

Power of the Word

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the transformative power of honoring God's Word and His servants to invite His presence and gain spiritual authority.

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Scripture: Romans 8:26, Hebrews 4:12

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Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the transformative power of the Word of God, urging believers to honor God's servants as a means of inviting His presence. He explains that true honor manifests in celebration and recognition of God's work, particularly in the lives of those who testify to His goodness. Koulianos shares personal experiences that highlight the importance of walking through challenges to gain authority in faith, and he encourages the congregation to pray the Scriptures as a way to deepen their relationship with God. Ultimately, he stresses that the goal of the Christian life is to be conformed to the image of Christ through the active and living Word.

Transcript

I want to go back through some teachings on the Word of God with you. As I said last week, we've, we've, gosh, we're in a real mood with the Holy Spirit. Last Sunday morning, last Sunday night, the week before that, the week before that.

Of course, some amazing guests come in. They're really not guests. They're very close to us and would consider you all family, and those are really the people we, we do invite in.

As wonderful as that is, and I'm so proud of the way you guys honor God's servants. We had a talk at Jesus School this week about honoring who God sends to you, honoring people who come in the name of the Lord. And God, in Western culture, this is really hard to understand.

It's much easier, sorry, it's much easier for a Mediterranean or Eastern culture to get this. But Jesus said, what am I getting there? You all hear that? I'm hearing every movement. Must be my beard.

All right. Jesus said, if we receive one of His servants, we receive Him, and then we receive the Father who sent Him. That's pretty wild.

I mean, to think that as I honor one of God's friends who comes our way, I honor Jesus and the Father, and of course, the Holy Spirit, who has clothed that person. This is a massive deal, and so I remember somebody asked Bill, what is honor? He goes, oh, that's easy. It's treating someone like you treat the Lord.

Of course, worship is not part of that equation. But Jesus makes it very clear that to receive one of His friends is to receive Him and the Father. So what I'd like to submit to you today is that part of inviting the presence of God is to honor His friends, in that as I honor them and receive them, I receive Him in my midst.

Think about that for a moment, that God comes with them, and so part of having a house of presence is to have a house that honors His friends and His own. It's really a powerful thing, and you guys do a beautiful job at that. And I know that makes a lot of people uncomfortable, especially newer people.

You're probably wondering, why do these people jump up when every person gives testimony? Well, number one, Jesus died so those testimonies would be happening. People getting healed at UCF is a big deal. People getting saved at UCF and then saying they don't want prayer, then they get saved, and then they say, we've got to spread the Word, is a big deal.

And we need that on every college campus in America. So it's worth celebrating. It's, gosh.

But what you're really seeing is honor manifest in front of you. Honor demands a response. Honor demands a celebration.

And so you guys have done an incredible job in that lately, and I don't want you to dial it down. I want you to, I really want you to turn it up. That doesn't mean you have to scream louder.

You're doing all right there. But I want you to be an honoring people and realize that this, that is playing a part in this infusion of God's presence here. And we have really stepped into a very holy and precious season.

Eduardo said before service, he said, I think the day is coming where our worship team won't even play. You certainly won't even get up to preach. I'm like, that's fine.

I'll take a break, gladly. I'll take a free day off, for sure. He's like, the day's coming because it's getting so heavy and thick where nobody will touch anything.

The Bible says the Lord is in our midst. Let all the earth be silent. And so all we're walking into right now, it's glorious.

We need to value it, enjoy it, love it. But I'm telling you, there's a deeper place God's taking us to. And I want to preach beyond our current experience.

It's healthy. I mean, if you want authority, if you want authority, you actually have to walk through what you talk about. I'll never forget before I said yes to preaching the gospel.

If you've read the Jesus book, I had this encounter in my room at three o'clock in the afternoon. I had just played FIFA 98, which is a great game on PlayStation. I haven't played it in years.

Not that I wouldn't. It used to be really good, but I wouldn't play it now. I need a month to get quick again.

But exercises. I'm playing that game. I take a break.

