

The Holy Word of God

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos' sermon highlights the essential role of faith in the believer's journey, urging a deeper reliance on Scripture and the presence of Jesus amidst trials and worship.

Duration: 30:48

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Word Of God", "Faith", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the significance of faith as a substance and evidence of things hoped for, drawing from Hebrews 11 and 12. He encourages believers to lay aside burdens and sin, focusing on Jesus as the source of endurance and joy in their spiritual journey. Koulianos highlights the importance of consistent faithfulness, passing tests from God, and the necessity of clinging to the Word to avoid a distorted view of faith. He calls for maturity in believers, urging them to embrace challenges and maintain their song of praise amidst life's difficulties. Ultimately, he reminds the congregation that true strength comes from humility and reliance on God.

Transcript

I want to turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 12. I was going to finish my series on, our series on discerning the voice of God, but let's just follow the Lord here. Now, before I read verse one of chapter 12, notice what does chapter 12 begin with? What word? Therefore, so that points us back to everything prior, specifically chapter 11.

And chapter 11 is really about faith and the heroes of faith. Faith is not something you conjure up. Faith is not a denomination.

It's become one, but that's not what faith is. Faith is a substance. And that's verse one of chapter 11.

Look at that before we go to 12. Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen.

Faith is not the mere repetition of words. Faith is substance. And the Bible calls the Holy Spirit the spirit of faith, Zechariah chapter 12.

In other words, if you want great faith, spend a great amount of time with the faithful one, who is faithful, the scripture says. That means he's full of it, it is him. But I want you to notice here what a victory faith

actually is.

Because the Bible says that faith is the substance here and the evidence. The miracle is not the evidence. It's the know that you know that you know.

That's the evidence. Once you grab onto that, it's game over. What you cannot see, faith is the evidence.

What you're hoping for will happen and the evidence that it will happen is that there is faith in your soul. And you cannot separate faith and his presence. He is the spirit of faith.

So Hebrews chapter 11 goes through this hall of fame of faith and in one portion in chapter 11, it actually says, by faith, listen, they subdued kingdoms. They subdued, listen, nations by faith. Not their wayward teen.

They subdued nations with their faith in God. The Roman Empire sealed its fate when it spilled the blood of Christians. Not only did it grow the church, but it was their demise in the spirit.

By faith, these champions subdued kingdoms. Could you imagine subduing America with great faith? And so the scripture in chapter 11 goes on to list these amazing people. Now we get to chapter 12, therefore, listen, we also.

Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, listen to this next part. Let us lay aside every weight. Let us lay aside every weight.

And the sin, listen to the language now, which so easily ensnares us. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. How do we do this? What's the gasoline on the journey? Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Now, if you're wondering what Jesus is like, what's the heart posture of making it to the end? Listen carefully. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Despising shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

How do you make it to the end? Looking unto Jesus. What's the journey like with Jesus? Joy and the cross at the same time. What's the promise ahead for those who endure their cross with joy? Being seated with him in heavenly places.

That's what it says. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. The father did not leave him in the grave.

Say thank you, Jesus. The father always exalts and glorifies those who are humble. And the secret is looking to Jesus.

How many of you wanna be mature believers? I do. Because the scripture tells us to be. You have to be really patient.

You're gonna all say amen to this one. With immature believers. They freak you out.

Sometimes you just laugh at them. Especially in charismania. We're an interesting old bunch, aren't we? We'll believe anything.

Any, I mean anything. Except for what the Bible says about communion. That's too much.

But we believe in riding on carpets through the galaxies. But we can't just take the word for the word when we receive communion. That's where we get all theological and spiritual.

You tell someone, man, I saw a unicorn jump through your bedroom window in the spirit yesterday. It must have been very, very, it had to be an amazing day for you. We're a bizarre bunch.

Well, you are, no. But, the church needs mature believers. And what I wanna say is the longer you walk with Jesus, the more you should be clinging to the word.

If we don't, we will define our own faith. Now you may have the fundamentals right. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

But there's more to this right now. There's more to this walk than being doctrinally strong in those areas. Eventually you have to interact with these really interesting creations called humans.

And it's that interaction, as I said last week, that God uses to remove the measure of ourselves so that Jesus might shine more brightly. So, if we do not hold to the scriptures, we have a different view of Jesus and a different view of the Christian life. So let me say unequivocally, if the Bible tells us to do something, the Bible is right every single time.

Every time. There are many mornings when life comes at me and the devil is not an amateur and he knows when to throw stuff at preachers. But there are many Sunday mornings, many, where I'm either tired and something's going on, where I just don't feel in the natural like getting up here and doing this.

Until I come in the room and feel the presence of the Lord and realize I was born for this. You should feel the same with your calling. Whether it's a business or all of us have an assignment from heaven that the devil is after.

He's after that. And he has a counterfeit plan. He has a counterfeit blueprint that's the exact opposite of heaven's for you.

But I think something we are being invited into discovering or maybe rediscovering is the beauty of consistent faithfulness. Listen to me carefully. Whether you have the energy or not.

