

Discipleship - an All Out Commitment

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of making an all-out commitment to following Christ, denying oneself, and taking up the cross, in order to experience the fullness of God's life and love.

Duration: 43:47

Scripture: Luke 14:25

Topics: "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the American church's crisis of preaching a cheap gospel and promoting a soft savior. He emphasizes the need for personal sacrifice, suppression from the world, and a hatred for sin in order to truly experience a new life in Christ. The speaker references Luke 14:25-33, where Jesus speaks about the requirements of discipleship, including hating one's own life and giving up everything to follow Him. The sermon calls for serious soul searching and a reevaluation of the American church's priorities and commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

Transcript

Good morning to you and good to be, you know, here with you again, and I always look forward to these opportunities. I regard Pastor Joe, a real brother to me and a friend, and this church, a fellowship that we feel very close to, so many reasons that I'm glad. And John Beers, my colleague, we both came here yesterday, and as Pastor Joe said, there are a bunch of materials out there you can take.

If you have the money, you do pay. If you don't have the money, please steal them. You are given permission to do that, so you don't have to worry about paying for it.

We do have, what do you call, a school of discipleship, which is a year-long program we have in Dallas. We take young people from the age of 18 and on, invite them to come and spend a year with us. They live with people.

We got some 160 plus people on the staff. They live with us and study and learn. Part of the time we send them overseas, and their lives are so completely turned upside down for good.

And we encourage you to go to our website and look for that, and also maybe the materials that talks about it. If parents, you want to get rid of those kids for a year, good opportunity for you. I want to share with you a few minutes the gospel of Luke chapter 14.

And in some ways, you know, I remind myself that I'm speaking to my brothers and sisters. I'm not a traveling evangelist trying to get you to do something big or money, give me this and that. I just want to share some thoughts with you, knowing that you as a church, you are experiencing a new life in the Lord, and there is such hunger and thirst, and God is working here.

So whatever I say to you, please receive it as an encouragement, inviting you to continue the journey as we all want to follow the Lord. You understand my English? Thank you. I just want to make sure that you don't miss that.

Luke chapter 14, beginning with verse 25. Large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them, he said, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Verse 33, in the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. They are strong words, strong words of Christ. And listen to these statements, a friend of mine, that may erode these.

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 crown without the cross.

We have created a world that is so confusing and chaotic that the unsaved, they have no clue what this is all about. Our instant salvation message has dishonored God and confused men. Our faulty seeds have produced a flaky harvest.

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

Spend more money on pet food than on four missions. Love to feast but hate to fast. Welcome God's message but are weary of his burdens.

Is this what Jesus died for? Is this our new life in him? Stop for a moment and think. Anyone who spends more time playing video games than seeking God in prayer has no right to call Jesus Lord. Anyone who takes delight in today's perverted soap operas is serving another God.

Anyone who cannot die to sports for a season is worshipping idols. Anyone who loves the world, the word says, will not experience, will not understand the love of the Father. 1 John 2.15. It is time for some serious soul-searching.

What kind of born-again experience have we had if it calls for almost no personal sacrifice, produced virtually no suppression from the world, and breeds practically no hatred for sin? How can we claim to be born from above? Where's evidence of a new life, a new nature? We say, just confess Jesus as Lord and you are in. He says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter in the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Those are convicting words.

I remember first reading, I said, my goodness, they are strong words and they are. My brothers and sisters, as long as Christian life remains your life and my life, we will not understand Christ or the New Testament. Christian life is not my life, it is his life.

Blood was the price the Lord paid to purchase you. And therefore, we are told, reckon, make sure, accept it, that you are not your own any longer. You have no right to run your life the way you want it.

Your body, your soul, your spirit, it's no more yours. And only that kind of recognition that makes us to come to the place of total abandonment on a perpetual basis that allows us to get to know him fully and be the kind of people that he wants us to be in our generation. I was reading a quotation from H. A. E. It's quite interesting.

Listen to this. He looks today as he has ever looked, not for crowds drifting aimlessly in his track, but for individual men and women whose undying allegiance will spring from having recognized that he wants those who are prepared to follow the path of self- renunciation which he took before them. You know the chorus, my Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine.

