

Called to Discipleship (P1)

by K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the urgent call to authentic discipleship and the need for believers to prioritize their relationship with Jesus above all else.

Duration: 24:45

Scripture: John 5:39

Topics: "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the question of whose friends we truly are. He urges the audience to seek the face of Jesus Christ by reading the four gospels and understanding what he lived for and what he calls us to do. The speaker expresses concern for the shallow and unrealistic lives of many Christians, attributing it to a cheap gospel and a lack of self-denial. He emphasizes the need for authenticity and radical transformation, referencing Acts 17:6 as an example of believers who turned the world upside down.

Transcript

The Lord is looking for men and women who will give their life, not just their spare evenings, or weekends, or the years after retirement. No! I think the Lord is still seeking today, as He always did, for those who will give Him faith and love. For a medical doctor, for a teacher, for a congressman, for a housewife, no matter what profession you hold, the question is, is Jesus the most important person in your life? Think for a moment about this.

Why is it that many living today know so much but their lives are so shallow? Keep that in mind as you join us for another Road to Reality. Brother K.P. Yohannan, founder of Gospel for Asia, takes us to Mark's Gospel, Chapter 1 today, and leads us towards an all-out commitment to the person of Jesus Christ. Since a great number of people today are confused about what it really means to follow Jesus, Brother K.P. joins us in studio today with a very personal word of encouragement.

First of all, I want to greet you in the name of our Lord. I often think about it, how I wish I could be there with you in your car, or at your home, or in the office, wherever you are, so I can look into your eyes and just talk to you, and maybe we can have a cup of tea together, or coffee, whatever, and talk about things that are significantly important, I believe, on God's heart. And obviously that is not practical, so here I am, talking to you again.

Please, I ask you to listen close, because I am not trying to be preaching at you another three-point or five-point sermon with illustrations to impress you with anything new. No, I've been carrying a huge burden on my heart for the body of Christ, and I would say to you personally, the Lord cares about you so much, and I kind of feel like what I share with you, if you listen close, it will make a difference in your life. Let me ask you this, have you ever wondered why after so much learning, teaching, going to concerts, counseling centers, hearing mega preachers, reading dozens of books on deeper life and Christianity and whatever else, why is it our lives remain so shallow, so plain? Why is it so fantastic, so unreal, and such dichotomy that we maintain in our lives? You may say, Brother KP, yeah, to some extent what you are saying is true.

Please listen. I spent over 300,000 air miles a year, traveling and speaking to God's people around the world. And after 40 years of serving God, I have come to the place of this understanding.

Great majority of Christendom today, I do mean, even in the so-called fundamental evangelical Bible preaching and teaching churches, people do not know the Lord the way they should know Him. As God said, these people worship me, confess me with their lips, but their hearts are so far away from me. So, a city like Dallas or Fort Worth, where you have dozens of Christian radio stations, 24 hours, I mean, what do you want to hear? Any kind of preaching, the most conservative preaching or the loose goose preaching and music? Yeah, you can hear the traditional slow rhythm music and you have the Christian contemporary music, then you have music that, you know, nobody understands what they are singing, the sound of metal is so heavy, so blaring, you don't know what they are saying.

And then you have teaching, very sober, conservative teaching, traditional teaching by sound evangelical preachers. Then you have the, you know, people, I say, kind of off the wall, saying about name it and claim it in your faith, you can get anything you want in the world. And one guy said, you know, if Paul had enough faith, then he didn't have to go through the problems he described in the second Corinthians and all that.

I mean, you can see the spectrum, it's from one end to other, but after all these teachings and music and books and everything, don't you think something is missing? When you look at the condition of Christianity, no, please don't misunderstand me. I'm not trying to be a doomsday prophet and anti-Christianity and against everybody. No, I'm not saying that.

But look at the scripture. When God says in the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament, he says in chapter 22, I seek for one individual who will stand in the gap on the behalf of the land that I may not destroy them, but I cannot find one. And then you read on, you'll find the land is destroyed.

I mean, you read the whole context of the scripture there, you'll find there are hundreds and hundreds of prophets, preachers going around saying, thus saith the Lord and all this stuff. Then God says, among all these people, I cannot find even one person who know me, who stand before me, who understand my heart. And people are destroyed left and right.

