

Audio ■ Basic Christianity

by K.P. Yohannan

This sermon emphasizes the simplicity of God's calling and plan for our lives, focusing on the core of what it means to be a Christian: denying oneself, taking up the cross, and following Jesus. It highlights the importance of following Christ wholeheartedly, seeking to be like Him, and living a life centered around His love and sacrifice.

Scripture: Mark 8:34, Matthew 16:24, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Luke 9:23, Philippians 3:10

Topics: "Discipleship", "Living a Christ-Centered Life"

Description

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Transcript

Get down to the basics of Christianity and be encouraged with K.P. Yohannan to receive the call of Christ, next on the Road to Reality. It's not hard to see what many are living for these days themselves, but the Christian is to be like Christ and follow Him. This involves a denial of self and a willingness to take up one's cross and follow Jesus.

We have a tendency of complicating matters in the church, so today, Brother K.P. Yohannan will spend some time explaining the sheer simplicity of God's calling and plan for our lives. And through it all, we'll get to the core of what it means to be a Christian. This is the Road to Reality.

I'm Richard Bewes, and with Bible in hand and an open heart, let's join Brother K.P. for the Road to Reality. I'm sure you heard the statement, trying to find a needle in a haystack. Well, that's something I picked up after coming to the United States.

Well, the image is this, that somebody is looking for a tiny little needle, and it's lost. And how can you find something like that in the middle of a huge confusion? It's a whole stack of hay. It's hard to find it.

So it is with Christianity. You see, the amount of teaching on what it means to be a Christian, it's so much, so many aspects of that. And people often get confused.

Did you know that somebody said there are now over 1,000 commentaries in English language alone on the Book of Acts? I can't believe it, but it's true. When I went to seminary, and I know the amount of books in the library never ending. As a matter of fact, all we have is 66 books in this Bible.

I'm holding one in my hand. It's so tiny, when you think about it. But then, there are millions of books written, explaining about what it means to follow God, and on and on like that.

And it don't take much for you to turn the Christian television channels or radio stations and hear preacher after preacher, teacher after teacher, telling you about this and that, and a million different explanations. And average people in the end get confused at what on earth. And it's like, you know, people who are sick, they want to get well, and what they do, they buy this medicine, and somebody says, Wow, this can work, eat this bark, and this medicine, and this pill, and this vitamin, and this particular thing, and they try this and that, and years they keep trying, and they find no solution.

Well, here's the point. The basic Christianity, or following Christ, is so simple, so clear, so specific, that often Christians refuse to go and read God's Word, and believe it for what it says, and simply says, Lord, I will follow you. You see, the call of Christ, when He met these disciples, you'll find it in the Gospel of Mark chapter 1, He simply said, Come and follow me, and I will make you.

You see, it is like I'm inviting you to come to my home for dinner, and I'll give you ten pages of explanation, and map, and everything else, and you get confused, this turn, that turn, and all those things, but if I tell you, you know what, I will meet you at that particular place, and you will see my yellow Volkswagen bug, and you simply follow me, and you will find the place, no problem. Now, my dear brothers and sisters, what we have to keep in mind, is that the call of Christ is not that we read all these materials, and trying to figure things out by ourselves, and I do this, I do this, I don't do this, no, actually seeing Christ, and longing to be like Him. And that's what Christ said.

Come, and learn of me, and become like me. But where do you find that? You find that in the Gospels, you find that in the writings of Paul. He said, Follow me, as I follow Christ.

So, Paul was not in the business of offering them, hey, wealth and prosperity, you send me your money, and you will get this and this and that, and you will become that person, this person. No, he simply said, my object, my goal in life, is to know Him. That is Christ.

And the way I live and conduct myself, and the journey I make, if you follow me, you will find the same Christ, and know Him. The reason I'm saying that to you, as I travel throughout this nation and talk to people, I'm running to people more and more, especially the younger generation, that are so confused about all this stuff that is going on in Christianity, and they just don't know where to go, what to do anymore. But the teachings of the Scripture, it's very simple and very plain.