For thee, all the follies of sin, I resign. My precious redeemer, my savior art thou. If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, it is now.

And I think the call the Lord gives to us continually is a higher call to come up higher and understand him so we can be those people in our earthen vessels that he can live out his life in our generation. A whole bunch of people, they were following Christ, a crowd, a multitude, and he turned to them and simply said, wow, what a big crowd. But then he said this statement, if you want to be mine, if you want to follow me, then the cost is you must love me more than your own life.

You want your own very life, you must love me. Supreme love for Christ. And I think unless we come to the place that nothing and nobody matters other than him, we will not enter into his life in the fullness.

Growing up in my home back in southern part of India as a small boy, I used to hear my mother quote this Bible verse a thousand times. I didn't know what she was talking about. Psalm 73 verse 25.

Whom have I in heaven but you and on earth I desire no one and nothing beside you. I thought something wrong with the head because I did not know what she was talking about until I grew up a little older, I realized this was a Bible verse. And I remember almost every morning she would be up two or three in the morning and spend next two, three hours on her knees praying.

And she never sat on a chair, she sat actually on a mat on the floor and she had this, you know, pulled the sari and put it on her head and she would be praying. And after those hours, she would wake up the whole family for what we call the family prayer. And by the way, it's my mother that led me to the Lord when I was eight years old and prayed for three and a half years every Friday fasting that one of her sons would go and serve God and happened to be the least and the last in my family, the Lord called me to serve him.

But you know, the thing about her, I always remember what intense devotion and love she had for the Lord. And she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor, and she never disclosed so much of her private work, only after she became a pastor. She left us and died in 1990.

At the age of 84, her sons, my goodness, how deep her work was with the Lord. And this is what she said. When I am dead and gone, the only thing I'm going to leave behind is my wedding ring and the earring and the gold chain my husband gave me when he married me at the age of 2019 I want you to sell these items and give the money to preach the gospel among people that never heard my Jesus name I want to meet them also in heaven And I I someday I hope to write a little booklet on our life, but I'm telling you a Life that is so devout to Christ.

There was no dichotomy in it There's no Sunday one day and Monday different day and Tuesday. No, it was total absolute Abandonment and it came out of her love for Christ more than anything on earth or anybody and My brothers and sisters I pray that you will continue to grow in the love of the Lord and love him more than anything and anyone One of our Staff members in Dallas was visiting one of our Bible colleges on the mission field and ran into this young man and Talked to him about his life story and found out while he was studying in college He gave his life to Christ and his parents threw him out of his house. He had one sister he lost everything he had lost his family all alone had to leave his home because He loved Jesus and he ended up at our Bible College So this staff person from us talking to this young man asked him Are you not? sad that you lost your family and your wealth and Your education and all these things and this young man responded.

Yeah, I am kind of sad But If I'm given the opportunity to do it again, I rather have my Jesus Than anything and all things and my only dream is that someday they too Will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and he said I love him more than anyone anything in the world and the disciples Jesus said Unless you love me more than anyone anything in the world You cannot be my disciple. Are we able to reckon with that? It was in 1973 Gisela that's my wife's name she was leaving India for Afghanistan and then on to Iran and back to Europe and We talked about getting married and you know when you fall in love The whole world is mystical You know 300 telephone bill a month all all doesn't becomes three thousand thirty thousand dollars and I remember as she was leaving India for Pakistan Afghanistan, we had this brief conversation It was one of the most painful conversation I ever had with anyone in my life. I said Islam I Need to tell you something She said what? As hard and difficult it is for me to say this I Wanted to know as you leave me and as I go on my way if We ever come to realize that this is not what the Lord want from us Please understand With pain we will embrace the decision and for you if you ever find out During this absent, this is not God's will for us to marry.

Please. Let me know We made that agreement and She left I went into my room. I said what a fool you are This is the most irrational stupid thing you can say to someone And I had to talk to myself.

