

Gospel for Asia: Let the Children Come

by K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the importance of children's ministry and the urgent need to reach the unreached in South Asia through Gospel for Asia's mission.

Duration: 43:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 25:40, Mark 9:36, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 9:48, Luke 10:21, Luke 18:16

Topics: "Child Ministry", "Eternal Compassion"

Description

In this sermon, a Dalit woman is depicted as a poor and broken individual who struggles to provide food for her children. The speaker shares the story of their own family's poverty and the impact it had on their lives. However, through the intervention of kind people and the hope found in Jesus, their lives were transformed. The speaker emphasizes the importance of embracing and helping vulnerable children, as well as the fleeting nature of earthly possessions compared to the eternal impact of compassion and determination.

Transcript

I'd like to move to this place from Dallas, Texas and go to church here. And I told my colleagues as I was walking up to the building, every church should construct a building like this. You are blessed, you don't know how blessed you are.

Well, praise the Lord. I'm part of a mission called Gospel for Asia. We serve the Lord in the most unreached nations in the 1040 window, especially in Asian part of the world.

Some 2 billion people that never had a chance to hear about our Lord live in those nations where usually we as Americans or Europeans are not allowed to be there as missionaries to evangelize and baptize and plant churches. But God has raised up tens of thousands of nationals, people from their own countries that we are training and sending them out. And we are part of the Calvary Chapel Fellowship.

Twenty-five years we've been doing it. Today, by the grace of God, we have nearly 15,000 full-time missionaries that we've trained and sent out, and they have planted 24,000 churches among people that never had a church before. Praise God.

And we have 54 Bible colleges in these 10 nations with over 9,000 young people studying between the age of 18 and 25. They go through a three-year training before they are sent out to the unreached areas.

And we have 92 languages, radio broadcasts, that touches the lives of people in 11 nations.

Over a million people write to us every year asking for more information about Jesus. And the Lord willing, in a few months' time, we are launching the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week television channel that will touch the lives of many, many nations in that part of the world. And people like Skip Heidsack and David Rosales and Ken Ortiz and some of the senior leaders of our fellowship from Calvary Chapel usually go and teach us, our leaders on the mission field.

And I'm praying that my dear brother, your pastor, Jack, will go with us for a couple of weeks on your behalf. If you don't want to go, please, you force him to go. This is such a blessing to be here to share with you what the Lord is doing, and I believe it's going to be a time of blessing.

Lots of people are praying for this day. And last year, we took more than 200 young people from America for nearly three weeks of time on the mission field to Sri Lanka, India, Nepal. For the exposure, they came back, their life totally transformed.

And we also take adults to go for short-term missions, and I understand this is one of the more heavily committed church for missions, and I encourage you to think about maybe planning one of your trips with us, and I assure you, you will never be the same again after you've been there and see what the Lord is doing and how it impacts your own personal life. And I'm so grateful just to hear from Pastor Jack that some 1,500 or more, I don't remember the number exactly, young people being mobilized from here. You know, the neat thing, they come back, it's worth the investment you made in their life.

They think different, they act different, they live different. And I thank you for your involvement in the lost world. May the Lord continue to give you the grace to go forward to do much more.

To those much is given, much shall be required. Now, do you understand my English? Wonderful. Please turn your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 9, verse 36.

This is about Jesus. He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.

And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me. Now, over to chapter 10, you will read those verses. When people were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant, he was upset. He said to them, Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Matthew, Mark, Luke, in all these three Gospels, we have this story repeated, which means something quite significant.

The Holy Spirit made sure that as you and I read the Scripture, we will read in one Gospel, then go to the next one, the next. You say, wow, I read this before. But the Holy Spirit is trying to say, I am trying to tell you something so very significant, especially words that came out of the mouth of Jesus himself.

Some time ago, I took the red letter edition of the Bible, and went through the Gospels, just only reading the words of Jesus. I tell you, it impacts you like nothing else. It is like my Lord just walks right now into time, and then stands beside me or sits in front of me, and then talks to me, and I hear him talk.

And the same thing here. In the midst of lots of people, he just picks up a little kid, and holds him up, and says, this is important. You must take notice.

I give time and priority to something like this. Then later you find the disciples say, what a bummer. Christ is so busy, he has too many other important things to do.

What is wrong with his parents? Jesus said, leave them alone. Let them come to me. Our ministry began 27 years ago.

