

Audio ■ An Invitation to Follow Him

by K.P. Yohannan

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus in absolute obedience and surrender, mirroring His relationship with the Father. It highlights the need to live a life that reflects God's love and to prioritize intimacy with Him over worldly pursuits. The speaker urges listeners to wait upon the Lord, seek His face, and understand His heart, emphasizing the significance of reflecting the image of God in all aspects of life.

Scripture: Mark 1:17, John 5:19, John 4:34, Psalms 42:7, Isaiah 40:31, Acts 1:4, John 15:4, Genesis 1:26, 1 Corinthians 3:13, Ezekiel 22:30

Topics: "Absolute Obedience", "Intimacy with God"

Description

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Transcript

One of the scripture portions that impacted my life very early, when I was I think 17 or 18 at the time, it is that verse in the gospel of Mark chapter 1, where Jesus said to these young people, follow me and I will make you fishes of men. At first I remember reading that verse, it was all about becoming fishes of men, witnessing and evangelism and doing things and all that, but eventually dawned on me, you know, what he said was to follow him and as I do that, my life will become like his. And Jesus followed his father and you know, how many times Jesus said, I do nothing of my own, the things I'm saying to you, I didn't make it up, this is what the father told me and so I say it.

So he lived in absolute obedience and surrender to his father and the result was, as you know, he ministered to people and did the father's will and he became the reason for multitudes to understand the father's love. And Jesus then says to his disciples, as the father sent me, so sent are you. Jesus did everything, everything in total fellowship with the father, nothing of himself.

And that's the reason why he said this statement, I do nothing of my own. You know, I heard the story about this tourist running into three people doing the same job, Italy or somewhere, anyway, these people were cutting stones and shaping it and the tourist asked the first man, what are you doing? And he said, well, obviously you can see what I'm doing, this is my profession and I'm cutting the stones and stone

mason. And the other person doing the job, little father asked, what are you doing? And he said, well, it's my career, this is how I make my living.

But then the third person, he asked the same question, what are you doing? He said, I am building a cathedral for my God. So you see, three people doing the same job, one can say what he's doing, another can explain how he's doing it and another person can say why he's doing it. See, Jesus did all what he did and you ask him, why do you do it? You can ask him how you do it, he can say, yeah, I touched the man and told him be healed.

Or I told him to get up and walk and explain all that. But that is not the critical thing, the most critical question, why? And Jesus would say, I'm only doing what my father tells me to do and the reason for me to do everything, why I do this? Because my father and his journey ends as he knows, the last thing Jesus says, father, I have finished the work you gave me to do. I think sometimes we forget it.

The invitation, the Lord still gives to us, to you, my brother, my sister, saying, follow me, being his, committed to live our life the way he will want us to live, that is him living through us. And Paul was a man who was just like us, who simply understood it, so he told his followers, so Timothy, follow me, Timothy, as I follow the Lord. The call is a perpetual call, it is always continuous invitation every single day, the intimacy we must maintain in this close journey with him and being his.

See, our ministry or what we do, raising children or whatever it is, the important thing is that we manifest, we reflect his life. It is the nature of the sun to give life and warmth. Why? It is basically within his nature.

God wants to be the most important person in our life, more than all others. Ministry, need, talents, money, health, other people's opinions, no, he wants to be the most important person. Today, lots of work is going on, people are so busy, but not eternal values it has, don't have the quality of eternity in them.

We must be concerned. In 1st Corinthians chapter 3, it says that someday all that we do, it is going to be tested. Tested for what? Tested for quality.

Our fellowship with our God determines the quality of our work. And Jesus calls his disciples to be with him, to know him, to become like him, to be humble and broken like him, to love like him, to be a servant like him, to live as he lived before his father, do the work as he did in the power of the Holy Spirit, have the authority as he had, be willing to die and lay down our very lives. You know, God did not create Adam for he needed a servant.

No, he had millions of servants. He created Adam so that he may reflect the image of God. Genesis chapter 1 verse 26, you'll find that, to manifest the life of God.

And Moses, with all his brilliance, you know, it will take years for him to understand the meaning of representing God. And he will spend 40 days with God before he could speak to the people of the heart of God, the commandments. And this is what he says in Ezekiel chapter 22 verse 30, he says, I'm looking for someone, someone to stand before me.

We are rushing around and doing this and that. You know, the sad thing is, and which I said it before, average believers spend less than eight minutes a day in prayer. But we have no problem spending 10 hours reading and doing all kind of activities.

We simply cannot just wait. Yet we are called to wait and be with him and know him intimately. So we have in Isaiah chapter 40 verse 31 says those who wait upon the Lord.

Acts chapter 1, wait for the Holy Spirit. And Acts 13, as they worshipped and waited, John 15, abide in me, be part of my life. You know, the old covenant, it is Holy Spirit came upon people for certain work they're supposed to do.

But in the new covenant, he dwells in us, is internal. And that's the reason why Jesus said, out of the innermost being, out of the inner being, reverse living water will flow. It is from the inside, inner life.

The emphasis is not reverse living water, but from where it is, it is from the inner being. You know, the other scripture says every plant which our heavenly father did not plant will be destroyed or rooted up. The question is not whether the plant is good, but the question is who planted it.

See, we look at, you know, somebody who is a brilliant preacher or a book we read, we are moved and impacted and people give money to do great things. But often we don't even think about it. What is the reason for it? What is the source of it? And it is important, my brothers and sisters, that we need to understand that our activities and what we do, the way we raise our children and and if we are called to serve him in some capacity or whatever it may be, we want to make sure that we are not doing it because a nice thing to do.