I was 23 years old at that time But later when we get married and It's been a long journey and We continue to affirm to each other That our love for Christ is more sacred Than for each other and when my kids were growing up My life was not easy. They were in Dallas Danny and Sarah and I had a travel sometime three four weeks non-stop from place to place speaking and And when I leave one of the saddest thing was sometime my daughter would say I want my daddy I want my daddy and she would be crying and They all three come to the airport and see me off and I'm gone again and later I found out Gisela will never cry at the airports, but she'll go home in the room. She will cry And she will tell the kids, you know Daddy is able to do this Only because we let him do it And you know what daddy is doing he's telling people about Jesus and the missionaries and so many people need to come to know Jesus and Because of that and and we should thank God and pray for him and those kids grew up year after year Never never once hearing my wife saying what am I going to do? I don't know what to do.

He's gone again all the problems this and that no No wonder when they finish their studies, they both said we want to be missionaries serving God and Somebody asked my son When he was in Nepal, what made you do this thing? You could be living in Germany in America anywhere and all those things and one of his answer was oh We just grew up seeing how much our parents followed the Lord They never told us to do one thing. It just so happened your children your brothers and sisters your family members They are looking to see something what living for and dying for and That What they will see in you Your love like I saw in my mother is going to impact them more than you can imagine You know about Jacob in the Old Testament When you hear his name you think what a crook he was I think he was too until God changed him But you know, he fell in love with a girl Her name was remember Rachel but the problem us Laban Who was father-in-law said yeah, you can marry Rachel, but the dowry seven years you had to work Seven years working for a girl and he did but then he gets married and wake up to find out It was a wrong girl That only work over there not here and And then he gets mad at Laban say what on earth are you done to me you creep What are other words he used He said son don't get so excited No problem. I think Laban was a Indian No problem.

What do you mean? No problem? What do you want I want Rachel All right, so no problem seven years More All those years he worked like a slave but the Bible says It looked like just one day Because he loved Rachel Let me ask you a couple of questions not to put you on a guilt trip or condemn you anything like that How hard it is for you to give up watching those television programs That you shouldn't How difficult is for you to say this is it I will not listen to those music anymore How difficult it is for you to say this friendship? This is not something I will maintain any longer How Difficult it is for you to take that day two or three to fast before the Lord How difficult it is for you to say I'm going to look at this catalog anymore because enticing me to spend money To buy things that I don't need to impress people that who don't care anyway How difficult it is for you to say not to sin That you grapple with that nobody knows about I Tell you the answer is not legalism The answer is not fear the answer is not saying that if somebody ever find out what will happen to me No, I Keep falling in love with him over and over and over again He gets sweeter each day as the days go by all the love Between my lord, and I I keep falling in love with him over and over and over again You say It's not mystical But all spirituality is mystical I I Encourage you to start spending 10 15 20 minutes with the Lord alone and Talk to him, and he will talk back to you increase that half hour I Encourage you to get an alarm clock to wake you up Maybe two in the morning or whenever oh your flesh will hate it. I destroyed half it as an alarm clock in my life and I found out my flesh It's not my friend and I get up and wash my face in cold water and I found myself years ago. I still like to lay on my bed and pray, but I dragged my body to the living room or somewhere I can kneel and Open the scripture and say Lord.

I embrace suffering in the flesh I'm not going to be a friend of my flesh. I want to buff it to my body. I want to know you Please help me Lord It was a journey, but still I am the journey But you see my brothers and sisters The scripture says unless you deny yourself and pick up the cross Couple of weeks ago when I was in India speaking to a group of Believers and I said you know You can pray all you want do all you want to become godly and spiritual you will not unless you understand the responsibility of doing spirituality Abraham was justified not just by believing but also he engaged he took decision and He said this is what I'm going to do There is a responsibility rest upon us to make choices decisions and our own personal life and our flesh will always fight against us, you know, I I Mean, I'm certain we are all in the spiritual warfare Especially if you seek to follow the Lord But there are times we blame the devil for everything under the Sun The devil did this to me did it to me and all those things and the poor devil sometimes says I have nothing to do With this thing stop blaming me.