Whether you feel like Billy Graham that Sunday morning or not. The mandate is the mandate. The calling is the calling.

Faithfulness is not limited to how we feel in the moment. I am not saying we should not feel and experience the presence of God. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about when life comes at you to the degree to rip the energy out of you that's needed to fulfill the call of God on your life, you get back on the horse. If, you know, this blows me away. Well, let me share, let me preface what I'm about to share with this statement.

You don't need another prophetic word most likely. We've all had a lot of them. I'll take them.

If they're the Lord, you know it. But the lack thereof is not gonna keep you from your destiny. What we need is to pass tests.

That's what we need to do is to pass tests. And now maybe some of you are just brainiacs but tests were hard for me in school. And tests with the Lord are not easy.

There is no more thorough test giver than Jesus. And his tests are not meant to destroy us. His tests are meant, listen, listen, don't miss this, to prepare us for the age to come.

You say, I thought they're for my destiny and calling. They are, but I wanna lift you higher. The tests are there to prepare us for the age to come, which is an eternal age.

Do you understand? This is a huge deal. Jesus has much bigger plans up his sleeve regarding his agenda for the ages. As badly as I cannot wait to get into our building he has way bigger plans for the age to come than whether or not we get into our building.

Of course we want it, but let's just look higher and all that'll just happen by default. Are you getting it? So his ability to test us, not tempt us, that's very different, but his ability to test us and try our motives is vital. A past test will take you much further in the spirit.

I'm telling you right now, if you pass a test that is a seasonal test, it's a long one, you pass that test, it'll take you much further than some person you don't know just giving you a word. Because when you receive a word, you don't realize you're signing up for a test. Because Jesus tests the word in us.

We're all like, yeah, more, more, more. The Lord's going, you have 12 tests coming in these next 12 years. And he has to, because the word is purer than silver tried in fire, the dross has to be removed, not from the word, from our interaction with what God has spoken to us.

It's when we die that God entrusts us with the most. The less the new building or anything else has my heart, the quicker the building comes. I'm not talking about keeping it before our vision, of course, but bricks and mortar cannot have our soul.

And when they don't have your soul or your thoughts and your motives, the Lord says, now I can trust you because you will not idolize the creation over the creator, which is what he tells the Romans. Pass your test, you pass that test. And if you failed it, repent.

Repent and repent quickly. Some people find their identity in the refusal to let go of the past 30 years ago. And Jess and I know people in our own lives who refuse to let go of stuff from 50 years ago, 40 years ago.

Such a bitterness sets in that they cannot, they're literally unable at this point to celebrate somebody else's breakthrough. And it's a miserable existence. And when you live that way, God's creation, your brothers and sisters aren't viewed as brothers and sisters.

You've always got your guard up. And life, listen, I've been mulling through, I've been mulling through the content that we're gonna teach at the pastor's conference. And if you wanna come, if you're in the ministry, it's gonna be amazing.

I haven't been this excited in a long time about an event. And I can tell how an event's gonna go usually before, because the Lord begins showing me things and speaking to me, and I almost begin to hear myself in my session going, if you wanna be a pastor, you need to know that this is what you're signing up for. And I'm not gonna tell you the points, but they are hilarious and true.

I think God, and I think, I know, that God gives us the specific assignment that he knows we need the most so that we might be the most like him. I see that as a biblical pattern. I see him take a stutterer like Moses and turn him into a deliverer of a nation.

Moses was an insecure man in moments. You see it in the scriptures. It's like, I can't talk, I can't do it.

The Lord sends Aaron. But Moses needed to be out in front because Moses didn't wanna be. And the ones who don't need to be out front are the ones who really wanna be.

Can I have five more minutes? I won't keep you long. Is this helping you? Yes. Promise? Yes.

All right. Remember, I'm half impaired here. God gets most glory when he calls us to what we're not naturally equipped to perform.

So if you don't feel equipped in the natural, you are a perfect candidate. Who was that, Chanel? Oh no, somebody. But what's the agenda? What is God after? He wants us to be like his son.

So much of what we run from, we need to learn to embrace. One time, Jesse and I were, not one time, 10,000 times, I'm just being real, we were in a disagreement. I had a pastor say, I've never disagreed with my wife.

I'm like, I'm not gonna come to your church anymore. I don't believe you. It's happened many times, like we'll argue, and I'll be like, or she'll be like, you haven't said sorry.

And she'll be like, well, I'm gonna go to the Lord. I'm like, that's not the way it works. You don't get to go to the Lord first.

It's not what the Bible says. And that's the fun part. Because then it can become an argument, well, you think you're the Lord? No, of course not.

Are you better than the Lord? No, I didn't write the recipe book. Because it's much more convenient to just go to the Lord. Until the Lord says, no more presents, go to Jess.

And so Joy Dawson told me in the early days of our marriage, the first one to say sorry wins, remember that. What a gift it was to get that. What's the point? We need that.

I am an introvert. I like to play golf and fish and be out in nature. That's how I rejuvenate.

So soul winning in public, when I'm not on a platform, that was always a challenge for me. But it didn't change the gospel or the Bible. Preach the gospel.

