

# Friends of the Bridegroom (Pt. 3)

by Michael Koulianos

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*Michael Koulianos emphasizes the transformative power of words and the necessity of speaking with wisdom and meekness in our Christian walk.*

**Duration:** 57:25

**Scripture:** James 3:1

**Topics:** "Bridegroom", "The Power of Words", "Speaking with Kindness"

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## Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the significance of our words and their impact on our relationships with others and God, drawing from James 3 to illustrate the power of the tongue. He warns against the dangers of speaking negatively and highlights the importance of speaking with kindness and humility, as true friends of the Bridegroom should. Koulianos also connects this to the way we treat others, reminding us that how we speak to and about God's people reflects our relationship with Him. He encourages the congregation to build boundaries against negativity and to cultivate a spirit of peace and gentleness in their speech. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of the weight of our words and the necessity of aligning them with God's wisdom.

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## Transcript

All right, let's take our Bibles. I'm gonna continue with our teaching on Friends of the Bridegroom. Is that all right? You happy this morning? Okay, wasn't that wonderful seeing so many people come to Jesus? Come on, let's thank the Lord.

Thank you, Lord. My voice is feeling strong, but I'm trying not to carry the whole meeting vocally and our team's doing amazing. Well done, Amy, well done.

So proud of you, so beautiful. And our worship team, oh gosh, we're spoiled, aren't we? I love you all so much, thank you. Let's let them know how thankful we are.

Yeah, it's true, we're just a gift from heaven. All right, turn to James three, verse one, and I'm gonna read 17 verses and break all church growth rules with one act. Gonna read many, many verses and break all the rules.

God forbid you get a lot of Bible. Bring it's right, I will. Well, he will, but we're gonna go for it today.

Holy Spirit, this is your word. You are the author of the scripture. You inspired the scripture, and the scriptures are holy, and the scriptures are spirit and life.

And so we live by your word. That's what you said, Jesus, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And so our hearts are open.

Our hearts are soft. Say this out loud, my heart is open. My heart is humble.

I have come to receive the holy word of God. Glorify your name through the scriptures, Lord, I pray. As you already have, do it this morning.

In Jesus' name, amen. James three, verse one. My brethren, let not many of you become like me.

Become teachers. Oh yeah. Evidently this verse did not find many people's feeds, social media feeds, anyways.

Everybody wants to preach, teach, start something. Okay, let me keep it moving. Knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment, for we all stumble in many things.

If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man. So here we see that, hey, we all stumble at different areas, but the real issue is what we say. Able also to bridle the whole body.

In other words, if you can tame your tongue, you can tame the whole body. Indeed, now he's painting an example, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us. I want you to think of the strength of a horse.

One time a lady asked me to pray for her horse. Growing up Greek Orthodox, I didn't even know if that was legal. Can you actually pray for a horse? Jess was pregnant with Theo, eight months or six months? Very pregnant, yeah.

I'll let you say that part. She was very pregnant. And this lady said, my horse is sick.

We were over dinner the night before and I thought, well, big deal, it's a horse, you know, who cares? And she said, I paid a lot of money for it. And then when she told us how much these competitive horses cost, I thought, wow, I'd be wanting prayer for it too. And she said, can you come pray for my horse? And I thought, when? And she's like, like now, or in the morning.

So we drive over to this, I didn't grow up with horses. We had goats, we didn't have them, we didn't own them, but we had a lamb every year that we killed and ate. And in my community in Tarpon Springs, we weren't all horses, like we weren't ranch people.

We were, we saw a lot of pit bulls, goats, stray cats, that's about it. And fish we had in our aquariums that we caught. Well, so I walked up to this, we walked up to the stable, and I said, well, where's the horse? And that thing stuck its head out, and it looked like it was from Jurassic Park.

I mean, the head came out like a giraffe and this big black stallion from Europe. And she goes, pray. And so I went to stretch my hand, and she said, no.

Walk with me into the stable. This actually happened. I said, Jess will go.

She's pregnant. So Jess rebukes me in front of a lady. She says, what kind of weakling are you? You're sending me, pregnant, into a stall with a horse.