And my brothers and sisters, we are living, I think, in the last days, oh yeah, you heard that thousand times, but I think with all the stuff going on around us in the Middle East and the meltdown of our dollar and the economy and the politics and all that, I do not know how much more intelligence we need to understand. Time is running short. And I think the answer to the question, why after so much of hearing or preaching and learning and all the stuff, going to church every Sunday, some of them are mega churches, you know that maybe you're part of one of those.

Every new invention, idea that is floating around, our church will buy into that to make them again to understand God and spirituality. And the answer why we are not embracing reality, why we are not becoming radically authentic, why we are not becoming like the people in Acts chapter 17, verse 6. These, those who turn the world upside down, have come here also. In Philip's translation, these world revolutionaries have come here also.

Why is it, what is it that make us miss this reality? I don't know all the answers, but may I say this to you? One of the reasons may be that we have been conditioned to give ourselves to study the Bible, learn all the doctrines and enjoy the worship. And all the other stuff, we gravitate toward to. We gravitate toward and give ourselves to, but we are not coming to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I remember some years ago, a friend of mine told me this story of his life. He said, as a young Christian who gave up high paying professional job of the world, he gave his life to serve God. He was so hungry for God.

And he started to attend a thoroughly Bible teaching evangelical church. Three, four times a week he was in Bible studies. But as months went on, he found these seasoned, or rather so-called seasoned believers and elders, he witnessed the carnality, the love of money, bitterness, self-centeredness, living for the things of the world.

Not really experiencing the reality of fasting and prayer, brokenness and humility. And he said, one night he said, Lord, what is it? Why these people know so much of the Bible? So much stuff they know, yet their lives are so shallow. Why is it, Lord? He said, the Lord responded to him gently and said, Son, they have spent time with the Bible, not with me.

Please, again, don't misunderstand me. I am not saying we should not read the Bible, study the Bible, memorize it. No, I do that every day.

As a matter of fact, I recommend you memorize Bible verses every single day. Study your word faithfully. But let's not forget this.

Jesus, talking to the Pharisees who were memorizing the Bible and teaching other people and writing commentaries after commentaries on the Bible, they came to Jesus. And Jesus said, you fellows, you think by doing all this and becoming experts in Bible knowledge, you will find life, you will find God. But the problem is, they testify of me, and you will not come to me that you may have a life.

So you see the problem here? It is possible for you to be filled with Bible knowledge and be active in the worship or enjoying the worship. But the worship itself is individuals falling prostrate before the living Christ, making absolute surrender of all they are, their plans and dreams and ambitions and abandoning whatever they want to do for the one who is Lord. And that is worship.

But now, for many, worship has become worship. Bible knowledge has become the reason for attending church. In just a moment, Brother KP Yohanan will return to the road to reality and discuss further what it means truly to follow Jesus.

Knowing the Lord is a lifelong pursuit and process. Brother KP's book, Living in the Light of Eternity, is a wonderful book. It takes a fresh look at biblical discipleship.

While asking some very straight questions, this book helps us to take an honest yet hope-filled look at our lives. The suggested donation for the book, it's only a suggestion, is £5 plus poster packing. You can order it online at roadtoreality.org.uk. That's roadtoreality.org.uk. Back now with us is Brother KP in Mark chapter 1. Let me read this for you.

Mark chapter 1 verse 16 As Jesus walked beside the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Verse 17 Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him.

Now that is the kind of call the Lord is giving to his people that want to follow him. You say, well, we are supposed to leave our nets and boats and whatever else and follow him. Well, if you think about this, you realize that when the Lord calls us to follow him, there has to be a forsaking, giving up of a whole bunch of things.

The kind of friends you spend time with, you can't do it anymore because you're consumed with the one that you fell in love with. And there's a lot of time and there's a lot of things you did and said and the way you lived, you're no more able to do that. It is no more about yourself and about myself, rather about him.

As we read in 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 Since Jesus died for us, we no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died for us. And I want to ask you a question. Have you heard Jesus calling you to be his, to follow him? And one of the sad thing is that our pulpits, our teachers, often have become hirelings.

They speak not as shepherds, but as entrainers. Hence, the sheep, innocent sheep, we lost our way. Now, Jesus laid down the rules for people who want to follow him.

Oh, by the way, please, maybe it is good for us to start saying about ourselves, we are disciples of Christ, rather than just Christians. Because in Antioch, we read in the book of Acts, these disciples who forsook all and followed him were called Christians for the first time. So, if we don't have the life of discipleship and following the Lord, then why we should say we are Christians? It don't make no sense.