The problem is our self-centeredness it's a bigger problem we deal with than the demons and the devil often and I think It is like a little kid that is given a toy and it'll grab hold of it I don't want to give it up But then you give a better toy a bigger thing and the kid the child will grab that the same way The more you get to know the Lord the more he spent time with him the more you fall in love with him you understand the joy that comes from knowing him and his presence and Trusting him so completely and see how he carry you along like that dry leaf in the wind You'll be so surprised. It's the most beautiful life in the whole wide world And I think this is definitely the call the Lord gives to us We choose to embrace this road Amy Carmichael Most of you I'm sure read some of her writings someone who knew the Lord intimately and One time she prayed this prayer From prayer that asked that I may be sheltered from winds that beat on thee from fearing when I should aspire From faltering when I should climb higher from silken self or captain free Thy soldier who would follow thee From sudden love or softened things from easy choices weakenings Not thus our spirits fortified not this way when the crucified from all that dims the Calvary Oh Lamb of God deliver me Give me the love that leads the way the faith that nothing can dismay the hope nor disappointments tire The passion that will burn like fire. Let me not sink to be cold Make me thy fuel flame of God And of course these disciples the Lord Asked to follow him As much as they love him more than life and embrace the cross They also will experience the pain the loneliness the difficulties the Misunderstanding that comes from following the Lord who want suffering nobody Nobody this is what I like to share with you.

I hope you remember this You will not be able to understand the depth and the meaning of godliness Until you have come to the place of looking at the present your wealth your health your relationship and all that you have and you are about in this life from the Perspective of eternity Now you go to the airport and we all do wherever we have to show them our ID am I right The driver's license or passport or something and there on it. You'll find your date of birth the time you were born or the year You know yesterday I was sitting at the airport we landed here in Philadelphia and I was waiting for John to pick up the suitcases and and The three or four people they were there, you know, this people are rolling them on the wheelchair you know the people who could not walk and I looked a couple of these ladies and And I sat there imagining how these ladies looked and behaved and acted when they were 20 years old And I just imagined how vibrant full-on life and Going after everything they went after whatever but now crippled up Sitting in those wheelchairs and I pray that none of you end up like that I don't want end up like that, but please understand We are heading very fast To a place That we will not Be able to have what we have today life Will soon be over Hundred years now we are not here. So when you look back Into time from that perspective you realize as Paul said these light afflictions are nothing Compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us.

Paul what on earth you're talking about? When I read 2nd Corinthians, I read about hunger and starvation rejection betrayal No money no food no clothes to wear shipwreck being stoned and you talk about almost you lost your mind at a you know narrows break down couple of times and These light Afflictions and difficulties and you said nothing and he will say If you only could see What I see If only you know what I know on the inside you will say the same thing my dear brothers and sisters Following the Lord will cost you something it will cost you misunderstanding betrayal and People think you are stupid and crazy. I never forget one time when I came back home to see my mother The way she dressed the old clothes she was wearing I was so mad and so angry And I said mother what madness caught in your head Don't you see people in our community will think that we don't take care of you you're putting cow dung and shame on us mother I was really angry with her preachers can't get angry and I never forget this incredible smile her eyes so bright You know this small frame of her see looked at me and said you little boy. You don't

understand nothing Someday you will understand She never disclosed her private walk of Giving away everything she had to preach the gospel It's a lonely walk where her own son who is a mission leader couldn't even understand and abuse her for the way She didn't have fancy clothes on her, but she was exchanging all For the sake of preaching the gospel and reaching the lost world People around you will think Why you keep on driving this old car? Why you don't have these new things or why you are not having all the social life And how come you know you are fasting more than you're eating food, or how come you don't do this? I mean I mean Listen, please listen to me when you stand before the Lord your husband and wife and your Friends and children and nobody is going to be there with you you alone will face him not to be Condemned and judged, but just to hear from him what he will have to say.