It was between practice sessions. It was super hot out. Summertime in Tarpon Springs, Florida in Tampa Bay, super muggy.

And I'm sitting there in my bed, and instantly I go into this spirit, and I see this horrible figure, this spirit who seemed to be the spirit of death. He had the whole deal going, the hood on. I don't know.

He was a big, he was tall. And he came into my room and literally attacked me. I'll never forget it.

At which point, the glory of God filled my room. And when the Lord Jesus came in with this marvelous light, this massive, strong figure ran like a little girl right out of the room. I learned a lot that day.

I learned that the stakes for my life were higher than I thought. The stakes for eternity were higher than I thought, that there's a real hell and a real heaven, and that there was a war going on. And that, when that happened, when that happened, a real sobriety touched my life in that area.

And I realized that God had called me to preach the gospel. And I quickly discovered that the presence of Jesus is not a side issue. That without him, we are toast.

And that in our own strength, we have no ability to fight off the powers of darkness. But oh, what a mighty warrior he really is. We grew up singing that song, mighty warrior dressed for battle.

Holy Lord of all is he, commander-in-chief, lead us to attention. I can still hear Pastor Jim singing it on his little box with his little stick. Lead us into battle to crush the enemy.

Well, we don't crush the enemy on our own. It's the Lord himself who comes in. And so, the presence of the Lord is so much more valuable than any of us can imagine.

I think one day in heaven, we're going to be exposed to the amount of protection and the amount of times that Jesus stepped in and saved us from tragedy. I really believe that. I do.

I think we're going to just be blown away by the level of faithfulness as our shepherd that Jesus demonstrates. And so, yeah, I believe that day is coming where we'll just step in and God will flood the room. And we'll just hold on to our chairs or sob in the carpet, hold on to the carpet for dear life.

I've done all the above, actually. But when that happened in my room, I thought I was going to die. I'll never forget it.

I thought my life was over. And the Lord really saved me that day. And so, I shared that story.

This was 2000. That happened in 98 or 99. Like in 2006, I was with Jesse's father, and I was sharing this with a group of leaders from Bethel who had come down to one of his meetings.

We were living in Orange County at the time. And this girl, who I thought was weird, who was with them. Now, a lot of people I used to think were weird are my good friends.

It's amazing how that happens. Then God makes you weird, and then you don't know what to do. So, she looked at me.

She goes, well, maybe one day you'll pray for dead people and they'll get up. And I said, well, what does that have to do with it? She goes, well, if the enemy came to take out your life, then you went through it. Maybe God wants to give you authority in an area you never thought you'd ever have.

So, to walk through something, listen, I know it's difficult, but to walk through something is to gain authority if you stay with the Lord. And there's a little noise coming from out there. Are they meeting out there? Oh, they're going to the bathroom.

They scream on the way into the bathroom. Okay. That's about how it works.

And all the parents are like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Thanks for taking my kids for these three hours. My kids scream all the time.

All right. To speak about, listen, we all need to talk about a breakthrough that's beyond our current experience. I'm not negating that.

We need that. We need those conversations of faith. We need those prophetic words of faith.

We need teaching and preaching that preaches us beyond our current circumstance and experience. We do need that. But if you live in that place, you will not live in the authority God wants you to have.

You want to walk through what God has called you to walk through. And in the walking through of it, if you do it faithfully, you will gain authority in that area. So, when I wrote the Jesus book, I had all this revelation from the scriptures about Jesus.

And the Holy Spirit was just blowing my mind with His width, His depth, His height, His all-sufficiency, the amazing nature of the Lord. And I remember when it began to hit me that, oh, this thing is about Jesus. I read the scriptures.

So, the Father only talked about His Son in the New Covenant. The Old Covenant reveals His Son, the disciples. I'll preach a message that I have one day here called, And They Preach Jesus, where I literally go through every sermon that the apostles ever preached.

And I'm here to tell you, absolutely, 100% on the authority of the scriptures, which is perfect and inspired of the Lord. That is what they preached. He is the only message they ever preached.

