Duration:** 58:55

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 16:13-16, John 14:6, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:8, Colossians 1:27, 1 Peter 2:24

**Topics:** "The Cross and Resurrection", "Surrender to Christ"

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## Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the need for the church to return to the core message of Jesus Christ, focusing on His death, burial, and resurrection as the foundation of faith. He calls for believers to surrender to the Holy Spirit and to embrace a life that reflects the love and sacrifice of Jesus, rather than being distracted by worldly wisdom or self-promotion. Koulianos urges the congregation to recognize that true glory is found in the person of Jesus and that the church must preach Christ crucified to fulfill its calling. He challenges the audience to prioritize their relationship with Jesus above all else, asserting that He is enough for every need and circumstance. The sermon culminates in a call to deeper intimacy with Christ, encouraging believers to let go of distractions and fully embrace their identity as lovers of Jesus.

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## Transcript

Holy Father, precious presence of the Holy Spirit, begin to settle upon us like a blanket of peace and tranquility, Lord. Catch our hearts up above the noise, above the meeting, above it all. It's just us and you now, just us and you.

You are beautiful. We'll just worship in the church. You are beautiful, kind, majestic, holy.

Fill this house with your glory. Open our hearts to your precious word. May it bear fruit that remains.

May your word come forth tonight with power. May the grip of the evil one be destroyed over every life tonight. As you speak, speak Lord, speak for your servants are listening and run us through with your holy word.

Make us like Jesus, wonderful Holy Spirit. You're the only one who does it. We give you all glory and honor forever.

In Jesus name, amen. Can we give the Lord praise tonight and seal that prayer? Thank you Lord. Blessed be your name.

You may be seated. Thank you Jesus. I'm going to begin teaching the scriptures and as I do, I'm just going to ask that everybody please find a seat as quickly as possible.

There is a way to receive the word of the Lord. And the way to receive the word of the Lord, it's the way Mary received the word of the Lord, by sitting at his feet and hearing his word. And distraction robs us of the reception of the word.

So I'm going to ask that everybody sit and let us never underestimate the power of the word of God. I said let us never underestimate the power of the word of God church. Humanity fell by engaging in a conversation.

Conversations are powerful and tonight the Lord will have one with us. And may his holy word break every hard place in our hearts. May his word be like a hammer and break us wide open that we would leave more soft and lowly and more like Jesus than ever.

Amen. Once again I want to thank everybody who's spoken and everyone who's led worship. I love you all.

Every leader who's here, God bless you. In an event like this, especially one that lasts two and a half days, three nights, it's wise to not see the sermons as individual sermons. But we need to listen to what the Lord is saying.

How many of you believe that this is the hour more than ever where we must hear what the Lord is saying? Not the world. What the Lord is speaking. And when I think back of Brother Yoon's session, of Dave's session, of Heidi's session, of Pastor Benny's session, of Ben's session, of Jess' session, of Brian's session, of how many? Did I miss anyone by any chance? Of Miller's session.

When I think and I think of everything the Lord released through everyone, I heard one thing. Death to self by surrendering to the Holy Spirit. That's what the Lord is saying.

Tonight as the choir began to sing, show me your glory. I was sitting there in my chair underneath the cross and just happened to look up while they were singing and I heard that gentle voice say, the cross is glorious. To many in revival movements or charismatic circles that I'm gladly a part of, I am a son of the river and I am unapologetically a man who loves the movement of the Holy Spirit and that will never change.

In any of us, say amen. However, the glory is not a specific manifestation. The glory is not a reaction.

But according to the scripture, the glory is a person. And unless we see that, we will play with this person. As Pastor Benny said last night, we will start to think we can use the Holy Spirit.

But the scripture teaches that the glory of God is found in the face of the Lord Jesus. 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6. The glory of God is found in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Friend, God is saying one thing.

Listen, I should say He is saying the same thing to the world that He is saying to the church. He is speaking Jesus. God has one message on His heart.

