

Call to Discipleship

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discipleship and caring for the least of these, especially children in poverty and exploitation, and calls believers to get involved in missions.

Duration: 47:14

Scripture: Proverbs 31:8, Matthew 19:14, James 1:27

Topics: "Christian Discipleship", "Compassionate Ministry"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of reaching out to children in need through the Bridge of Hope program by Gospel for Asia. It highlights the impact of investing in children's lives, sharing stories of transformation and hope, and challenges listeners to consider supporting and praying for these children. The speaker urges the audience to align their lives with Christ's mission of love and compassion, calling for a deeper commitment to serving those in need.

Transcript

As many of you know, we announced it last weekend. We are blessed this morning to have the team from Gospel for Asia here to share with us the vision and the ministry that the Lord has placed on their hearts. And we are very blessed to have K.P. Yohannan from Gospel for Asia to share with us this morning.

So please welcome Brother K.P. I didn't want to hug him. He might crush my bones. I saw him yesterday evening, I got scared.

Then I found out he is a very gentle person. I like to attend this church too. It's a blessing to be here.

Thank you. This is a second service. That kind of tells me not to be so nervous.

That means we'll preach all day long. Not really. I have a flight to catch also.

John and I, one of our senior leaders, we came from Dallas, Texas. Some people believe God lives there because of the Southern Baptist churches. That's where we have our U.S. headquarters of our mission.

Some 100 plus families actually serve the Lord. We are kind of a community serving the Lord on behalf of some 2 billion people that wait to hear the gospel. We have some 15,000 missionaries serving the Lord.

You know what? This thing turned upside down. Wow. How did that happen? It's a disobedient mic.

Some demons are attacking. You know what? That's me speaking in tongues. How was that? Thank you.

Thank you. Did you hear anything I said so far? I feel very comfortable here because we are part of the fellowship. Here, in many ways, I met Pastor Chuck Smith some 28 years ago.

No words can describe the impact of that man's life on all of us. We have today over 12,000 congregations in these nations. About 15 churches are planted every single day where people never had a chance to hear the gospel before.

Your prayers and our being a family moving forward in these last days, it will mean a lot. Someday you will understand it when you see the Lord face to face. We have a lot of young people here.

We do have a very special program in Canada and also here in the United States called School of Discipleship. It is geared for young people who finish their high school. They come and spend a year with us.

You learn godliness, life of prayer, and all these things, not by reading books, although they help, but by being a people. They spend a year with us. That part of the time they go overseas and their lives are turned around.

It's so incredible when they go back to the universities, their homes, and their churches. It's a whole wonderful journey. If you parents are desperate to get rid of your kids who are nuisance, and young people, you are looking for a way to figure out what life is all about.

Something worth living for, something worth dying for. The rest of your life you will be grateful for taking that one year to come and be with us for this program. We have a minute long explanation about that, so please let's look at that.

God is always calling us deeper, but it's our choice on whether we want to go deeper in our walk with him. My expectation was that it was going to be really hard, and it was really hard, and it's still pretty hard, but I realized that all we really have to do is let him work in us and through us. The focus isn't so much academic as it is just discipleship.

I can remember one class we were sitting, and one of our teachers was teaching, and he looked around at us, and he looked me right in the eyes, and he said, you are spending time with the Lord, aren't you? And it really convicted me because I was going through a dry time, and God used that to encourage me to go and spend more time with him. I love working at the office because my boss is great. He really cares about where I am with the Lord and where I stand, and not just the work I do, but the state my heart is in while I do the work.

It's been very impacting for me to be able to see older brothers and sisters in the Lord and to learn from their example. When I got here, I realized that it really is a family, and it's really a tight-knit group of people that want to grow together. I mean, I get to hang out with other people's kids and hold babies and hang out with single people and married people.

It's a really great mix. The biggest difference between serving at Gospel for Asia and serving in the secular world, I think, are two things. One, there's just an incredible love, and there's kind of a grace culture.

And the second thing is just the incredible focus on reaching the lost. In everything we do, we must accomplish the goal of reaching the most unreached. Through the process, I've learned more about missions, and God has given me a passion and excitement for missions.