And Jesus didn't do that. Jesus did not act merely because there was a great need or somebody invited him. No, he acted only based on the knowledge.

This is what his father is asking him to do. You know, remember the story of Lazarus? The news came to Jesus simply this, Jesus, Lazarus, the one you love, is sick. They didn't say, oh Jesus, please come and touch him and and raise him up and heal him.

No, they knew the only thing Jesus need to hear that he was kind of sick and Jesus will rush and run because they knew he, Jesus, loved Lazarus and Mary and Martha. But when Jesus heard the news, you know from the scripture, he didn't go. And the disciples thought, well, he's going to rush.

He said, no, I can't go. And his response, my time has not come yet to do that. Yet, after Lazarus is dead and buried and stinking and everything is gone, finished, then he says, let's go.

But then you read again there, this happened so that the father's name may be glorified. You see the difference? When he heard the news, Jesus must have simply turned his face toward the father and said, father, as far as I'm concerned, as a man, I so bad want to go and and raise him up. And remember, Jesus lived on earth as a man in total dependence on his father.

And the father said, son, not now. Don't go. Wait.

So he dies to himself. He give up what he wants, embracing death to himself and what he wants and wait so that the father's name would be glorified. And my brothers and sisters, you know, those of you know me, I live for one thing, somehow to know the Lord and understand his heart.

But I am driven with a passion to see the lost world come to Christ. And all night long, I dream about it. And all day long, I work for it.

And I don't have very many other agendas in my life. But I'm telling you again and again and again, often. I'm arrested with this conviction.

What is it the Lord is seeking to do? What is it he wants to do? And that makes me to wait. Sometimes our people just spend a few days doing nothing but praying and waiting and seeking his face. And once we do that, what happens is that our lives are not shallow.

It says in Psalm 42 verse 7, deep calls unto deep. You cannot lead people further than where you are. Parents, you can spend all the money in the world, get all the books in the world.

And I tell you, that is not going to help your children to understand the ways of God. It takes your journey with the Lord. With words or without words, they will find the way.

You know, I didn't want to criticize, you know, my brothers who are in the ministry or pastors and Bible teachers. But I simply ask this question. Why are 80% of our young people growing up in our so-called evangelical Bible teaching churches, hearing this thing 24 hours? Why do they quit the church after they leave home? Not one or two percent.

I didn't make it up. Why is it? Is all this preaching and all the teachings we do basically is from our head reaching their head. It is not from the inner life, our hearts, that reaching their heart.

Something to think about. And so, as we continue this journey, let it be my prayer that as parents and shepherds and ministers or whatever your call may be, that God will not say, you know, they are talking all this stuff on my behalf because they want to talk about it and they write commentaries and books and preach and teach. But they never stood in my presence and they don't hear what I am saying.

They are only telling people what they want to say. And that's the reason why, personally, I am quite concerned that we, as followers of Christ, we will read God's word, not for knowledge, although that is important, but to see the way Jesus showed us how we must live. And if that be the case, I'm telling you, you read the four Gospels, which I did some time ago with a pencil, looking for the man Jesus throughout the four Gospels.

And I marked the way Jesus, the man, lived here on earth. I know He's my God and I worship Him. He's my Savior, my God.

But also the Bible portrays Him as a man, as an example for me to follow. And when you find Jesus, how gracious and loving and merciful He was to people who criticized Him, attacked Him, and He never fought and defended Himself. I see, not like anyone else, He's different.

And when people talk about going after the things of the world and be rich and famous and acquire all these material things and comforts and this, I don't see the Jesus or the New Testament, the one who said, birds are nest in the air and foxes are holes, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head. And He was not living, you know, to make money and riches. And He didn't heal people and collect money from them.

No, He lived before His Father. And He never sought anything for Himself. And when I read that, I find in John's Gospel, chapter four, someone who is hungry and thirsty and physically exhausted, but then meeting a woman who did not know the Father's love, his heart is breaking to the point when the disciples came and said, Jesus, here's some food, please do eat.

And he says, I lost my appetite. Then he tells them, lift up your heads and see the harvest. It is right now ready.

Don't say four months. He's trying to say the reality of the lost, unforgiven, undone is so critical that my physical needs and my hunger is not becoming that important. And you see, this is the kind of Jesus we see in the New Testament, the man who walked on earth in dependence on the Father, always thinking not about himself, but about what the Father wanted him to do and his life reflected.

And this is my call. Please understand me. After 40, for some years on this journey, I'm still struggling and learning what it means to understand Him, so that what I do is not based on needs around me and people's invitations, but rather a sense of what is it Jesus want me to do? It is his life, not my life.

And my life is not my life, but his life. And that's the reason why I said, you know, for me, it's a 24 hour thing. I'm saying, Lord, you died for the world, people in Bangladesh and Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey and India and Sri Lanka in Africa.

Oh, God, people everywhere, people in desperate need. And Lord, what is it you want me to do? And that kind of prayer and agony and surrender makes life beautiful. And that makes me not to fall prey to the pull of materialism and the stuff what people think about me and and their opinions.

No, something more sacred and something important is to be his for time and eternity. And may the Lord continue to lead you and give you grace and my recommendation, please get hold of some books and materials written by, you know, godly men and women in the early centuries who followed the Lord. And my life been so impacted.

And as a matter of fact, the book I wrote, Touching Godliness has a lot to do with understanding the way in which Jesus lived and his invitation for me to follow him. And he still says, Come, follow me. And I will make you and may the Lord bless you and watch over you and give you his grace.

Amen.

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