I didn't know they were that big. As I said, I never rode one. I still have no desire to do it.

So we got up to this thing, and it was massive and jacked and powerful. And she goes, the sickness is all over its muscular system. And I thought, God can heal it from a distance.

Why do I have to be in here? But I felt bad for her. And she walks me to the back of the horse, and she goes, you're gonna start back here. And don't startle it, because it will kick you.

And I'm thinking, why do we have to start back here if you don't want me to startle it? So I touched the horse real quick. I said, Jesus healed the horse, you know. I don't even say that.

I think I said that, to be honest with you. I was like, okay. And she goes, no, no, no, go around.

Anyways, that was my first real experience with the size and power of a horse. Here, the scripture is saying through James that an entire horse, and all its power and glory and fury, can be controlled through a bridle. By moving its mouth, I can move everything it is.

It's amazing. I said, that's amazing. Look also at ships.

Now, these I am familiar with. Although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Remember, he's comparing this to the tongue.

Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. Ooh, this is powerful. And how great, how great a forest a little fire kindles.

In other words, one word can set the whole forest of your life on fire. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body.

Do you understand you can defile your physical well-being by unspiritual, demonic talk? And sets on fire the course of nature and is set on fire by hell. If you wanna bring hell into a situation, begin to speak in a devilish way. And I'm gonna get to that.

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. Listen, he's saying we can tame a lion, a tiger, a horse. Look at this next portion.

But no man can tame the tongue. That tongue is a wild animal. It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison.

Now, how many of you know that poison kills? Poison doesn't give you a bad day. So when the Bible calls bitterness a poison, it kills you. The Bible calls bitterness poisonous.

It is a poison. You don't give people poison to give them a headache or to discourage them. You give people poison to kill them.

And so I want us to understand the power of ungodly, unbiblical speaking. It's very important. Now, obviously, faith talk and some word of faith perspective is not in line with the full breadth of the Scripture and in the historic church.

There's no doubt. Some of that stuff's gone way too far. Absolutely.

So I'm not talking about that. But I am telling you that it's by faith and through God's speaking, through God's speaking, that the worlds were formed. I am telling you that words are incredibly powerful.

They carry the life and the power of life and death is in the tongue. If you've ever had your heart broken, let's say it was a parent who was meant to protect you and shattered your heart with their words, you discovered it was probably easier had they spanked you than ripped you to shreds verbally. If you wanna break a heart, that usually lasts longer than a physical injury.

The tongue is unruly, it's evil, it's full of deadly poison. With it, we bless our God and Father and with it, we curse men. Now, here, the Scriptures are talking about this great dichotomy, that the church blesses God and the Father and then curses men.

Who have been made in the similitude or the image of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. Now, listen, this is a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful description.

My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Listen, does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter water from the same opening? In other words, when you go to a spring, anybody ever swim in a spring? Have you ever had a drink from a spring? Let's just say it's not a spring, let's just say it's a vat of water, a Zephyr Hills water, whatever those things are called. Containers, if you tap that thing and you press the button, imagine if you didn't know whether you were getting salt water or fresh water.

And here Paul, or James is saying, it doesn't make sense to be both. Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives? Or a grapevine bear figs? Here, just like Jesus, he's connecting the heart and our words, in other words, Christians should speak Christ-like, with a Christ-like tone, that does matter as well. Thus, no spring yields both salt and fresh.

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in meekness of wisdom. Now here we see the connection between meekness and the way we talk. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

Whenever somebody chooses to do damage with words, there's always self-seeking and envy involved. Selfishness produces painful speech. If I really care about the other person, I'm gonna be careful what I say.

This wisdom, and sometimes it sounds smart, so here I love this, that the scripture's attacking this. This wisdom, in other words, it may sound wise, but the scripture tears down this perspective. This wisdom does not descend from above, but it is earthly.

Friends, you don't want, you don't want to gain your worldview from the world, because I'm gonna show you what the next word says after earthly, maybe you can do it, sensual and demonic. So here the scriptures compare that which is earthly, that which is birthed in the world to demonic strategy. For where envy and self-seeking exist, so is confusion and every evil thing.