That's what the Word teaches. So, when all this began to hit me, so much was getting flushed out. So much religion was being flushed out.

And I kind of thought I was maybe crazy, because I would go places and hear all of this topical teaching, and many times, never even hear the name of Jesus. And so, I began to think, wait, how could this be what God wants? If the Father sent His Son, then how come nobody talks about His Son? Not nobody, but how come enough people do not? I remember when I wrote the Jesus book, I was invited to this huge book expo, and it was in Atlanta. Have you ever watched the Jeremiah movie? It's... Who's the dude? Yeah, but it's that old... Patrick Dempsey? Not Swayze.

No, Amy. No, Patrick Swayze never played Jeremiah. It's not... It wasn't Rocky, guys.

It's just... All right, it's a Jeremiah movie. And in the Jeremiah movie, he walks through Jerusalem. And there's a great movie on Martin Luther as well, called Luther, where Luther walks through Rome.

And they're walking through, and they see all of this stuff. Luther's blown away that you can buy enough relics to to deliver yourself from purgatory for like 300 to 400 years. He comes back sickened.

His spiritual father sent him to Rome to go check it out. And he comes back grossed out by all the idolatry and all the merchandising of God's house, which by the way, has not departed, is still here and needs to go. We need a move of purity that pushes all that garbage out.

So it's similar to this. I'm at this book expo, and it's a Christian book expo. People have all these signing things where you sign books and people are waiting in line.

And I'm talking about massive, massive exhibits, like huge... I had a little banner. And then I figured out that some people have banners of their own faces that are bigger than billboards indoors. So I was like, oh, here's my little table, my little banner.

It had our little logo on there. And I did a book signing somewhere. I was shocked how many people came, but some people had these long lines.

And so I went for a walk. I walked through every aisle, and all your favorite authors had books there, a lot of them I love and honor. But what freaked me out is out of the hundreds of thousands of books, I think I saw the name Jesus on one cover.

So this was 2010. So at the time, I was kind of feeling like that scene from Luther or the Jeremiah movie, like, whoa, whoa, whoa. You're telling me how to accomplish my dreams, but you don't talk about the Lord.

Hold on a second. Eight steps to prosperity, but you don't talk about Jesus. Hear me roar.

I'll leave it there. But you don't talk about Jesus. Really? And so this thing started getting on me where I was like, wait a second.

I thought this is a Christian book experience. Where's Christ? So it stirred in me, and the Lord began to show me himself. And I slowly but surely bit the hook on this lure called Jesus, and the barb went in.

And in the beginning, you start to think, am I too simple? And is simplicity stupid? Only to discover as I read the word that the most wise were the most simple, and that Paul wrote, he has been made wisdom unto us. He, the person of Jesus' wisdom. So even in Proverbs chapter eight, and the other chapters in Proverbs that speak of wisdom, that is speaking of a person, not a topic.

That's why they describe wisdom as she, she has done, she has, she has, speaking of a person called wisdom. I'll get into that later. You're like, yes, all the ladies.

Yeah, okay. The point is, the point is, is that I went home and wrote the Jesus book. And as I was writing it, I got to a chapter.

I think it's chapter, I don't know, it's after, should be one of the latter chapters, called Sufferer. Now I had met people like the Sisters of Mary who would teach on the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings. It sounded really cool and really wonderful.

And I thought to myself, that sounds deeply spiritual. I don't understand it, but I want it. Okay.

When I began writing, because I had all the passages and revelation was flowing. When I began writing, I stopped writing. I could take you to the place.

It was my aunt's condo. Her name was Argie. She's gone on to be with the Lord now.

I was typing in her condo. She would go to work and let me go up. She had a little 700 square foot condo.

And I wrote a good portion of the Jesus book from there. And then the other portion really on our bathroom floor because it was the only quiet place in the house back then. It still is actually.

It's amazing. The Lord gives you a little bigger house and then you add dogs and humans and you just never escape sound. So I'm writing it and I hear the Lord speak to my heart.

And this is what he says. If you write this chapter, I'm going to hold you to it. And if you write this chapter, I'm going to have to walk you through suffering.