Every day that I'm here, I get to impact so many people for the kingdom who don't have hope before and have never heard the Gospel. Like, my life means that much. It just makes me think, why would I want to be anywhere else when I can impact so many people right here? So we do have brochures and lots of information about it on the table there, and then you can go to gfa.org and get all the information.

I think it will be quite significant. This morning, what an amazing thing to have all these children sing and lead in worship. And I was fascinated by the people, actually, that guided them.

It's like a movie. They're so enthusiastic about it. But when you think about this, what an incredible privilege we have our children, our grandchildren, to be in a culture, in a community, in a church, where they are given the opportunity to know God, to be cared for, compared to some realities in our world.

Listen to this. In South Asia, like in India and Bangladesh and Bhutan and Sri Lanka, these nations there, 90 million children go hungry every day. It is not they're hungry for ice cream or lunch or dinner.

They are desperate. Can you imagine your child or your grandchildren crying all night and weeping, saying, Mommy, I'm dying. I can't sleep.

Give me something to eat. Because they didn't have meals for two or three days. And the mother says, My child, I have nothing but drink this and give in a mud cup some dirty water.

Or think about the picture that appeared in the National Geographic one time of a mother looking at two children. She's skin and bones. And she has no clothes she's wearing on the upper part of her body.

And she's holding these two kids, looking at them. And the article explains she's trying to make a decision which child she's going to let die. Because she has nothing left in her body to feed both children.

Now, please listen to me. Our Christianity, whether you know this or not, we are extremely self-centered, so drunk with our Bibles, our knowledge, our children, our health, our well-being. We can't even imagine that our life ought not to be about us.

But about Him who died on the cross, who still weeps over the creation, people that He created with His own hands. And He says, don't you care. If you're looking for a Bible verse, I tell you, in 1 John 2, verse 6, it says, If anyone claims that he's a follower of Christ, must live today as Jesus would live.

That can't be a fancy spiritual statement. You and I, part of this kind of teaching and fellowship, blessed more than anyone else on planet Earth. Yet, you realize how little our heart breaks and aches for people that do not know our Lord and are perishing.

And now, it is not a crime and a bad thing that you and I are given the privilege to have our children and take care of them. But think about this, 135 million children between the age of 7 and 18 have never been to school in that part of the world. And we fight over what home school curriculum we should have, which school district we will send our children to, where we move to so we can have.

Nothing wrong with having that desire for our children. We care for our children the same way I'm talking about. You care for.

But when, how it will come to the place in my life where my heart begins to break, not out of pity or some kind of guilt trip, rather, I am becoming like Christ. I remember one time from Bombay, I was waiting to catch my Lufthansa flight to Frankfurt, Germany. And I picked up this newspaper called Indian Express.

On the front page was a picture, a black and white picture of a little boy, maybe 4 or 5 year old boy, kind of semi-naked, laying on the sidewalk of a busy Bombay street. And laying beside him is a dog, a female dog. And you look at the picture, so vivid.

The boy is drinking milk from that dog. And the caption reads, this dog is his mother. The three column article explained about over 100,000 children that live on the streets not knowing who their parents are.

And the beggar children, how they die without any hope. How many of you have seen the movie Slumdog Millionaire? Would you raise your hand? Wow, amazing. All of you raised your hand, you will go to heaven.

The rest of you, you better get that movie and watch that. Well, you know, by the way, 3 or 4 years ago the movie came out here in America and it was the movie of the year for all the awards. And so, somebody told me about it and I watched that movie and emotionally I couldn't handle it.

Because I lived in Bombay for a year. It is a story about the children from the slums. The largest slum dwellers of the world, it is in Bombay.

Over 5 million people live in those slums. If you ever go there, try to go to one of those slums you have to literally pinch your nose to walk in lest you throw up. Dark, mucky sewage runs open through those slums and kids are playing in them.

And the monsoon season comes, you can't even imagine the crisis. You know, there are 4 bamboo sticks sticking up and plastic over it and husband, wife and kids all living there. And the ground is soaking wet.