Hold on a minute. Where envy and self-seeking, and those two are brother and sister. They are parallel tracks, parallel rails on the same track.

Where those two things exist, every evil thing exists with it. I want you to just ponder that for a moment. How many believe the scriptures are the word of God? So we don't get to shift that, we need to allow them to shift us.

I told our school, our Jesus school, I taught on Wednesday, it was my first session with them, and I laid out the 15 things we do there, which started with 11, they've grown to 15, and the 15 we never do. And one of those core values is we never cause division, because the Trinity is three in one. It is the culture of God to be united.

Therefore, the culture of his body should be to be united. Are you following me? So, another thing I told them is that the word wins. The word wins when we don't understand the word, that just means we need to give more study to the word in time and prayer.

But we don't throw portions of the scripture out, and another thing I told the students is, I'm going with the Bible that's been around way before us, and it'll be around way after us, I'm going with the Bible. Communism could not take out the Bible, it tried. It'll never work.

In fact, one of the great leaders of the communist movement who gave his life to affecting people so that they would forget about God and destroy the Bible, his house became a Bible printing press, a factory for Bibles. That's the wisdom of God. The Bible will be around a long time.

The Bible will be known and discovered in heaven. Forever, oh Lord, your word is settled in heaven. What I told the students was this, look, you're getting free Jesus school without the tuition.

I told the students this, if the word is settled in heaven, it should be settled in Apopka, in Longwood, in Altamont, in Sanford. If there's no debate over the word there, I'm going with the word, I'm going with the scriptures. If I say something that's not biblical, never believe it.

Don't ever believe anything I say if it's not from the scriptures when it comes to teaching. I gave you full permission to disagree with me. In fact, please do disagree with me if I do not teach the scriptures.

But we have a, there's just this lifestyle in today's generation that wants to deconstruct that which constructed us. It's hilarious. If Hitler couldn't do it and the communist regimes of the past could not do it, the Bible's gonna be around.

And I'm going with that. If armies couldn't destroy it, I'm going with that. If prophetic history is falling in line with perfection, I'm going with that.

If the life of Jesus fulfilled hundreds of Old Testament prophecies to the detail, I am going with that. And I would even encourage you who are history buffs, go study the history of Israel and the history, the true history of the life of Jesus. And you're gonna be blown away by the accuracy of the scriptures.

The scriptures are amazingly powerful. They are infallible and they are inspired by God. Build your life on the word of God.

Now, this Bible says, it is challenging to imagine it because we cannot see vastly enough. Our view is not panoramic enough or deep enough. The Bible says we're self-seeking and envy exists, dwelleth every evil work.

And this is the sin of Satan, to become jealous of what was not his. He wanted to be God. And you're gonna find that this is a common trend throughout Israel's challenges and even the early church's challenges.

The desire to want more because the heart is not satisfied in Jesus alone. When you have ministry teams and a worship team, you can't put all of them up here at once. They can't all preach at the same time.

But if somebody is insecure and not satisfied in the presence of God, them not leading a set or them not preaching a sermon or them not lining up in the prayer team can reveal insecurity. In that moment when the insecurity is revealed, we have a choice. The choice is to say I'm satisfied in God's presence or to allow the Lord to expose the fact that we're satisfied up here only.

It's a great issue. When people say you haven't given me more, there may as well be saying I'm not satisfied in Jesus. Everybody wants to be hidden until they're hidden.

I'm just in the shadow. Yeah, but you're trying to get out with this conversation. Every evil thing exists where there is envy and self-seeking.

It's the danger of coveting. That's why it's in the 10 Commandments. But the wisdom that is from above, so now we see the differences in wisdom here.

The wisdom that is above is first pure, in other words it's holy. Peaceable, that means it exists to be a peacemaker. Let me give you a tip if you want to be a friend of the bridegroom.

Disconnect yourself from people who feed on drama. I don't even care, listen to me, if you're related to them, I'm not saying don't talk to them and cut yourself off, but if they bring division, if they crave conflict, you are going to have to build boundaries. If those boundaries upset people, communicate them lovingly, but don't you move them.