But think about the scripture, Matthew's gospel chapter 16 verse 24, Jesus said, If any man, any woman want to follow me, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him. Christianity, my brother, my sister, is an all-out commitment, not to a doctrine or a denomination, but to the person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is looking for men and women who will give their life, not just their spare evenings or weekends or the years after retirement.

No, I think the Lord is still seeking today, as he always did, for those who will give him first place in their life. For a medical doctor, for a teacher, for a congressman, for a housewife, no matter what profession you hold, the question is, is Jesus the most important person in your life? Your job and what you do becomes a vocation, but your call is to please him above all and to be his wherever you are. H. Ivan Hopkins said this, I quote, He looks today as he ever looked, not for crowds drifting aimlessly in his track, but for individual men and women whose undying allegiance will spring from their having recognized that he wants those who are prepared to follow the paths of self-renunciation, which he trod before them.

Unquote. This is authentic Christianity. Nothing less than unconditional surrender could be fitting response to our Lord's sacrifice at Calvary.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. The Lord Jesus Christ definitely made stringent demands on those who would be his disciples. Demands that often preachers, Christians

overlook.

But the word of God remains still intact and the meaning still the same. I was reading a book recently and this author had some very strong words to say. The American church is experiencing a crisis.

For years we have preached a cheap gospel and peddled a soft savior. We have taught salvation without self-denial and the crown without the cross. We have catered to the unsaved and compromised with the world.

Now we are paying the price. Our instant salvation message has dishonored God and deceived men. Our faulty seeds have produced a flaky harvest.

What a pitiful crop we are reaping. As American believers, we spend hours watching television but minutes watching in prayer. We are hungry for the sports page but have little taste for the world.

Spend more money on pet food than on foreign missions. Love to feast but hate to fast. We welcome God's blessings but we are weary of his burdens.

Let me ask you, is this what Jesus died for? Is this our new life in him? Now stop for a minute and think about it. Anyone who spends more time playing video games than seeking God in prayer has no right to call Jesus his Lord. Anyone who takes delight in today's perverted soap operas and entertainment definitely serving another God.

Anyone who cannot die to sports for a season is worshipping ideals. The scripture says, if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him because the friendship with the world is hatred toward God. Please think about it.

1 John 2 verse 15 and James 4 verse 4 The question is, in reality, whose friends are we? I wish I have another 2 hours to continue talk with you and I will pick it up later and continue this journey. But for now, I am asking you to please think and think deep and seek the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the 4 Gospels to see the Christ or the New Testament.

What he lived for, what he is calling us for. Some 2 billion people live in our generation that do not know his name and plunging toward eternity. And he still calls men and women to lay down their lives so that this world will once again see and hear and be changed by the living Christ.

This is the reason why I have encouraged my leaders here at Gospel for Asia. Why don't we open our doors for young people between the age of 18 and 25 or even older to take one year of their life after high school or during their college years and come and spend a year with us. During this one year with us, they live with a group of people.

We have about 150-160 people here serving God. All these individuals and families and the children committed to follow Christ based on the New Testament teachings of discipleship and caring for the lost world. Impacting a generation here, there and everywhere.

And I am asking you if you are interested in giving a year of your life to come and be with us. We are not trying to make money out of this but I am telling you even this morning I was spending time with 15-20 young people that are here right now for their internship. Some of them are saying their lives are so completely transformed and changed.

They are never the same again because they saw reality in the lives of people and learning what it means to be followers of Christ. If you are interested in knowing more about this, would you please contact us? You can simply go to our website gospelforasia.org or you can go to website wrotetoreality.org and get all the information. Whatever you do, I pray that you will think deep and seek the Lord's face.

That you may know Him and understand Him and become like Him and walk away from this plastic superficial world that says it's all about you, take care of yourself. No, it is all about Jesus. Amen.

Our website is Living in the Light of Eternity. You can order online at wrotetoreality.org.uk Also available free is Brother KP's book Revolution in World Missions which will walk you through Brother KP's journey with the Lord as well as how the Lord, through Gospel for Asia, has raised up over 16,500 national missionaries to reach their people with the life transforming gospel of Jesus Christ. Both books are available on wrotetoreality.org.uk I'm Richard Bews and you've been listening to Wrote to Reality, the radio ministry of Gospel for Asia.

Thanks ever so much for joining us.

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