When I read the New Testament, well I have a habit, once in a while I take a pencil and read through the four Gospels to see something about Christ. And one time I remember, I was reading through the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, just to see the man Christ. How Jesus lived on earth.

So I can kind of see the man Christ, of course He is my Lord, I believe in Him, He is my Savior, but I also want to see this man who lived on earth, what was his goal, what was his ambition, what he lived for. Once we get to the place of focusing on Christ, our life will become quite simple, not so complicated. I remember talking to a dear brother, who was faced with a huge amount of persecution in the state of Orissa.

Of course, that's where, if you remember, a year and a half ago, huge persecution broke out, hundreds of people were driven out from their homes into the jungles and forests, and dozens of people lost their lives, and thousands of Christian homes were destroyed. And I remember talking to this young brother, who, one of our missionaries actually went to the mission field, and faced with a huge amount of abuse and persecution, and they forced him to kneel, and they shaved his head, and poured all kind of liquid on his head, and tore his clothes, and threatened to cut his throat, and all these different things, and they said, the only way we will spare you, if you go with us and bow down before our gods, and you offer homage. And what these people did, having shaved his head, they had this hair right in front of him, said, now this is what you'd offer to our god, this is your hair, your offering, your sacrifice, if you do it, we'll spare you, if not, we'll have to kill you.

Well, his response was very simple. He said, you know, when I was sent out to preach about Christ, and tell you people about His love, the people that sent me out here, my leaders told me, they were giving me a one-way ticket. And I'm here.

And the next place I want to be is with Christ in heaven. And for sure enough, you must know that, that sure is a better place than this mission field anyway. And if you kill me, that's fine, I have no problem.

Oh, one more thing you need to know, my life is not my own. I followed Christ, and I still follow Him, and I'll be with Him forever. Well, the story is that, somehow, among the crowd, one of the elderly person, you know, said, you know, leave this young fellow, and why you want to torture him? Even if you kill him, you're getting nothing out of him, he's too determined.

Just leave him alone. Well, obviously, God intervened, and his life was spared. Much later, when I talked to him, I said, were you not scared? He said, tell you the truth, I was scared.

And what made you respond to these people like that? He said, even when I was scared, somehow, I remembered the word that I read in 2 Corinthians. Since one died for all, now all those who live for him will not live for themselves, but for him who died for them. He said, it was very simple.

I realized that my life is not my own. Even I'm scared, I knew that actually, this is not my life, it is His. So, if they kill me, fine, I'll see Him face to face.

Obviously, you and I may not end up in a situation like that, I understand that. But, recognizing it is not a bunch of doctrines, philosophy or psychology, or what I want or what I get out of it, is the crux of the matter, but rather, it is Christ, the one who loved me and died for me, and He was buried, He rose again, and that is the only thing that matters, now I belong to Him. Amen.

Our lives should revolve around Christ and His call. Deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow me. We'll get back to Brother K.P. Johannan in a minute here, on the road to reality.

This is a ministry of Gospel for Asia, where our primary aim is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who have never even heard His name. You know, while K.P. was talking about the basics of Christianity, we here couldn't help but think of his book, Revolution in World Missions. In it, he encourages the reader to let go of self-centeredness and think in eternal terms.

So, you're wanting to make a real difference in this dying world? Pick up your free copy of Revolution in World Missions through our website at roadtoreality.org.uk. One reader from Stirling has told us, For me, the book brought alive the challenges that the Bible represents, challenges which transcend borders and

cultures and are so readily forgotten in comfortable Western Christianity. Hey, thanks for the comment. Yes, it's a life-changing book.

Again, receive your free book by going to roadtoreality.org.uk. You can also call us on 01904 643 233. Got a pencil or a stub of crayon? Again, it's 01904 643 233. As we return now to K.P., he recalls this profound hymn written by William Featherstone.