Jesus. Are you awake tonight? Or did they give you some melatonin at the door? God will wake you up. God is going to touch many of you tonight.

I was seeing it in prayer this afternoon. Nobody is safe in this room. Nobody is safe if you are yielded to the Spirit.

Is anyone hungry in this room? I have no desire to host an event. I have come to host the presence of God. I have no desire.

These events are too hard and stressful. I have come to be with Jesus. Have you? God is speaking Christ to us.

One night, and I don't know if Pastor Benny remembers, but one night we were in his study reading through a little letter Miss Kuhlman wrote in this journal book that he had. I will never forget the way she addressed the Lord. Dearest Jesus.

That said everything to me. Dearest Jesus. She had no idea we would be reading that.

She died in the 70s. My word, it has been 50 years. She had no idea we would be reading that.

That said something to me about her heart. You see, in a life that is yielded to the Spirit, that life beats for one thing, Jesus. And for the life of me, I don't know why we changed the subject.

Pastor, I wonder when the last time was you preached on the cross. When was the last time you preached on the resurrection of Jesus? When was the last time you told the people that Jesus is coming back? Because He is. Whether we talk about it or not, He's coming back.

We may as well talk about it and be ready. Self-help. We're preaching more TED Talks than gospel messages.

We've embraced the wisdom of the world. We're eating from a tree that is not the tree of life. When you meet the Holy Spirit, friend, when you really meet Him, when you take the time to get to know Him, you discover something.

He is absolutely into Jesus. There's something about Jesus that the Holy Spirit is absolutely in love with. And the Father, the same.

If you were to talk to the Father about what is on His heart, He would tell you about His Son. You say, how do you know that, Michael? Because the Father preached the gospel in the New Testament from heaven at Jesus' baptism. And what was His message? This is my beloved Son.

What did the Father say at the Mount of Transfiguration? This is my Son. Hear ye Him. Heaven's anthem is the Lamb.

And it's time we leave with quickness every lesser lover and every lesser perspective and leave it in the dust behind us and show heaven that we believe Jesus is enough. I dare every preacher in this room to preach Christ crucified until the day Jesus takes you home. It'll save you a lot of time.

You don't have to steal messages online. Go into the Word of God with the Holy Spirit and say, show me Jesus from Genesis to Revelation. Oh my gosh, such an acquisition cannot be stolen from you.

Come hell or high water, come persecution, come betrayal, come naysayers. Something is formed in you when you see Christ crucified that cannot be taken. We're living in a pivotal hour and this is a prophetic moment.

We're living in a day, listen carefully, listen carefully, where inside the church preachers are changing the gospel. This isn't to get on you tonight, but it is to awaken you. Someone's got to say it.

I don't know a Jesus that's not in the Bible. We don't recognize Him. We don't receive Him because there isn't one.

We don't know a Jesus without wounds. We don't know a Jesus who did not hang on a tree. We don't know a Jesus who reserves the right to tell us what to do.

I should say who doesn't reserve the right to tell us what to do. Jesus is Lord. I know it's quiet in here, but I feel devil's shaking.

I feel bones rattling. It's time we begin preaching like Isaiah did. Hear O heavens and hear O earth.

He was aware that there were more people listening than the people he could see. Heaven itself was watching and we've been entrusted with this glorious gospel. We dare not change the gospel that the martyrs died for.

Don't you do it. It is not compassionate. Let me get down there.

I can't jump. It's too high. This is a holy privilege to preach Jesus.

We're pacifying devils because we don't preach the gospel. Have you ever faced off with the devil? No, you're like no. You don't want to, but when you do, you notice one thing.

One thing works. Christ crucified. One.

One message works. Jesus Christ and him crucified. One message delivers the soul.

Christ Jesus and him crucified. So tonight as we stand, I feel in the spirit, we're at this precipice. We're at this crossroad in the church where we must rediscover the glory of our bridegroom.