That is a slum. And if you saw the movie, actually you understand what slums look like. And the sad thing about the crisis when you think about the reality of this the movie talks about this pimp, this evil man going around, picking up these kids from the streets promising them food and clothes and they are so happy and excited but then you see the scene they are taken to a building far away and right there these kids are playing and happy and everything but the scene changes.

He lines up these kids and makes them sing and do things to see how he can turn them into beggars on the streets to collect money. The next scene, a little boy the little boy looks so handsome, so kind looking little fellow should be about 5-6 year old boy maybe and he is taken out to a room and he takes this man, chloroform and put him into a cloth and knocks the boy out. And now he lays on the bench like he is dead.

And he takes boiling oil and he opens the lid of the little boy and pours it and blinds him. The next scene, he is standing on the streets years later begging and when I saw that I said, all these kids on the streets how many of them are destroyed like this? But when I see that movie and I see that little boy drinking milk from a stray dog here is a professional trained minister a Christian leader who writes books and talks to people all over the world and the question Jesus asked me is the same question I am asking you.

What if the Lord said, this little boy happened to be your son Danny or your daughter Sara What if this little boy in the movie happened to be your son?

You know just like right now you are going through in your emotion I saw some people when I explained the story shaking their head and crumpling, just can't handle it and think about me going through the same emotions and I didn't want to entertain that emotion but the question I must ask myself am I like Christ who is my Lord who can take this tabernacle this body of mine, my emotions, my life and walk again on earth incarnate through this earth and vessel to weep, to suffer, to cry and touch and heal or am I going to be someone like typical American Christianity that says, Jesus bless me, heal me, take me to heaven bless my children, bless my husband that is the Christianity that I am part of and I say this to you my brothers and sisters not to condemn you, put you on a guilt trip I

have no agenda to get nothing out of you, really not but this is what I plead with you for that is let's not close our eyes to the reality of the world and if you can look away from your little world, my little world oh we can change the world and by the way, there is a passage in scripture that is quite adamant about it Gospel of Matthew chapter 18 where Jesus says in verse 5 if you welcome these little children in my name you are welcoming me, you want Jesus to go home with you and think about it he says the way to do that do this, then warning verse 10, see he says that you do not look down on one of these little ones don't ignore them, don't walk away don't say I don't want to handle it, don't say yeah there is a lot of problem I got my problem, don't do that the reason for I tell you

that there angels in heaven always see the face of my father in heaven I just don't understand a lot of stuff that I read it's a mystery to me can you just imagine that little boy in that movie that little boy on the street and 62 million children known as child labourers from the poorest of the poorest untouchables and dull communities can you imagine they all have angels watching over them look at the little girl sitting here I don't know how old she is, blonde hair, Swedish or something like that but I can assure you there must be 2-3 angels all around her and by the way even if you are not a child there are some angels around you, they are assigned to watch over us but then it says while they are watching over simultaneously they are beholding the face of the father in heaven I don't

understand how to explain all that but then how did the angel respond and felt and the father felt and feels when 15,000 young girls between 9 and older kidnapped, sold into sex slavery from Nepal every year I didn't want to think about it but I like to think about this in the slum where the movie was shot we established what you call bridge of hope centers rescuing children and giving them education food and clothes and taking care of them and in one of those slums a young lady her husband an alcoholic abandoned her with two young girls, beautiful looking girls about 9 and 7 something like that and she didn't know what to do to take care of them anymore can't send them to school, can't feed them and she decided the only thing left for her to do is to go to the red light district and sell

her body and make money it was that particular week, that time two of our missionaries went to the slum going from slum dweller to slum dweller talking about, saying we are going to start a bridge of hope center we will take your children and care for them and teach them and those two girls were rescued and the mother was led to the lord Jesus Christ and through our missionary's help she found a job and I want to think those angels must have been dancing all over the slum dwellers and the streets and saying father just can't imagine what happened we rescued, we caught it their lives are spared because someone was obedient someone was willing to go and live in those slums someone carrying the bible was willing to say I will pay the price to care just as Jesus did when he came to rescue us

oh I am so blessed to see these children people ask me so brother KP now you are a grandfather I have three grandchildren, how do you feel about it I don't know they are expecting me to jump up and down and