You know that little chorus that maybe you heard it before? My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine. For Thee, all the follies of sin I resign. I'm sure if you heard me talk often, once in a while I say these words.

The reason I say that is because someone who is giving up a friendship, someone who is willing to give up their resources to preach the gospel, someone who is willing to leave everything and go to the mission field, someone who is willing to say, I say no to television programs or movies, I'm going to spend my time on my knees in prayer. Someone who is willing to say, you know what, I don't want to end up spending all my hours reading all these romantic novels and all this fancy stuff. I just want to spend my time reading His word, reading what Jesus will have to tell me.

Or I want to read something about what is going on in the world today. I watch television not because I want to be entertained, but I want to know what is happening in Afghanistan, in Russia, in Iraq or Iran, or in Israel, or Albania, or India, or Bangladesh, or wherever it is. I'm eager to find out what is going on.

So tonight, when I wake up in the middle of the night, my one hour of prayer, I will know what to pray for. But you see, you can do all these things out of guilt or legalism, or saying, oh yeah, if I do all these things, maybe I will get some blessings from God. Or you will be saying, Lord, I remember you were telling me, take my yoke upon you.

My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Lord, I hear you saying, can't you just spend one hour with me in prayer? And you see, statements like Paul, when he said, the love of Christ constrains me, it compels me. It is not external forces, or somebody telling stories, and this and that, or even your feeling, or my feeling, that okay, if I give money, I will get more money back.

You know, one of the things that really kind of bothers me, is when preachers, either on television or radio, saying that sow your seed, and give your money, and send your money here. And you know, I heard about a guy who actually is flying around on his private jet for, I don't know, two and a half, three million dollars, and he's pleading with people to send him a thousand dollar offering, which he promises if people did it, they will get so much more blessing. And okay, I'm not saying we should not give money to God's work, and we also ask people, support missionaries, support children, build these houses in Orissa.

But you know, the reality is that, often, people do things, thinking that by doing this, I will get something back from God. Well, it's quite interesting, isn't it? Totally contrary to the gospel of Christ. Jesus is the one who said, you want to follow me? Then this is what you should do.

Pick up your cross, daily, and follow me. And he said, you cannot do it unless you deny yourself. And then also he added, unless you love me more than father, mother, son, daughter, and even your own very life, you cannot be mine.

Saying it more simply, you want to be godly, you want to be like him, you want to be Christ, that someday when you see him face to face, you will not say, wow, I did not know you look like this. But the problem is,

while your life here on earth, you live your life for yourself and somebody else and whatever else going on, that you have no chance to become like him on the inside. So, here is what my encouragement to you is this.

And this is what I will tell you, that is, you know, some 42 years ago, when the Lord called me to follow him, and I remember that night, kneeling down beside the little bed, and I said, Lord, all I have is this little fragile body of mine, I don't have anything to give up except this little life. You want it? It's yours. And help me to walk with you and know you.

Please, I pray, that you will guide me. And I said, Lord, I want to hear you. And if you tell me, I will follow you.

As I look back over these four decades, my journey has not been easy. Yeah, a bunch of mistakes been made and had to repent and turn to Him again and run to the cross. But I tell you, I don't have that many regrets.

The only regrets I have in my life are those times I sought something for myself and not for Him. Today, as I think about the early morning hours of being on the telephone with some missionaries from Nepal, hearing their stories of struggle, their persecution, their suffering, hearing the story of a dear missionary who left his home in the early morning to serve Christ and said to his wife and kids, I'll see you tonight. And it's a long walk, which means he was walking five, six hours to get to a community to preach the gospel.

And late night he would come home. But he would come home that night with bruises all over him, bloodied nose, torn clothes. And his wife and kids weeps and ask what happened.

Did you fall? What happened? And he'll say, No, I had the awesome privilege to suffer for Christ's sake. And I'm glad that I'm alive and I'm back here with you. And that evening, they will kneel and pray, not complaining and murmuring, but saying, Lord, thank you for your grace, the privilege you gave to serve you here in this community.