The message, listen, our individual callings is not our message. That's where we get all screwed up. Pastors are not called primarily to teach people how to plant churches.

Evangelists, the message of the evangelist is not this is how to be an evangelist. The message of the evangelist is this is Jesus. Planting multiple campuses doesn't make you an apostle.

Bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus according to the scriptures makes you an apostle. Suffering makes you an apostle. Beholding the Lord makes you an apostle.

Not being old and planting a bunch of campuses, God never called us to franchise something. Listen to me. Listen.

We must return. We must return to the message of heaven. If Jesus is enough for the Father, should he be enough for the church? Lose the hangups on websites downloading somebody else's bread.

Jess came to me once. She goes, there's people having Jesus nights all over. I said, that's good.

But they're having Jesus nights and they're or they'll take a sermon and copy it. And I heard someone say once the only original thought was the fig leaf Adam came up with. And that didn't work very well.

None of us came up with Jesus. But this kind of thing cannot be siphoned off. I'm not talking about the anointing.

I'm not talking about power. I'm talking about a divine revelation from Holy Scripture with the Holy Spirit that once you gain it, no demon in hell can take it. I'm 26 years old.

No, I'm not. I'm 46 years old. I can't believe it.

And I've seen many come and many go. I saw many people start with great momentum. Many people start with giftings, word of knowledge, healing.

I've seen a lot. Unfortunately, I've seen many come and many go. The ones who are still doing it are the ones who are in love.

It's those, it's the ones who embrace the slow drip of the cross. The ones who aren't for sale. The ones who don't need, as Francis said, to post everything they do or they think they do for God.

I'm not mad. I'm mad at the devil. I'm jealous over the church.

And Jesus is jealous over us. All right, let's get into a scripture before I get out of hand. Take your Bibles to 1 Corinthians.

Is it okay that I'm down here, guys? Media team? Okay. Yohan's probably a little upset with me. Hallelujah.

I said hallelujah. Some of you, listen, listen. Some of you remember his touch.

You remember that touch. Some of you right now are sensing him again. And it's been years for so many of you that we go our own way.

And according to the scripture, our own way is always astray. That's what Isaiah writes. You have gone astray.

You've gone your own way. Jesus lives on the way because he is the way. So tonight, as I begin to open the text, as the Holy Spirit begins to open the text, I want you to be more aware of the presence of Jesus than you are of me.

1 Corinthians 1 verse 18, the scripture says, for the word of the cross is folly, this is the ESV, is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Can I read that again? For the cross, the word of the cross, the word of the cross, the preaching of the cross, is folly to those who are perishing or dying. But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, listen carefully now, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? God's saying that right now. Where are these wise theologians? Where are these wise church planters who are wanting to deconstruct the text, create a new gospel? Here the Lord begins to call out such a perspective, a life that looks to the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a life who is not convinced that Christ Jesus is enough.

And here's my question, how can he who is all in all not be enough? And that's why I say, you, we don't hire Jesus. Jesus doesn't join our causes. Jesus doesn't join our initiatives as Heidi preached this morning.

We are either connected to the head or we are chickens running around with our heads cut off. Listen, listen, Jesus joins nothing but the bride. We don't come up with our own initiatives and say, Lord join it, be a part of it, come work on our staff.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Here the scriptures call this type of perspective out. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Listen, where is the debater of this age? Social media is great to further the gospel, but it has given people a platform who have no right talking about the Lord.

It's just true. Where is the debater? And do you know naysayers and debaters are left behind in history's narrative? They are vaporized by the triumphant procession of those who walk with God. Don't fall into that.

Don't be a mocker. Don't be a naysayer. Don't give your life to debating what you think is wrong with Jesus or his church.

For since, listen, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom. It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs.

Greeks seek wisdom. I can say amen to that. Listen, but we, we the people of God, we preach Christ crucified.