scream honestly I don't then you say what is wrong with you well you know the problem I have I am brainwashed with this awareness of millions of children precious to the father just like my grandchildren are precious to him but nobody cares, they are lost and my emotions are all torn into pieces often think about it and cry over it and I say this to you my brothers and sisters we have this amazing opportunity to now touch the lives of nearly 300 million people by touching the lives of these children and as I mentioned we were able to rescue huge numbers of children some 60,000 so far

but my dream may be at least half a million children that is not even a drop in the bucket and that is the reason I am here to share with you to pray and let's get engaged and do something right now because it means so much for the kingdom of the Lord you know this whole thing with our mission kind of a turning point some years ago when I had a strange dream I was looking at a field the harvest field, millions of acres golden in color, wheat field just ready for harvest somehow this was the time we were dreaming about touching the lives of the 280 million untouchables Dalits who are crying out to come out of slavery of caste system in India and the subcontinent and we were agonizing over all that and we never thought about the kids that is not part of our mission theology at that time and

in the dream I recognized this actually is the millions of people coming into the kingdom and the Lord has given me the privilege to march into the harvest field and collect all these people and take them to heaven and I began to run toward the field with such excitement but all of a sudden I couldn't go any further there was a river right in front of me blocking me so wide, so deep I stood there and simply began to weep saying what am I going to do you see you should understand I come from a family where my people are rice farmers in southern part of India harvest time comes our people are like the chicken with the head cut off you ever heard that? that means you do nothing except take care of the harvest why? two weeks the monsoon will come and the entire harvest will be destroyed and

so this mindset I have always but then what am I going to do I can't get across the river and right then a humongous bridge appeared from this side of the river to the other side and this bridge began to be filled with kids thousands of little kids all kinds and shapes and I walk out of my room dream and sat on my bed sweating this is a strange dream and that's when the Lord spoke to my heart harvest is plenty, these are my people go after the children love them, care for them, embrace them and they will come to know me in north east of India we have seen this happen as an incredible miracle and I just wanted to look at a couple of pictures that talks about how this bridge of hope centers are impacting communities and changing our world and I said look at it, would you do a couple of

things for me would you please pray saying Lord speak to my heart about what you are saying and thinking and secondly ask the Lord that he will give you his understanding wisdom to think about your life and your involvement here, there and everywhere for the rest of your lives let's look at it more commonly assaulted, raped, murdered deep in their hearts they hunger for love and reassurance to be told for once that their lives are worth something Gospel for Asia has long wanted to tell these people that Jesus loves them and offers them hope but how? now God has provided a way to reach them through their children Bridge of Hope you can help build this bridge of hope by sponsoring a child today for \$28 a month you can give a child an education clothing, food and medical care and most of all

you give your child the message of Christ's love and hope for the future to sponsor your bridge of hope child today simply fill out this card and bring it to the GFA table you'll receive a picture and information about the child you'll be helping you know people like me that spent our entire life dealing with many nations and traveled so many nations in the very recent times my thinking about America and the future

unlike maybe the way I used to say things some time ago I'm an extreme wild optimist as I look in the future of this country and say what on earth are you talking about there's no nation on earth with people and the body of Christ that cares more for the need and the suffering and the lost and confused people in many of these nations and all over the world like the people in

this country and you are part of a wonderful nation and one of the reasons I now believe the Lord will extend his mercy on us and his grace be given one of the key factors is that our continuous caring and loving and praying and being involved with the world so much in need for God so loved the world he is looking for us to be his in our time and that is the reason why I think like that I don't eliminate change as the fact that I must fast and pray for our country and stand in the gap but we also must act and continue to be obedient to be Christ like when you think about things like this that's going on time will not permit me to tell you day after I can tell you a story without end one little boy like you saw in that picture in north east India we started 50 bridge of hope centers for

communities that never had school no hope and one little boy Naboon first grader as he came to the school he learned about Jesus healing the sick and loving people and forgiving sins and his parents totally never touched the gospel living in a remote community in a little mud house and he goes home and tells his father Jesus can heal mother his mother was sick and dying there on a mat without any help and the father thought we had a medical doctor named Jesus at our school literally he comes and says my son told me about your doctor Jesus would you please have him come and help my wife and two missionaries went and explained the gospel and read God's word and prayed over the woman believe it or not amazing Jesus does it he heals the woman and the whole family comes to Christ and you can