Preach the gospel. It doesn't change the leading of the Holy Spirit. If he prompts me at millennia to lay hands on someone, I can't tell the Lord I'm an introvert.

He knows. But Jesus is not an introvert. He's not limited to some label.

He's all in all. So the Father's goal is to break Michael out of Michael so that he can be more like his son for the age to come. Can you help me, Joel? So I want us, listen, I know, I know, life is hard.

Life is hard. I wish someone would have told me that and I wouldn't have believed it. Life's never hard at like 16.

Do you remember some of the decisions you made in college? Do you remember how much, how little sleep you actually needed when you were 20? Do you remember that? How life changes. But life is hard. And when you add children and then grandchildren, and let's say you have 12 grandchildren, now you have 12 times, not addition, multiplication, you have 12 times the opportunity to have an issue.

And if you have a church, you have a couple thousand times more the probability of having an issue. Then you throw a school on top of that where you actually care about people and walk with them. Now you've got a few hundred more times the probability that there'll be an issue.

My life is no more stressful than yours. But what I am saying is you can fly above it. Fly above it.

There's an old saying in the church, fly higher than the snake line. Get up higher. And that's why it was so important how there was such a focus on praise this morning.

Because I've told you this before, if you don't lose your song, you are not out of the fight. Don't you lose your song. Every time you, every time you biblically and in a heartfelt way praise the Lord, shackles are removed.

And princes, the Psalms say, are bound. And fetters are placed on princes and powers. So you don't need to go around binding princes and powers, just sing.

Sing to Jesus. And until your dying breath, don't you dare give up your song. When you're broken, sing.

When you're happy, sing. When you don't have the energy, sing. If you can't sing, hum.

You say, is that in the Bible? It sure is, making melody in our heart. It's a sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit. What should I sing? If you don't know what to sing, sing the words, sing Psalms, the Bible says, hymns and spiritual songs.

You say, how could this help my issue? It makes no sense. I don't see the connection between worshiping Jesus and praising him and my own deliverance from my issue. You have to remember, our weapons are not carnal.

I said, and you know what that means? Our weapons are not fleshly. Our weapons are not flesh and blood. Just like the enemy is not flesh and blood.

Our weapons are not carnal. They are mighty. That means they come from God.

They are mighty, and what do they do? To the pulling down of strongholds. I feel the Lord now. What is a stronghold? It's a house you let the enemy build.

It's a house we let the enemy build because we don't have the boldness or the spiritual discernment to blow up the first brick when it is laid in the structure. Bill always used to say, I can't keep a bird from landing on my head, but I can keep it from building a nest. These strongholds are thoughts, thought processes, ways of thinking.

That's what the Bible says. Casting down, Paul said, every high thought that exalts itself, every imagination that exalts itself against the knowledge of Jesus, against the Scriptures, every thought process, even if it comes from who I love, don't misunderstand me, from a counselor. We use them.

Don't get me wrong, but the counselor's perspective is not higher than the Scriptures. The Scriptures were around a lot longer, and they will be around well after that counselor is in the grave. Say thank you, Jesus.

Don't say I'm against counselors. We have them. I love them.

I believe in them. We see them. Jess and I, I'm all in.

But these thoughts, these imaginations, one by one, the devil builds a stronghold. And the thing about the devil's strongholds is they don't protect you. You see, the Lord is a refuge and a strong tower.

But the devil's stronghold will turn on you. Listen to me. Some of you are gonna get really rescued.

The devil's strongholds will turn on you. They will pacify you and pet you and tell you you don't need to do real business with God, that you don't need to open your heart to the Word and to people who God has given you, and you start believing stuff. And all of a sudden, brick by brick, it is laid and constructed.

And then once you're a slave, boom, it turns on you and crushes you. The Lord is a refuge. He's much different.

We need to build godly strongholds, godly strongholds. And the Bible refers to the church as a house that's being built. We are living stones.

Jesus is the chief cornerstone. And he's building a house that is meant to last from age to age to age to age. So get your foot in the river and trust it.

And trust the Lord. But I want this to be a house where walls die. I want this to be a house that is mask-free.

I don't mean COVID masks, though, thank God. I'm talking about this mask we put on that nobody can get through, that nobody's allowed to touch. Let's all be that way.

Let's be humble enough to offer our hearts to Jesus and his people so that we lose our blind spots. And this is what I'll end with. Do we have communion? May I have the elements? Thank you.

Listen, if you would, just please look at me. Do you remember the passage when the apostles were celebrating for being beaten on the temple steps? They were celebrating it. They prayed a prayer.

There they are being beaten for preaching Jesus in the book of Acts. And they rejoiced, saying, thank you, Lord, that we are counted worthy to suffer for his name, for your name. Why would they do that? Because they knew they needed it.

Weakness, friends, listen, weakness is glorious. Natural weakness. I don't mean physical, I mean self.

Weakness is glorious. Meekness is glorious. Meekness implies softness, pliability, moldability.

I'm not talking about not talking much. You can be a very reserved, quiet person and be hard in the heart. But meekness implies something else, a gentleness.

That's what I wanna mean.

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