He's like, because the moment you put your name on this, I'm going to need you to be a man of integrity. I can't have you parroting truth that you have not walked through. So you can write it or not.

Just leave the chapter out. But if you write it, I'm going to hold you to it. And so I wrote it.

And I thought, you know, maybe somebody would just say something nasty to me in 10 years and that would be the bulk of the suffering and I'd just get over it, you know. But the reason God ensures that he holds us to it is because he has a goal in mind. Now that goal, listen very carefully, is found in Romans chapter 8. Is this okay? Verse 26, Romans 8, 26.

Likewise, the spirit also helps in our weaknesses. Say weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought.

Time out. Has anyone gone into prayer and not known what to do? All right, here we go. Here's your answer.

It's coming. Are you ready? But the spirit himself makes intercession. So if you don't know how or what to pray, you're in good company with Paul himself.

And the remedy is the Holy Spirit himself who makes intercession, this is verse 26, for us with groanings that can't be uttered. A wonderful woman, a teacher on prayer said, people are silent in prayer for two reasons. Some people have nothing to say, some have too much to say.

Let me say that again. People are silent in prayer for two reasons. Some have nothing to say, some have too much to say.

I want to be the latter. What does that mean? I want such a love in my heart and I want so many reasons to fill my heart about how and why I love Jesus that I cannot utter it in the natural. Have you ever felt like this about your spouse? You look at your spouse or your children and there's this overwhelming love.

John and Jenna just had their first child. I guarantee you. Well, I know for sure because I can get John to fumble on his words for nothing, let alone Bo.

And when I asked him about Bo, I go, what do you think? He goes, I don't know, man. I don't know. I don't know.

It's great. It's great. I don't know.

I go, oh, you got him, Lord. You got him. And it's a love you really don't know until you hold your little baby.

So there is a love so deep that you literally can't exchange it verbally. You don't know how to communicate it. Words don't do justice.

And this is what Paul is saying. There's a place in the Spirit where the groanings of the Spirit take over through the true ministry of intercession that's birthed by the Spirit. Not on pacing and screaming.

It's birthed by the Spirit. And then he begins to speak through you, which is true prayer, such a deep love exchange that groanings that can't be uttered flow from you. Verse 27.

Now this is going to produce something. You ready? Now he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Listen to this now. And so this is connected to a life of prayer. Listen carefully.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God. So the world cannot claim this promise. I'm sorry.

I'm not trying to be rude. But the world cannot say everything just works together for good. No, no.

To those who love God. And that's you in this room. To those who are called according to His purpose.

Say, that's me. All right. Now what is the working of good? What is that to look like? Now this is the goal.

I should say this is the Father's goal for us. Now whether or not this is our goal in the Christian life, that's a different issue. You do want to come to the place where your will and the Lord's will actually intersect and bleed into one another.

That's what happened to Jesus in Gethsemane. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. So this is the Father's will.

And what I'm about to read to you is the... My voice is back. Thank you, Jesus. All right.

What I'm about to read to you is God's will for you before you having a ministry is God's will for you. When I say ministry, I mean organization. You all have a ministry.

This is God's will for you before you're to live in a massive house. God doesn't have a problem with massive houses if you have one. I've met very nice people who live in big houses and very mean people who live in small houses.

It has nothing to do with it. All right. This is God's will for you before you being known is a priority.

This is God's will for you before you working signs and wonders, though that's part of this. It doesn't encompass all of it. Let's read it.

For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to do what? To be conformed into the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Oh, my. You say, what is God's will for me? Do you remember when they asked Jesus in the Gospel of John, what is the father's will for my life? And what did

Jesus say? He made it so simple, I guarantee you this upset some people.

He said, the will of the father is to cling to the son. And they're like, oh, yeah, I know, but we've got stuff to do, especially the zealot. Simon the zealot said, I got a sword on my hip.

We need to deal with Israel. Get Rome out of here. Jesus is like, yeah, let me tell you how all that's going to go down.

Cling to me. We got issues. We got issues.