imagine the shock in the remote community what happens there all of a sudden because they are all waiting for him to die and the funeral service takes place but first church was planted in the community in the history of that people through that little Naboon I wish to tell you oh this happens once no no no this is a common story right now in terms of what God is doing so how do we respond to that well obviously keep doing what you are doing praying, keep feeling the pain that you are feeling don't stop it I got a wonderful wife who cares for the Lord and I am glad for my children now grew up and married and grandchildren they are serving the Lord on the mission field and caring for the Lord and often I am gone from the home you know about 9-10 times a year I have to leave the country to

other nations and a few years ago phone rang beside my bed my wife in the United States and I am in India and I pick up the telephone the first words I hear he died I mean somebody wakes up at 2 in the morning and the first thing you hear he died I said who? and my wife said John and then told his last name I said what happened? her voice was breaking up kind of emotional explained a massive heart attack and he just passed away and I couldn't talk anymore I hung up the telephone and sat there deeply hurt you see 7-8 years prior to that I was sitting in my office in Dallas when I got this telephone call from this man from Houston and he introduced himself and he said I just finished reading a book Revolution World Missions and I can't stop crying my heart is broken and he said he was 60

some years old at that time and he said I never understood the reality of the world I am a follower of Christ and believe in Jesus I am born again and serve him but I never understood there is a world like this and he said can you tell me how I may invest my life the rest of my life to change the world and reach these millions of people for Christ the long story cut short over the few years of our relationship with him he invested more than 6 million dollars with us we became very close friends he traveled to the mission field with us to see what was going on the slum dollars, the children and the missionaries so later I told my staff

can you please find out for me there is some 6-7 million dollars he spent with us what happened with that money how was it invested, what came out of that

you know what we learned we had documentation over a million people had come to Christ through the efforts of this man supporting missionaries and children and various ministries and I wonder now he is with Jesus saying to himself man what a bummer I should have bought one more house invested that money in that place, this place I don't think so if anything he is saying to himself thank God for the privilege the Lord gave me to touch the lives of millions someday when we all stand around the throne with the multiplied millions that no man can number the dear friend of mine who is now Jesus will run to millions for he lived and acted based on what the Lord gave him without loving his own life and holding on to it may I encourage you to think about it and honestly really this is true I hate

to ask people so now give me your money and do this and that honestly I don't care I have been in this 40 years serving my Lord and 30 to some years ago when Jesus gripped my heart living in Dallas and seminary I realized life is so brief and walked away from all this stuff that I was dreaming about American life and I maintained two jackets couple of ties which I hate just a few trousers and a crock and I traveled all over the world even to Germany and Scandinavian countries even when it's snow and ice it works you know the reason I am saying that to you take your driver's license and look at it add 100 years to that whatever happens to all the stuff we are worrying about live for our Lord with inconvenience and pain embrace the cross be committed to the church to the leaders, to the

children and walk away from all kind of plans you already made for this and that and walk on a narrow road and die to self and part of that I plead with you if you will do this we got no less than 8 or 9 thousand children right now that we need someone to pray for and help them to find hope and if the Lord touches your heart please fill out this card and pick up a few children we have some people who support 50 or 100 children they have more money than I have but my wife and I, according to our children and grandchildren we picked up children to support them so if you got 15 grandchildren, take 15 children and if you plan to get married and have 2 dozen kids don't wait to get married, you can have them today all you need to do is fill out the card and bring it and we actually give you the

children, the real children their story, they write you a couple of times a year and we had people support lots of kids and go to the field and meet these kids also and the amazing thing, all of them come to know the Lord and the communities are being transformed and every penny you send, it goes to the field to help these children, just \$20 a month but again, don't do it out of guilt or force but it's a wholesome privilege and I thank you for listening, and thank you for your love and your concern, and it's a wonderful journey we are on and we'll make it together and carry the whole world with us the Lord bless you, thank you with 3 minutes to spare if the message Brother KP shared has touched your heart you may want to consider some of the materials we have at the book table in the back