Oh, what a beautiful thing It will be for him to say My daughter I just wait until you get here I'm so glad you are here my son Thank you for walking with me all alone, so glad you are here But then you will know it didn't happen without suffering without pain without difficulties But it's worth it Because our life on earth as you know is so very brief before we know it It is over Other day I was At this place to do my exercise, and there's a man there who? Helped me to do the right things and all those things you know I'm trying to stay alive So I can continue to preach the gospel so And I and when he told me do ten more times. I said I don't like you He said I know, but he would like me later You know The difficulties we go through in following the Lord the time of fasting or prayer or giving or whatever you do or Humbling yourself or seeking forgiveness or coming clean be honest. It's all difficult painful But I assure you in the long run those difficulties will turn into beautiful beautiful experiences with the Lord and This is a journey the Lord is calling us for I Remember the day I turned 50 by the way I was going to tell you this so this man The gym asked me So how old are you? He should have known that I thought I said I'm 60 he said what I Think he was lying to me, then he said you look a 40 I Like that sound But I remember the day I turned 50, and I took that day And I said Lord It's been a interesting journey with you, and I love it How many more years I have left I did not know and I want to Hear something from you this day and I was alone and Late in the afternoon It was interesting thing I Didn't see him I didn't hear him with my ears, but it was so real And he said son A few more years left Get to know me and you know to keep in mind In all my 43 some years of serving God I Have taken two vacations and one was last year with my wife and my children and grandchildren We went on the ship was a weird thing you can do, but it was quite interesting seven days But before that we took a three days vacation.

I don't know how many years ago and Three meetings during that time My life revolves around one thing the Lord and his kingdom and nothing else I live for and as Paul said I labor and very hard And I expected for the Lord to say something like this I'm glad you spend this whole day with me. I Know Your journey been one of the Most difficult and you work for me you labor for me two billion people wait to hear my name and thank you for doing what you're doing and and Move forward and this and that and all kind of affirmations What's a weird thing he didn't say any of those things He simply said Son just a few more years Get to know me and I cried I sobbed I wept And I realized once again He was saying work is important The whole world need to hear my name that's important Your sleepless nights and fasting and agony. It's all very important but son What I ask you Love me more get to know me better and my brothers and sisters What makes us What we are who we are as disciples of the Lord it is not activities and work we perform But his life Flowing through our earth and vessels This you will never know unless you Spend time with him So may I make just a few recommendations.

Hopefully some of them are practical you can do them Average Christians in America The study shows spend less than eight minutes a day in prayer that means a whole bunch of them do nothing Would you

consider asking the Lord for grace and make a decision to take Maybe an hour a day just to be with the Lord Please stop reading books about some new things that you need to learn No, this is a time you got your Bible and you and Jesus Practice that and you'll find the joy and it will cause it increase more time and Maybe it will become two hours a day Then see if he can take a day of the week for fasting No, he will not die if he fast a day if you die Heaven is a better place Why you fast? Way to help you to lose some weight But don't worry about that part But you say Lord this is fast Before you why Lord I want to see you. I know you You'll feel hungry. If you add two three four days, you'll find it a little more easier But if you take a week or something like that, you will find after a couple of days things get a little easier And I encourage you to enter into a world of Spending time with the Lord getting to know him in that way And I please I encourage you don't feel guilty and bad Because you are not doing it now or you don't know how to do it but someone like your shepherd here that Walked with the Lord and know the way I'm sure you will learn more how to go about doing that The second thing I will ask you to do What is godliness? What is knowing Jesus? It is just being honest The the only way you can really know him is to be honest When I say I was given the revelation of God he began totally honest he said I'm I'm lost I am undone.

I just I don't know what to do See the longer you pretend to be spiritual by using the right words and doing the right things and this and that we will live in our world of superficiality and being honest and and Transparent before the Lord and before one another that makes us to become more real before the Lord and The third thing I would encourage you one of the worst enemy that We have in our following the Lord is the love of comfort and materialism whether you know it or not The amount of time You spend shopping around buying things on sale and crowding your life with stuff that Just hurts I do not know anything that bothers or hurt hinders people than the love of material things Anything money can buy to make life more comfortable and ease keep on going after that, you know life Keep it simple and So you will find it easier to do out your time for the things of the Lord and I pray that your journey When this comes to an end you will say Lord, it's been a good journey and that's what you want Thank you for listening Thank you for opening your hearts to the Lord and my prayer is that the Lord will draw you close to him and he will Amen

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