We got to fix all these things. Socially, we got to do all this stuff. And Jesus is like, uh-huh, hold on to me.

I'm better than you. I've been doing this a long time. I know what I'm doing, but don't you need me to do anything else? No, just hold on.

Cling. Put your arms around him and never let go. And in Romans 8, he tells us what that will produce.

Us being conformed, the Greek word is molded. Molded. We'll be molded by the Lord into a certain image, which begins internally, by the way.

Always begins internally. Jesus, if you read the book, the gospel of Luke, the transfiguration account, the scripture teaches that Jesus began to shine. His clothes brighter than the sun.

His face was altered and he began to shine. That word transfigured in the Greek is the same word we use for metamorphosis, to change from the inside. So Jesus, because of his inner life of prayer and the attention he gave the internal presence, who he was on the inside, began to shine.

The father manifested by the spirit and spoke and the Lord was transfigured. In a way, the same process takes place in the believer. God begins to mold us and conform us, listen, into the heart posture of Jesus on the inside.

This is the will of God. So before you're doing anything great, number one, let the Lord determine greatness. We need more foot washers and less posters.

I'm not interested in following any influencers. I don't even know what they are, by the way. Somebody told us we were one the other day.

I was like, wow, that's cool. What's that have to do with golf? Nothing. Okay.

I don't want to talk about it. I'm not interested in following anybody who is too successful to wash feet. So the goal from God's perspective, according to Romans eight, is to mold you into the image of his son so that something would happen so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren.

What does that mean? God is after a harvest. He wants the bride to look like his son so that Jesus is the firstborn among the many and the more the merrier for Jesus sake. And the context is prayer here and not just aimless prayer.

How many of you want to be like Jesus? Wave your hands. Say amen. You with me this morning? Okay.

Is this okay? Just too much because it's going to be way too much every week. We're just going to turn it up. You'll figure it out in a decade, but you'll be different.

I said you'll be different. All right. So when I speak of a life of prayer, it is impossible to separate the scriptures and your life of prayer.

You cannot. Now, how many of you want to pray successfully the will of God? Well, I'm about to give you a tip. Start praying the Bible.

I'm not against dreams. I have them. I love them when God speaks to me.

I'm not against seeing in the spirit. No, I believe that's for today. I'm not against the Lord showing us things.

Absolutely. I'm not against prophetic words, obviously. But what I can tell you is that when I pray the word, I'm praying his will every single time.

Every time. And so I want you guys to begin taking the scriptures into your prayer time and learn to pray them. I want them mingled in to your time with Jesus.

Why? Hebrews 4.12. Turn there. I feel that rain in the air now. Hebrews 4.12. For the word of God is alive.

I said for the word of God is alive. And if the words in you, you'll be alive and active. That means the word of God is moving sharper than any double edged sword.

Hmm. There's a lot I could say here. But I don't want to get the rabbit trail, but I'm ready to preach.

It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Say this, I will read my Bible.

All right. Number one, the word is alive. You didn't have to do that.

I didn't ask you to, but I like it. All right. The word is alive.

It's not dead. It's not a mere history book, though it is historically amazingly accurate. We'll all go to Israel together.

We'll open our Bibles. I'm not joking. We'll all go and we will walk through these holy sites with your Bible open.

You're going to go, Oh, my God, this is more true than I ever thought. But not only is it historically accurate, it is alive. The word of God awakens.

Now, there's an old saying that says either sin will keep me from the word or the word will keep me from sin. And one of the first things that happens when we begin to compromise is our hunger for the word diminishes because we begin filling our life with shameful things. Like Jesse came home the other night.

She went out with Kathleen. She came home and thought she was sick, but she's like, I think I just ate bad. Not your fault, Kathleen.

Don't worry. She's like, I think I had like an empanada or something. I don't know.

Whatever it was, chips and guac and all this. And she's like, I think I'm sick. I'm like, what'd you eat? She's like, maybe that's it.

And she laid down. She was fine in the morning. Now, had I given Jesse, other than chips and guac are amazing, by the way.