If you build them properly, they will have to react to the godliness in your life. It's an invitation to repentance or judgment, that's on them. Because words are poisonous, poisonous.

Listen, they will kill you and your destiny. They will kill your destiny. We see this in the life of Jesus, we see such balance.

How many of you know, he's just so perfect, so whole, so complete, there's no weakness in him. But we see in the life of Jesus that he's there on the cross, he's suspended, skinned alive, that sword is piercing Mary's soul that was prophesied by Simeon. And he looks down and sees his mother and looks at John and says, you take care of her, basically.

And then he tells Mary, this is your son now. He loved John and obviously he loved Mary, made sure both were taken care of. So we see his focus here on family.

In his worst moment, he's thinking about his mom. Oh, what an amazing savior. I said, what an amazing savior.

Family is vital, family is beautiful, it's important. But then all of the, prior to that, Mary and her sons, Jesus' brothers show up, and Jesus is preaching. And one of them says, hey, your mother and brothers are here.

And he looks at the crowd, he says, who are my mothers and brother? Who's my family? But those who hear the word of God and obey it. That was a boundary. That was a boundary.

In other words, when I'm doing this, I'm doing this. You have to have those in your life. Don't be prideful when you begin building the boundaries.

Married couples are the worst at this, newly married couples, the worst. They literally think they're Braveheart, both of them. The family pays for the wedding, raises them, wipes their, you know what's for, I don't know how many years you do that.

I don't know how long that lasts, but I remember. Thank God. Doing all this stuff to raise the, you know, you're working your tail off.

And they get married, and the boundaries come like Braveheart, and they bring a fence. It's true. Start turning your phone off at like 3.30 p.m. Just to prove to your new spouse that you love them.

All the parents who've been through it said, you can say amen, I know your kids are in here. You're all right. Do it with love, but do it according to the scriptures.

Amen? This wisdom is from above, it's pure, it's peaceable, it's gentle, gentle, that's the how. That's the how you use your tongue. It should be gentle.

Meekness is wise. Say that out loud. Meekness is wise.

That's why the meek get the earth. Because the proud, and the boastful, and the violent cannot have the earth. God won't trust them with it.

That's why David could not be entrusted with the temple. Too much bloodshed. You need to learn, if you want to be a friend of the bridegroom, to allow the Lord to take vengeance.

Not you. If you want to be entrusted with the presence of God, you cannot crave blood. You cannot crave drama.

You cannot crave war. Peaceable and gentle. This is mighty in the kingdom.

That's why we need a greater revelation of the Lamb of God. Because the Lamb of God conquers through meekness. Today's church, on many fronts, conquers with volume.

And they call themselves warriors. You have no revelation of the Lamb, therefore you are not a new covenant warrior. As Jesus said, you don't know what spirit you are of.

Don't you remember when they said, Lord, they won't receive us, let us call fire. The disciples said, let's kill them. They didn't receive the gospel, let's smoke them.

That's what happened. They came in, they were rejected. Hey, Lord, let's blow them up.

That's exactly what happened. Exactly, fire and brimstone. Take them out.

And Jesus looked at them, he said, don't you know what spirit you're of? Don't you know you're walking with the Lamb? That's heavenly wisdom. Heavenly wisdom destroys the prideful devil with lowly meekness. Heavenly wisdom, listen carefully, heavenly wisdom never, ever exalts itself.

You see, as long as you see Jesus and the cross as merely something he did, rather than who he is, you'll never see him properly. If he came as the Lamb, if that's his nature, that is a game changer. But if you see him as Thor, who happened to stop by the cross to pay a mere penalty off, you'll never see him rightly.

What I'd like to submit to you this morning is that there's power in turning the other cheek. I would like to submit to you that the kingdom, hear me well, you're gonna need it, I feel the Lord. I would like to submit to you that the kingdom moves forward in its conquering nature when you're most Lamb-like.

The world has never seen such a warrior. Because this, typically, in a natural war, the goal is to stay alive and kill. Jesus came to win the war by dying.

Washing feet is powerful, even if they got corns on them. It's powerful, it's powerful. I think we have the wrong view of Jesus.