I say this all the time, it's one thing to have somebody come through and challenge your heart and it's another thing to take some materials home with you that the Lord can use to remind you, because if you're like me I forget, I leak, so really the desire that we have these materials is for that purpose just that the Lord could use it to encourage you just to continue strong, following after Him and so there's a few books and materials we have the first book is no longer a slum dog this is the book Brother KP wrote, it's been about 8 months ago it's about the Bridge of Hope children's ministry tells the story of some of the statistics he shared with you but more than anything, it's filled with stories of hope about how the Lord is changing these children changing communities, changing

families and just using this thing in such a powerful, profound way we've seen about 150,000 copies go out already in just the first 8 months the Lord's really using it, it's a very powerful book it's free for you today, so there's a book table outside you can pick it up there for free and I mentioned last service, if it doesn't impact you call me, I'll give your money back sorry, this is cheesy, next picture please the second book is The Road to Reality coming home to Jesus from the unreal world brothers and sisters, this is not the real world the real world is eternity, and if you want to live your life here in such a way as to maximize your impact on eternity by living a simpler, more scale-backed lifestyle get a copy of this book, many, many practical suggestions and just a donation

on this thing, we like to help people get started we're very practical, we like to help people get started simplifying right away, and so the suggested donation on this book is I think like \$8,000 you can pay that if you want, just kidding \$8 suggested donation, rest of the material is the same thing next one please, this is Destined to Soar it's kind of a devotional in style, 37 little mini-sermonettes very, very challenging, discipleship-oriented materials they'll encourage you in your walk with Christ, they'll encourage you again to look away and see a world out there that we so easily forget about it's a very, very encouraging book, and then finally one video a touch of love, it's another message very different from today about the children's ministry Bridge of Hope, but I guarantee

it'll challenge your life all these things, we're not here to make money, so if you have the money come get the books and materials, if you don't have any money, you're still welcome to come get the books and materials, you can send your money later when your ship comes in or whatever happens, if somebody wants to get some extra it all goes to the Lord's work, we just want to put the materials in your hands, and again as far as the card, this card is in your bulletin, if you'd like to link your life with children today all you need to do is fill out the card, bring it back to the table for each child you decide to support, the next slide will give you a packet of information, it looks like this next slide has a picture of your child has their testimony, information about their family and

you can take this little child home and let them become a part of your family, and just you can pray for them and you can know that their life will be impacted as a result of your gift, and so please come back to the book table if you have any questions, we'd love to talk to you, and just want to say thank you so much, again, Pastor, thanks so much for allowing us to be here, it's an incredible privilege to walk with you in this journey, God bless you.

Would you all please stand as our worship team comes up, we'll pray and sing one more song together, I believe they mentioned it, but I want to restate this, one of the things that is truly an amazing thing about this ministry is every penny that you pay towards that child gets to that child, gets out to the mission field none of it goes to administrative costs, everyone who works for Gospel for Asia in the ministry is required to raise their own support, so 100% of the money that's given to those children gets to the mission field, so an amazing amazing thing, so let's pray after we're done praying, our prayer team will be up under the screens, if you need prayer for any reason, please come forward, we'd love the opportunity to pray with you but let's pray together now, Father thank you for just how incredible you are, we thank you for how you are moving around the world so often we can get so focused in on what you're doing here and we certainly are grateful for that Lord, your grace and your mercy that you pour out on us here, but Lord you are moving in powerful ways around the world mass numbers are coming to know you as Lord and Savior and Lord for that we are so grateful in the fact that we have an opportunity to be a part of that ministry so Lord we ask that you bless Brother KP and all of those with Gospel for Asia, bless their ministry continue to give them vision and guidance and direction for your work there, Lord we thank you for the opportunity that we

have the challenge that's been placed before us today Lord we ask that you would speak to our hearts personally as to how you would have us come alongside whether that's praying, whether it involves financially, Lord you guide us, you direct us you show us your way, Lord we thank you for how wonderful you are and how you do call us all to be a part of your ministry of reconciliation what a blessing, in Jesus name, Amen

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