I love good guac. It's not necessarily the healthiest thing for you, the chips. Anyways.

No hate. I'm getting really hungry. All right.

Had I put a good, healthy, grass fed, free range filet in front of Jesse, after she already filled herself with stuff that wasn't as healthy, she would have no interest in it. And that's what happens with sin in the scriptures. As we begin to fill our bodies with cisterns, as the scripture says, that don't spew water, they don't give life.

So the word is alive. When you preach the word, listen carefully, the dead come to life. It's happening right now in this room.

Many of you who aren't burning in love for Jesus, you can right now. Many of you who remember the old days, these can be better days. The word is alive.

When you use the word in your preaching of the gospel, which is non-negotiable, by the way, when you use the word, the dead come to life. Those in darkness receive light. That's what the Bible says.

At the coming of your word or at the entrance of your word, there is light. The lights go on. The word is alive.

Number two, the word is active. It's moving. What do I mean by that? God is active in making you more like Jesus.

And every time you sit under the word, that conforming process continues. God is at work. The word is at work.

In other words, when the word is preached, the last thing people should experience is a lackadaisical dead spiritual life. See, you don't know this right now, but as I'm teaching the word to you, God's getting up on the inside of you and tweaking you and filleting some of the fat off. I'm not saying on your real body, but we'll take it, Lord.

I'm just saying God's going inside and He's at work within. There is activity when the word is preached, and it is unto us being conformed. Number three, this is all in Hebrews four, the word is sharp.

Oh my. The word is sharp. I love how it's active and sharp and that those two are in succession.

And they're connected to one another. Because the sharpness of this sword comes quickly. It is active.

When the waters of Marah were too bitter. Can I have 10 extra minutes today? When the waters of Marah were too bitter. I said Marah like I'm from Tulsa.

Marah, that's how you'd say it. When they were too bitter to drink, the Lord told Moses to do something. He said, do you see that tree? By the way, it's the cross.

He said, do you see that tree? Take that tree and throw it into this bitter pool of water. He didn't say lay it in there. Gently placed it in there.

Keep the people's feelings in mind while you're preaching the gospel. Realize people don't like to sit in church after 12. Really? We have constructed a church culture in America that completely, in many cases, revolves around the likes or dislikes of people in the seats.

Because packed rooms make us feel better and increase our budgets. It's pastor appreciation day. You can't get mad at me.

But that's not the nature of the way the Word operates. It's not the nature of the gospel. So Moses takes that tree, that old rugged tree, and he casts it into the bitter waters.

Say speed. Now if you take a heavy tree, I've seen this done, and you throw it into a pool, it doesn't just float right away. If it's sharp and slender and it's penetrating, it goes into the waters like the gospel goes into us swiftly, uproots everything in us, and brings it to the surface, and then the tree just floats.

And that's how people see the nature of the cross on your life for the rest of your life. Just a cross floating on your back forever. And so the Word is quick.

It is active. And then number four, it penetrates. It goes deep.

You don't even have to know everything the Word is accomplishing right now. You just need to open the door. I'm telling you.

I am telling you by you being in the room, in humility right now, and not checking out, and not assuming to know everything, because I certainly don't. But that posture alone is going to position you for the Word to penetrate more deeply than you ever dreamed. Position yourself at the feet of Jesus to hear His Word.

It will penetrate. Listen to this. It divides soul and spirit.

Oh, that's a big deal. I don't have time to get into it, but I can just say this. You're going to learn as you're in the Scriptures what is birth of the Spirit and what's birthed in the soul.

And you want to go with what's birthed in the Spirit. And you begin to realize as you're with Jesus, the difference between the activity of the Spirit and how He's renewing your soul when you sit in the Scriptures. There's an old saying from some of the elders of the church.

Read the Word until the Word starts reading you. What does that mean? When you're in the Scriptures and out of nowhere, instantly, according to Hebrews 4, God starts challenging motive. Out of nowhere, you're like, I'm reading about Noah.