A stumbling block to Jews and a folly to Gentiles. Last night as Michael Miller came to receive the offering, he almost tripped over the cross and he whispered to me when I hugged him, he said, it is a stumbling block. I knew it.

Listen, listen, verse 24. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. You say, what is wise, Jesus? You say, what else? Nothing, nothing.

What about this? No, that's not wise. If it's outside of him, it's not. If it's outside of him, it's devilish.

This is a type of clarity we need again. What is smart? Jesus. What is holy? Jesus.

Who is God? Look no further than Christ and him crucified. Who is the Lord? Point them to the tree. As David said, true kings carry crosses.

And this is the antithesis of the spirit of this age. The spirit of this age is saying, exalt you, promote you, call you, anoint you. Friend, you cannot call yourself, you cannot release yourself, and you certainly cannot anoint yourself.

Untethered, listen carefully now, untethered, unyielded initiative is dangerous. Our own ideas are dangerous. Even if we put a Christian stamp on them.

They are dangerous. They are not wise. You say, Michael, are you, do you really, Michael, have the audacity to look at thousands of people and thousands watching online tonight? You have the audacity to

tell us in this modern age where there are so many options, that I don't need anyone but Jesus, you bet your life.

That is exactly what I am telling you tonight. And I will say that until the day I go to heaven, Jesus is all you need. Because he is everything.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

You say, what could be so wise about a bloody savior skinned alive on a tree? How is this wisdom? Do you want me to come back up here so you all can see me in the back? How is the cross wisdom? How could it be that the naked God-man suspended between the heavens and the earth, it's wisdom. How could such a shameful death be deemed as being wise? How could death be a good thing? Listen to this scripture. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

The weakness of God is stronger than men. Jesus showed us what divine strength looked like, and it looks like death. You say, you mean actual death to my body? Maybe.

But it looks like dying to us. It looks like dying to the wisdom of this world. It looks like dying to the wisdom of supposed modern-day church life.

It looks like dying to satanic, listen, self-promotion, even if you're in the ministry. Where are the people with treasure anymore? Treasure. Are you hearing me? Can I just talk to you? Where are the holy people? Holy people.

Where are the people whose eyes drip with the glory of God? Where are the people who have pulled out treasure and have guarded that treasure in their hearts? Where are the people who when you get near them, you feel like Jesus walks with them hand in hand? Where are the cheek turners? Are you hearing me tonight? Where are the lowly ones? The gentle ones? Where are the hidden ones? Where are the ones who make you feel uneasy on the inside? There's something about them that makes you feel like you need to behave. I'll never forget, Pastor Benny took me to meet Dr. Roberts the first time, Oral Roberts. He stood at the door, and I was afraid to talk.

And a lot of that was just because I was nervous. Where are the people who carry the glory of the Lord? Where are the cross carriers? Where are the dying ones? Where are the ones who cannot be threatened by the devil because they already died? Where are the ones who have been delivered of fear, the fear that comes from people because they fear the Lord? Where are the ones who speak when He says speak, and they're quiet when He says be quiet? Where are the ones who are enamored with Jesus? May they arise again. I said may they arise again.

May friends of God arise again. I get so excited, as Francis said, when I see young people that we have hundreds of at the school. I get so excited when I see their zeal.

But God doesn't need us to make room for ourselves. I think we have too many initiatives. I think we have too many ideas.

I think we're trying to start too many movements. I think we just need to get to know Jesus again. We need friends of God.

I said we need friends of God. Matthew chapter 16. Just go there and I'm going to talk to you a little more, and then we're going to receive communion.

Is Marcus here tonight from Germany? Marcus, are you here tonight with Elsie? The Lord has something very special for you tonight. And the Lord is going to touch you as He touched your father-in-law in this city. And you're going to go back to Europe burning with a fresh touch from the Holy Spirit.

This is Jean-Luc's family. The Lord spoke to me today in prayer as I was praying that the Lord would touch you guys here, right here in this same city. And that you would go back with a true impartation from the Lord.