It is one of the largest ministries known for what we do. But for the first two decades, I didn't think much about children. Although I have two children.

My whole commitment, somehow preach the gospel to people, and get them to repent, and convert, and baptize them, and get a church planted. If children don't come along, that's a problem. I was coming back to the United States from Bombay, India.

I had a few hours in the hotel, and picked up this English newspaper called Indian Express. On the front page was a black and white picture that arrested me, because I never saw anything like this before. It was a picture of a little boy, 4 or 5 year old little boy, laying on the sidewalk of Bombay, crowded street.

But not just him laying on the sidewalk, beside him lays a dog. Not just a dog, but a female dog. But then as you look at it, you find the little boy drinking milk from this dog.

The caption reads, This dog is his mother. The three column article explained about over 100,000 children that live on the streets of Bombay, not knowing who their parents are. It began to describe the pride, the agony, the lostness, and the hunger of children by hundreds of thousands on the streets.

And I sat there, and I said to myself, What if it was my little son, Danny, trying to survive, laying on the street of Bombay, drinking milk from a female dog. But I had much work to do, I must move on. Nearly a year will go by.

Another occasion, again in Bombay. A city with 5 million people live in the slums, the largest slum of the world. I was waiting for the light to turn green, so I can cross the street with the multitudes.

If you have been to Bombay, you know what happens, like many cities in this part of the world. You will have 10, 15, 20 little children come, many of them half-naked, mothers carrying little babies with bloated stomachs, having their hands stretched out, asking for alms, money. They are the beggar children on the streets.

And it is told to the tourists, when you go to India on the streets, do not give anything to anyone. If you do, you will be mobbed, you cannot get away. So, keep your face turned and mad and angry, walk through streets.

So, I stood there waiting for the light to turn green, so I can cross the street, but kids everywhere, and I would not look at them. But all of a sudden, from behind me, I hear this voice. Saab, sir, my father died.

My mother is sick. She cannot beg anymore. I have a little brother.

He is hungry and crying. Would you give me a few pennies, I can buy some bread and take it to him. Somehow those words pierced through my heart.

I could not move. The light turned green and everybody walked away. I turned around, looking at the face of a seven, eight-year-old girl.

A girl that I will never be able to forget. One of the most beautiful faces of a young girl I have ever seen in my entire life. Long, black, thick hair, as long as the length of a body.

Dust mingled with sweat running down on her face. Dirty fingernails. No shoes, no socks.

She wears a rag, holes everywhere. Just standing there with her arms out. I put my hands in my pocket, took all the money I could find and gave it to her and walked away.

But it was strange. As though now Christ himself joined me on the walk and asked me a simple question. So, what do you think about the little girl? Is her life as precious and valuable as your daughter Sarah? Of the same age, born and raised in Dallas, Texas.

Got her own private room, furniture, carpet. Closet filled with beautiful clothes. Her German mother makes sure that she is cared for.

Loved, goes to school, prays, reads Bible, loves Jesus. Loved, cared for. Being a missionary and a minister, my answer to Christ was, Is now Jesus? Absolutely, I do! I wished he walked with me further.

He didn't. Now he left me to walk alone on the streets, weeping. When we are so possessed and intoxicated with our own self-centeredness.

With me, mine, my world, we become blind to the plight of a world that did not know our Lord, nor do they have any hope. I was speaking at the Carver Chapel in South Bay a year ago, Steve May's church. And after the service, somebody came and handed me a CD by Stephen Curtis Chapman.

You know the guy? Neat brother. I was with his wife on a television show, Beth, some time ago. Neat people.

And this man said to me, Brother KP, you may want to listen to this song called, What Now? Which was on the CD. Listen to these words. I saw the face of Jesus in a little orphan girl.

She was standing in the corner on the other side of the world. And I heard the voice of Jesus gently whisper to my heart. Didn't you say you wanted to find me? Well, here I am.

Here you are. So what will you do now that you have found me? What now? What will you do with this treasure you have found? I know I may not look like what you expected. But if you will remember, this is right where I said I would be.

You found me. What now? Let me ask you. What do you expect to find when you look in the eyes of a one-year-old, two-year-old, three-year-old little kids? You look for love and smile and affection and security and warmth.

When those things are replaced with fear and anxiety and starvation and hopelessness. It must arrest us to stop and think, Jesus, what do you think? How must I respond? And I am learning. Listen to this.