And you just asked me why I gave that guy ten bucks. I thought you loved it. And God goes, I'm glad he got the money, but you did that so people could see you.

See, that's the nature of the Word. It's when you're in the Scriptures, God starts to pierce with a two-edged sword. And why is it two-edged? I'll tell you.

Because the Word is used to judge sin and the world, and the other edge brings life to the humble, to those who love Jesus. Because Jesus will return with a two-edged sword in His mouth. To the church, the spoken Word in that moment will say, come home, you're my bride, be mine.

To sin and to those who do not yield, that Word will be a sort of judgment. It's two-edged. So when that sword goes in and starts penetrating, as you're simply praying the Scriptures, which is different than just reading them, all of the sudden motives and intentions and thoughts of the heart are revealed.

Listen very carefully. It is easy to hide the thoughts of the hearts from people. But you get in the Scriptures and God starts going, I see that.

And the passage doesn't even really deal with it. You're like, oh yeah, yeah, God calls all things that work together for good. That's me, that's me.

And God goes, motive time. Thoughts and intentions of the heart. Think of that.

You can think with the heart. And God can go that deep because the Word penetrates. Say this out loud.

The Word of God is breathed of God. Say this. The Word of God is life to my soul.

Say this. The Word of God makes me more like Jesus. One more thing I want you to say.

Say, I will no longer simply read the Word. I will begin to pray the Word and eat the Word. Joel, can you help me quickly? So, what I like to do, so I'm just going to show you what I do.

And I want you to take this. And you know what's so exciting about this teaching right now? Is that some of you are going to grab this and do this forever. That makes me so happy as a pastor.

It really does. That if you can do this, you will be okay. And if you teach this to your children, they're going to be all right.

And if we live this kind of life, there's hope. I said there's hope. So, let's say I open my Bible, turn to Psalm 91.

Let's just say I open my Bible and I come to Psalm 91. I have a few options. One is to read it.

But if I want to go deep and allow the words of God, which are spirit and life, say the Word of God is spirit and life. If I want His words to get in and conform me with His precious hand, I want to move from reading to praying His Word. It's the prayer posture that takes the text and pulls them in.

The heart. And it's by that that we're conformed. Verse 1, Psalm 91.

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God. In Him will I trust.

This is what I would do with this verse. I would sit in my chair and I would say, Lord, I want to live in the secret place. I want to live here.

I don't want to visit. I want to live here. I would say something.

I prayed this this morning. I would say something like this. Father, I claim Psalm 91 for me, my entire family, for our ministry.

But Lord, I realize this is conditional, this psalm, and it depends on living in secret, having this secret, genuine, authentic relationship with You. I want to dwell in secret, Lord. And then I read the next part of

verse 1. I want to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I want to live under Your presence like Peter did. I want the shadow of the Lord to cover me. So that when people come in contact with us, they find You and not me.

I want You to live in my shadow, Jesus. Then I realized that verse 1, the beginning of it, is the condition that leads to the second part of the verse. If I dwell in secret, I will abide.

If I live in secret, so Lord, today when I leave the room, help me give You my affection. Help me give You my attention. Help me think of You today when I drop the kids off at school.

And I began thinking, praying all of this, and verse 2 says, I will say of the Lord. He's my refuge and my fortress. I say, Father, I have nothing to say unless I dwell.

You missed that. There's too many people speaking who are not abiding. And notice, he says here, I'll say of the Lord.

I don't care if you're talking about the Lord even. We were never meant to talk about the Lord and not be with Him. So I will say of the Lord, You're my refuge and my fortress.

Father, help me discover the safety of Your refuge. I have no desire to simply have a fortress. That's for war.

But You call me into a refuge first, and then You wage war from the fortress. Jesus, be my fortress today. And notice, it's presence first, and then having something to say.

Lord, I don't want to say a thing that You don't move my heart to say today. And this is what happens when you pray the Word. You pray this whole song.

And all of the sudden, it becomes part of your bone marrow, part of your DNA. And you become more like Jesus. And that's the goal.

I said, that's the goal. Say, Amen.

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