If you would hear the Word of the Lord tonight, the Lord will entrust you. I know you've been visiting America looking at churches. Unfortunately, you're going to have to unlearn a lot of what you saw.

I can tell you that because I live here. But the more simple your church will be in Stuttgart, the more simple it will be, this is the Word of the Lord for you. The more anointing will be on that house.

It is about Jesus, friend. I'm going to pray for you in just a bit. Matthew 16, verse 13, would you go please? Are you receiving this tonight? And the Scripture says in verse 13, now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, listen carefully, some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

He said to them, but who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Amen. And Jesus answered him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then He strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ.

Let's keep reading. From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things, from the elders, the chief priests, the scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took Him aside and rebuked Him, saying, far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you.

But He turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan. That's good pastoring right there. Get behind me, Satan.

You are a hindrance to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. And then Jesus told His disciples, if anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? What shall a man give in return for his soul? Jesus asked this question beginning in verse thirteen, who do people say the Son of Man is? In other words, who am I? And then Jesus turns the question and makes it personal, places it on Peter. Who do you say that I am? Peter answers, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then Jesus makes a statement.

He says, flesh and blood has not revealed this, but my Father, my Father who is in heaven. Instantly, friends listen carefully, instantly, after Peter says you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus then begins to define verbally what it looks like to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. And this is what He says, I am going to die.

You missed that. Jesus begins to tell Peter who the Messiah is and what He looks like and what He does. He reveals the very heart posture of God.

True godliness is discovered in the passion of the Lord Jesus. I want that to settle in so deeply that the next time somebody says to you, can you tell me what God is like? You point them to the passion. Instantly.

You don't have to start with, do you know He has a great plan for your life? That's true. But what's that plan look like? Death, burial, resurrection. You don't need to wait two years.

I don't care what mountain they're a part of, the medium mount, I don't give a rip what mountain they're on. Every mountain bows its knee to Christ crucified. That's the only gospel.

If they need counseling, tell them about Jesus. If they need healing in their body, tell them about Jesus. If they need a marriage healing, tell them about Jesus.

He's the third full cord in the middle of it all. He defines marriage. He's the one who is the model of the great mystery in Ephesians chapter 5. Jesus defines what it is to be a bridegroom.

He defines marriage. A husband dies for his wife and so she honors him. Regardless of the need, Christ crucified is God's remedy.

If you're worried about your future, discover the shepherd. Discover the shepherd who leads you to green pasture, takes you to still water and places you on paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Are you lonely? Find Jesus the friend who died for you.

People are addicted, introduce them to the bloody lamb whose blood breaks chains tonight. If you're in sin cycles, behold the lamb who is our righteousness. It is all about Jesus.

It is all about his death, burial and resurrection. Peter decides to answer. It wasn't a very wise answer.

He thought he was doing the Lord a favor. How many of you know the Lord does not need our help? More of you should know that. I'll ask again.

How many of you know the Lord does not need our help? Does not need our assistance? And Peter says no, no, no, no, no, no. You're telling me that the Messiah, the Son of the living God has come to die? Far be it from you. Now I want you to listen to the Lord's reaction.

Get thee behind me, Satan. He didn't say Peter you're being oppressed right now. He didn't say you need a sozo.

None of that. It's all good and great, but he didn't say any of that. He didn't say here are the steps to you not making such a dumb statement next time.

No, no. He said get behind me, Satan. Why? Listen carefully.

Don't forget this not for a single moment for the rest of your life. Any attempt to separate Jesus from the cross is satanic. It is satanic.

It is not a gospel that's in need of tweaking. It is a false gospel that is in need of burning. Any attempt to take this life of Jesus, the miracles, the walking on water, the signs, the wonders, the calming of the storms, the turning water into wine, all of the attempts to keep that but not see it through the lens of Calvary is satanic.