He's not an avenger, he's the Lamb, he's the Lamb of God. But as a sheep is brought to its shearers in silence, he uttered not a word. When you learn to obey God's red light, when you feel like defending yourself, when you learn how to obey that red light, God'll turn his green light on and get involved.

When you go like this, God'll take two steps that way. I've seen it, I've seen it. And you just stay faithful.

Keep bearing fruit, keep bearing fruit. And then one day, God is gonna create a few lines before the throne and there'll be a massive fruit audit. And all of heaven's gonna see the fruit that God gave you and then that little basket of rotten fruit that God gave the naysayers.

So stay faithful, stay faithful. Stay humble, stay lowly, be generous. Don't become a slave of this world and this age.

Don't love money. The simple stuff, you know, the stuff that we heard about when we first got saved, before we got so spiritual, we got weird, turned into Martians. I'm talking about simple, biblical Christianity.

There's a great liberty that comes when you're not bound by material wealth. When God starts to bless you, that could be the test. The moment you stop being sensitive to the Spirit and obeying what he's saying, give that away, give that away, do this, do that, the moment that thing gets dialed down, you need to go into sacrificial mode and stir that thing up again.

You know, we judge people like some of the monastic movements like the St. Francis birth, we judge them because, well, God wants us all blessed. You know, at least the guy said, I will not be a slave of earthly possession. I'm not saying they got it all right, but to love money is the root of all evil.

This kind of stuff. This all right? It's full of mercy and good fruit. Listen to this, without partiality, see, this wisdom doesn't compromise.

No, don't think for a moment that you don't get to speak the truth. It's without partiality and it's also without hypocrisy. In other words, God lives inside of you.

Jesus himself is indwelling us by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the outflow of our life should be Christ-like. And such a lifestyle, such a wisdom here, James is saying, is without hypocrisy.

In other words, if you say you're a believer and you don't speak like one, hypocrisy is involved. Now, the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Peacemaking requires making. It's work. But the work, if you follow the biblical pattern, will conform you into the image of Jesus.

All right, let me say this. Very quickly, I wanted to read that passage. That's almost my whole sermon.

Back to A Friend of the Bridegroom. Why did I read that? Write this down. If I want to be his friend, I must learn to tame my tongue.

If I want to be his friend, I must learn to tame my tongue. I don't think we realize the weight of our words. I don't believe we see or view what we say the way God sees what we say.

Say this. Say, Lord, I want your perspective. It is very important.

We want to see things the way the Lord sees them. To turn your Bibles to Acts 9, this is good. I said, this is good.

This is gonna build a foundation in your life. You are getting a nice filet with the bone in it. Philadelphia style, tops crusty.

Acts 9, verse one. This is the road to Damascus conversion. Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the way, those are the Christians, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

So he was out to take prisoners. And he was there, by the way, holding the clothes of those who killed Stephen. Remember that.

And the word Stephen is the Greek word, Stephanos, which means crowned one. The first martyr named the crowned one. How many of you know Jesus isn't standing at the right hand of the Father? He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

You know that, right? But when Stephen died, what did he see? Jesus standing. Jesus stood in honor of somebody who followed his path. Verse three, as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

Then he fell to the ground, and he heard a voice saying to him, this is the first thing out of Jesus' mouth, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Now, am I getting this wrong? Because verse two says he was taking those who were members of the way, hoping to bind them and take them back to Jerusalem. It seems like he's just persecuting the church, but not the Lord. Is Jesus confused here? Does Jesus see this massive chasm and canyon between him and his people? And what I wanna give you now is this correlation, this relationship between touching the Lord's people and touching him.

Now, notice he doesn't say here, why are you just harassing them? He says, you're persecuting me. Now, Saul discovered very quickly that he was losing the fight. He was blind and on the ground.

He had no idea how it happened until he saw the Lord. But we must understand the way God sees how we treat others. It's very important.

And again, if you're asking, what does this have to do with being a friend of the bridegroom? Everything, because if you wanna be the bridegroom's friend, you must speak kindly to the bride. Let me give you one Old Testament passage. I'll give you a couple.