And tomorrow, he will continue the journey again. So, when I think about brothers like that and sisters like that, I say, Lord, the prayers I offer, the resources I give, and the pain I'm willing to embrace, and whatever difficulties that I must deal with, Lord, it's nothing compared to what you did on the cross for me. It's nothing compared to the brothers and sisters that are suffering and paying such heavy price in so many nations.

And Lord, thank you for the grace. And so, my plea and my request, my prayer for you is this, that somehow you will stop somewhere to evaluate the Christ you follow, the gospel you believe, and ask the question, what is this all about? Am I following the real Christ or the New Testament who called me to be His completely? Am I willing to give up my dreams, my ambitions, and my ways so that His heart's desire can be fulfilled? Am I willing to give my time for things that will build His kingdom and fulfill His heart's desire? Parents, you pray for your children. I know you do.

Why don't you start praying, Lord, not only save my children, my daughter, my son, but Lord, please call him, call her to follow you. My ambition for them is that they will become yours and your servants. Wife, pray that for your husband.

Husband, pray that for your wife. And as you work, go to your workplace, you're an engineer, or doctor, or teacher, or common laborer, or whatever you do. Why don't you say, Lord, today I go to work.

And really, my call is to build your kingdom and to be yours, and this is my vocation. I remember a doctor from Fort Wayne, Indiana, who told me, you know, Brother KP, I go to hospital, I'm a surgeon, and I do my work, and I make my money, but really, I go to the hospital saying to myself, wow, today I have another day, the privilege the Lord gave me to make money so I can support my missionaries in India, in Pakistan, in Bangladesh, in China, that are winning souls for you. When he said that, there was such emotion, such passion.

Then he said, you know, I could buy a Mercedes Benz or a Rolls Royce if I want to, but he said, KP, I drive this car not because I don't like nice cars, no, it's a choice I made out of joy knowing that I'm not doing it for anything else, anybody else, I'm doing it for my Lord. Well, I had the opportunity to spend that evening with his wife and whole bunch of kids in his family just to see the glow on their faces and the peace in their home and the contentment and peace of heaven in their family. Well, that can be our experience, your experience.

My prayer is this, that once again, we will make a decision to close our eyes, shut our ears to the popular preachings and teachings and the call from so many to live for ourself, to take care of ourself, to seek things for ourself, even in the name of religion. I pray that our eyes, our ears, our hearts be opened to hear the voice of the Lord saying, come and follow me, that we will hear his words, deny yourself and pick up your cross and follow me, that we will hear the words of Paul. I suffer all these things for the sake of the elect and the love of my Lord compels me to continue the journey.

If that be the case, someday, when we see him face to face, we will have no regrets or we will be able to say, Lord, it's been a wonderful journey, thank you for your grace and your mercy. Remember, we brought nothing into this world and we will take nothing with us. Oh, not just material things, but the honor, reputation from other people.

Worrying all the time about what others think about us, who really cares? Only think about what the Lord is thinking and what he wants. May the Lord bless you and give his grace to continue this journey and remain faithful to him till the end. Exactly.

That's K.P. Yohannan on the Road to Reality describing basic Christianity. Yes, the Jesus way is simple enough for even a child to get hold of. K.P. is the founder and director of Gospel for Asia and as we leave you today, may we encourage you to visit our website gfauk.org You can find out more about Gospel for Asia and how you can be involved? Well, go to gfauk.org and, for further inspiration and encouragement, follow GFA underscore UK on Twitter or find Gospel for Asia UK on Facebook.

Dear friends, cynicism is so common, but it is a sin to be avoided. K.P. believes it can actually destroy our lives. Next time on the Road to Reality, let's see how to avoid it and embrace a correct view of ourselves with a commitment to what God says.

I'm Richard Bews. The Road to Reality is brought to you by Gospel for Asia. Thank you for being with us and until next time, may God bless you.

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