It's not just bad preaching. It is hellish, demonic preaching. It comes from the belly of the underworld.

It comes from hell itself. There is no other version of the Messiah but the one who bled and died. This, this friends, listen, this, this is who God is.

You say, can I, what if I yield my life to the Holy Spirit? Which you should. Every moment of every day, I feel His touch right now and there's nothing like it. I said there's nothing, nothing like it.

There's something about His touch that makes us feel fully alive where our problems burn around us. We feel the shield of the Lord like a hedge about us and He is the glory and the lifter of our head. The Christian walk is not easy.

Following Jesus isn't easy. He never promised it would be easy but it's wonderful. I said it's wonderful.

There's something, something that is majestic. I feel His touch right now. If I were you, I'd just start thinking about Him.

There's something wonderful that happens when trials come and the Lord is still with you and you're buffeted and you still know that He's about your own good. You sense He's not delivering you from a situation to keep you lowly. That's what Paul said, this is buffeting me but I discovered there's something beautiful about it so that I don't puff up.

And in these places of deep death, He makes us alive. He comes and blows upon our hearts. It's like He's looking for the wounded.

He is. He's the cross-carrying King. There's something about dying.

Are you listening to me tonight? Are you quiet because you're just being filled or what? Why are you so quiet? Are you here? There's something, there's something, there's something about dying. There's something about looking at the One who scaled Calvary and then choosing to follow Him. There's a life flow that the world doesn't understand.

When the world quits, we keep going. We keep going. We keep going.

We keep carrying the tree and we discover there's something about this tree that makes Him come my way. That tree is an altar. It's a magnet for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

It's a magnet for the glory of God. Friends, the glory is not to make us famous. No, no, no, no, no, no.

Jesus, bloody, dying is death, burial, resurrection. This is glory. The beauty of His face is glorious.

Let go tonight. I'm begging you, let go. You have no idea what's on the other side of that yes, of that yieldedness, of that surrender.

Please look at me, hear me. There's something glorious on the other side of that door. It's the wind of the Spirit.

Let go of whatever He tells you to let go of. Say yes to whatever He's saying, telling you to say yes to. Go wherever He tells you to go.

When you want to defend yourself and He says be quiet, be quiet. He'll fill you with new life. God will begin to visit you.

There's something about brokenness that releases His glory. It's wonderful. It's wonderful when He just sneaks up on you and visits you.

Sometimes we don't even know what we're saying yes to. And when we say yes, we hear that gentle touch of the Spirit say, do you know? Do you know? I think I know, Lord. I don't know if I'm speaking a different language, but I'm speaking to you by the Spirit tonight.

If you've been there, you know what I'm talking about. He asks something of you. And it starts off a lot of times here.

You're meditating on it. You see it in the Scripture. Maybe you write on it, or you preach it, and then you hear that gentle voice, if you preach it, you'll have to walk through it.

I have to do it, or you'll have no authority. You hear that gentle whisper? I've had that happen. Reading my Bible, catching myself praying, Lord, do it in me.

Are you sure? Do it with me, Lord. Are you sure? No, Lord, I don't think I am. I don't think I know.

Well, just say yes, and I'll help you through it. Mother Bessaliah Schlink, the sisters told me a story. I feel the Lord here tonight.

I feel His touch. I feel the presence of the Spirit moving through this crowd like a river right now. I feel Him.

I feel the power of God gripping hearts tonight, gripping you, possessing you, touching you. Mother Bessaliah was praying one day, and the Lord said, would you give me a day? She said, yes, Lord, here's my day. She spent that day with the Lord, and He said, would you give me a week? And she said, a week? I have hundreds of sisters.

You want me to give you a week alone? He said, would you give me the week? She said, okay, I'll give you the week. And she gave Him a week. And then the Lord said, would you give me a month? She said, a month? What will happen? If I spend a month with you, what will happen to the ministry? Can I say something to all of you? Jesus is raising up people who love Him more than their assignment.