Can I have till 1210? All right. Go to Numbers 12. You know what's happening here right now? As you receive the word of God like this, God is building a reservoir within you for the days ahead.

You don't even know he's building it. Some of you might be going, gosh, it's a lot of Bible. You have no idea what's being deposited.

God is stuffing you with solid food, solid iron that'll be a foundation for you and the generations after you. You need to teach your children this. Numbers 12, verse one.

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. For he had married an Ethiopian woman. Said it twice, two different ways.

Thank you, Lord, we got the picture. She's from Ethiopia, we got it. So they said, this is Aaron and Miriam.

Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also? And the Lord, but they were talking to Moses. You do know there's always an extra guest at the table. You know that, right? You know, Jesus doesn't need you to open his ears.

Say that, the Lord heard it. My, my. Now the man Moses was very humble.

More than all who were on the face of the earth. Moses wrote that, by the way. That's when you know you're disconnected.

And give all the glory to God. Imagine Moses writing, Moses is the most humble one. Verse four.

Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting. In other words, Aaron and Miriam, if you think you've got it like that, let me take you to the stadium, to the place of presence, where everything flows from. And we'll see how good you really are in the glory.

And then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle. And called Aaron and Miriam, and they both went forward. I'm sure when the Lord left Moses his name out of that one, Aaron and Miriam knew what was up.

Moses probably like, I'm gonna ask for y'all. I'll be right here. Verse six, then he said, hear now my words.

If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision. Or speak to him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses.

You know, God never, ever bought the parenting tip that it's illegal to bring comparison. He is faithful and on my house. In other words, you're not.

And now let me talk to you about how I speak to him. Face to face. I speak with him face to face.

Even plainly, not in dark sayings. In other words, like I do you too. And he sees the form of the Lord.

This is the Lord expressing to them the depth of his friendship with Moses. Listen to this now. Since, remember this must be the backdrop, contextually, since I speak face to face with him.

And since he's found a place in my presence that you've not found. And since I revealed my form to him. That's how close we are.

Now, let me read this next portion of the verse. Why then, if Moses and I are that close, why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? In other words, have you lost your mind? Are you crazy? So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them. And he departed.

And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. So Aaron said to Moses, oh my Lord, please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly, and in which we have sinned.

Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed, when he comes out of his mother's womb. And so Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, please heal her. Oh God, I pray.

What a heart. You never glory in someone else's punishment. Never.

Don't ever fall into that. It's fearful to watch it. Contend for mercy.

Don't applaud it. And the Lord said to Moses, if her father had but spit in her face, would she not be a sinner? Would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterwards she may be received again. And so Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again.

And afterward, the people moved from Hezereth and camped in the wilderness of Paran. Okay. Okay.

As I wrap this up, I think what I want you to gain the most is this, that God is deeply connected to the person to your right and left. All right, let me help you. God is more connected to them than you are with your parents, your spouse, or your children.

And God has no problem telling you that, and defending them. Now, if you are in an unhealthy church, this type of teaching can get off. In that, all of us have to trust people that God has anointed and be teachable ourselves.

So I understand so many people have taken this so far. It's become a serve me, open my door, carry my Bible, call me this, can never call me, all of this stuff. Now, I don't think there's anything wrong with calling your pastor, pastor.

I think it's healthy. I mean, you don't walk up to the sheriff, I'm not telling you to call me, I don't need it, but I'm just telling you how I live. I don't walk up to a sheriff and go, hey, Charlie.

You know, my coach to this day, call him coach. I do think we've lost, I'm just telling you this, and I'm not even saying it to this house, I want this to go out into the airwaves. We've lost the honor for those whom lead us into the presence of God and break the bread of life.

I can tell you this, pastoring is the most difficult thing I have ever done and the most rewarding. If you don't learn boundaries and how to have an off switch, you will have dozens of opportunities to have pain or drama every day. I would love to see the church, and that's one of the reasons we're hosting this pastor's conference, because I wanna shower these men and women who are coming with the goodness and the appreciation of the kingdom.

I want them to feel so loved and valued. In many cases, their kids don't even get a vote. They're just thrown into a scenario that they didn't even get a vote.