That's the only thing that qualifies you to carry the assignment. That's what He's looking for, not employees. He's looking for lovers.

He's not raising up mercenaries who do this as a career. She said, Lord, I'll give you the month. And so she gave the Lord a month alone.

And then He said, would you give me a year? What a loving Savior. I said, what a loving Savior to ask His creation for time. And here we are, busy launching the new stadium event.

Launching this, launching that. Telling God what He will do with us. Telling the Lord how to use us.

It doesn't work that way. And so finally, after toiling with the Lord, she said, I'll give you the year. And she showed away with Jesus.

What a dream. That may not make much sense to you. It does to me.

You say, how could you say that leading a ministry? It does to me. It sounds wonderful. Being all alone with the Lord sounds beautiful to me.

We go where He says go, and we preach where He says preach. But friend, that does still sound very beautiful. And so she said, yes, here's my year.

And the Lord spoke to her, I just wanted your yes. Go back to the sisters. What's He want from you tonight? A deep-seated yes.

Everyone, please look me in the eye. I tell you that respectfully. But I want you to hear what I'm going to say.

Will you be okay when He dismisses the crowds? Because He will. And the scripture says, and He dismissed the crowds. That day's coming, friend.

Pastor, you might have a megachurch of 50 campuses. Those crowds will be gone one day. There'll be a day where young Davids are raised up, and God will begin to draw you to Himself into the depths of the shadows.

You'll get less invitations. Will Jesus be enough for you? It's easier to say yes than to live it. Will Jesus still be your food when the people are gone? Ushers, just help me there.

Please listen. The scripture says, listen, listen. Pastor Benny mentioned it last night.

Thou takest away their breath. Thou takest away their breath, and they go into the dust, and they die. Then what does the Lord do? Thou send forth Your Spirit, and they are created.

I have a question for you tonight. What comes first? The death or the life? The death. And in closing, before we receive Holy Communion, I want to say as clearly as I know that the one who was born of a virgin, by the Spirit, lived a perfect and holy life, completely yielded to His Father, the one who was betrayed, rejected, forsaken by the ones He healed, the one who was not received by His own, His own people Israel, the one, the beautiful one.

It's like you start talking about Him. It's like you can see Him. Your heart comes alive.

That one who came to His disciples when they were in trouble, walking four miles on a storm-tossed sea to get to them, the gentle, holy Christ, the man from Galilee, the holy teacher and rabbi whose words are our life. Where shall we go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life, that one who healed Malchus' ear, this gracious, holy, unmatched, loving God, wrapped Himself in a body humble enough to ask His disciples to pray with Him as His body's sweat drops of blood Nobody moving right now, please. That Jesus who was bound by His own creation, pulled away, judged while still being the judge, stripped naked.

That's what Matthew's Gospel says, and they stripped Him so that we would be clothed in His precious glory. The one whose robe is dipped in blood so that our robe would be white, who gave His back to the scourge so that we could be healed tonight, whose beard was plucked and face marred beyond recognition, who received the spittle of an entire garrison while bleeding in front of them as God's holy offering, the one who was nailed to the tree and traded heaven's diadem for a crown of thorns, suspended between the heavens and the earth, to cleanse the heavens and reconcile us to our Father, this Jesus who willingly gave up His life and bowed His head first and then breathed His last to tell us, I am in control of this. You don't take my life.

I lay it down. That's why He bowed His precious face first and then breathed His last. This is an offering, friends, that Jesus whom the earth mourned because man didn't find Him worthy.

The sun was hidden and the rocks exploded and the earth broke because the Ancient of Days hung before them. Hear me, hear me well, as humbly but as clearly as I know to say this. He is the Lord.

He is God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He is the Lord and He is the Savior of the world, worthy of all honor and glory and worship unto the ages of ages. Amen.

This is the Lord, friends. Can you stand to your feet?

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