Or God starts moving and they kind of feel like they didn't even get a vote. Welcome to lordship. But I would love to see the church gain a mass appreciation for those who break the bread of life.

And to treat them accordingly. I used to sit with a man named Ralph Wilkerson. Ralph was very close to Catherine Kuhlman.

He lived near my father-in-law when they lived out in California. And I used to go over there all the time, all the time. I never, ever would have called him Ralph or Ralphie.

I felt like God would kill me. It's like a great leader, a father in the church. I'll never get this young little, like hipster preacher kid came over.

He had the whole thing going, man. He looked like just perfect, right out of a magazine. Had his whole church launch kit.

You know, that whole look going, black frame, everything, it was perfect. Whole deal. I'll forget it, I'm gonna stop.

He calls him Ralph. And in my head I was like, man, first time at the table? How's this gonna go? He goes, Ralph goes, brother, you should call me Pastor Ralph. Why? Because I've given my life to the gospel.

Again, this isn't me, I hope you hear me here. You don't have to trust me. This isn't me trying to get you to treat me a certain way.

It is me saying that I don't think we value, and that's everybody around you as well, God's friends and his bride enough. I don't think we see them as God sees them. I told Benny yesterday, my son, that often times we see people in need and I said, you never know.

The Bible teaches we entertain angels unaware. We don't know. That's what the Bible says.

He said, that makes me uncomfortable. I know. That's why I said it.

That's what the Bible says. Any loyal husband, any normal, godly husband, feels as though he is attacked when his wife is attacked. Amen? Where do you think we got that from? From the Lord.

Peter, when he was restored, may I have the communion elements guys? Want to help me Joel? When Peter was restored, do you have one bud? Yeah, love you. Peter's restored at, on the shore of Galilee. Jesse and I went to that spot in Galilee.

It's I think probably one of our favorites. And there, actually don't hand out the elements yet. Just one second.

There on the shore of Galilee, Peter, he's out in his boat and I love portions of scripture. In John's gospel, when Jesus is raised from the dead, John makes a point to say that he outran Peter and got to the tomb first. That's how you know a guy wrote that.

He's like, FYI, I won the race. Can't get it out of us. It's just there.

He's like, and we heard the news and this disciple outran Peter. Healthy competition. But that doesn't happen when Jesus is cooking fish on the shore of Galilee.

They're out on the boat. They went back to fishing. I love Pastor Ben, he says it's one of the saddest moments in the scriptures when Peter goes, let's just go back to fishing.

And remember where Peter was called from, right? The shore as a fisherman. And do you remember where Peter betrayed the Lord? What was he standing around? Say, a fire. Remember, they were warming themselves.

So now Jesus puts all that together in Peter's restoration. He goes back to the shore that he called Peter from and makes sure that there's a fire there. And musters up, stirs up Peter's memory.

Imagine that, oh gosh, here we are. The same shore he called me from. And a fire there just to remind me of what I did a few days ago.

And Jesus puts all that together and lovingly restores Peter. But he restores him by asking this question, do you love me? Not will you do this and that for me. Do you love me? And Peter says, you know that I love you.

He asks him again, do you love me? You know that I love you. But what does Jesus respond with when Peter says, do you love me? This is what he says. Feed my sheep.

Here's the tragedy, guys, that we've got to tear down and build back up again to be a healthy church. I'll never forget hearing somebody say, I chose that church because the pastor shook my hand and remembered my name. And I said, that's what name tags do.

He didn't remember it. He read it. But we would value our hand being shaken and not value feeding, feeding the sheep with the holy word of the living God.

Jesus didn't say if you love me, shake hands. There's nothing wrong with it. Some people can physically, some cannot.

Me, for instance, if I said hello to everybody on the way in and out, I wouldn't be able to preach on Sunday night. Because of my voice, I just would not be able to do it. But immediately Jesus says, Peter, you're going to take care of my people.

This is how you do it. Feed them and tend to them. I want us to treat all those who break the bread of life in our lives, whether it's a guest speaker, our team, myself, Jess, others, each other.

I want us to treat each other as the bride of Jesus. Amen.

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