In South Asia, 90 million go hungry every day without anything for them to eat and survive. 135 million between the ages of 7 and 18 have never been to school. Never had the chance to learn ABCD.

160 million child laborers in India, the largest number of working children in the world. They start their work at the age of 4 and 5 and begin to work when the sun rises and go to bed when the sun sets, making 9, 10 cents for the whole day's labor. 160 million child laborers.

Go to the website, you'll be shocked. In carpet-making factories, brick-making factories, firecracker-making factories, places where little kids, their legs are chained to steel posts so they can run away. They have to work and work and work.

You say, brother KP, who are these children? I tell you the answer. These are the children of the untouchables, the Dalits, the downtrodden. In India, with 1.2 billion people of that population, 300 million people are known as the Dalits, the untouchables.

The curse of slavery that came upon the nation because of caste system. 90% of illiteracy among these people. I remember meeting with a leader of one of the people groups called Banjara.

61 million people in that part of the country. This man told me, he said, sir, my people are dying, we are slaves, we have no hope. We adults are lost, at least for our children.

Would you please come and teach and help? Then he said, you teach about Jesus also. Teach them Bible. You make all our people Christians, no problem.

I looked at him. I said, you really mean what you are saying? He said, yes, we know. For our people, nearly 300 million people, there is no other hope except Christianity.

But we don't know what to do. Help us. I told you, as I began to talk this morning, I had just laser beam focus, just one thing on my mind.

Get people repent, get converted, baptize them, and plant a church. That's all I think about. So when I ran into the Dalit community, where places, they are saying, come and make us Christians.

We want to be Christians. And it's a phenomenon. It's the biggest thing happening in the world, missions, that is millions of people are saying, come and tell us how to follow Christ.

But as I met with these leaders, about five years ago, they said, you know what? If you can come and start schools among our people, it will be wonderful. Because then we will know how to read Bible and learn about Jesus. And I said, oh no, no, this is not something we want to do.

We are in the business of repent. I said to my leaders, senior pastors, you know, maybe we should do something a little bit to help, you know, so they will believe us. You know, kind of go along with the game a little bit.

And we began to start a few schools among these people. I had a strange dream one early morning. I'm not a dreamer, by the way.

I'm not one of those spooky guys looking for. I'm just a normal in and out hamburger French fries guy. Believe it or not, every time I come to California, one of the place I visit as a holy site, it is an in and out burger place.

I'm crusading for the whole American states to have it, so we can have some in Texas also. But in this dream, most strange dream I ever had. I was looking at a harvest field.

Millions of acres of ripe field, wheat field, golden color, just swaying in the breeze, just so beautiful. And in the dream I realized, this is what Jesus talked about in John 4. The harvest is now, not four months later. And then I realized, this is what God is doing for us now.

The nearly 300 billion untouchables, the poor, the downtrodden, the nobodies in South Asia, in this part of the world. Because we are right in the midst of these people. I got so excited that this is a gift the Lord has given to us.

We can scoop up all these people and take them to heaven. I began to run toward the harvest field with such excitement saying, it is ours, it is ours, we got it. But then I was made to stop, I couldn't go any further.

I came upon this river, so wide, so deep, that I could do nothing about it. There is no bridge to get across. And the harvest is on the other side of the river, and I am on this side of the river.

And I stood there weeping, saying, oh, it's all gone, what am I doing? Because I come from a family where my people are rice farmers back in India. When the harvest time comes, my people are like the chicken with the head cut off. You don't sleep, you don't go anywhere, you work day and night.

Because in two, three weeks time the monsoon will come and the harvest will be destroyed. And now I stand there just in panic. And all of a sudden in my dream I saw a bridge appear gaping from this side to the other side of this massive river.

Not a tiny bridge, but a massive one, huge, humongous. And all of a sudden children began to be filled with this bridge. The whole bridge became full of little kids, black, white, pink, yellow, naked, all kinds of little kids.

It's no more empty bridge, but packed with children. And I woke up. Sad or not, I said, what on earth is, what happened? It was as though the Lord came into the room and repeated these Bible verses.

This harvest is yours, it's mine, but will you go and embrace these children? This is the bridge for you to get to these people. In Tripura, in that part of the world, we started 50 schools, centers for these kids that never been to school. Many times kids come to our place, totally naked, little kids.

We provide them with uniform and clothes and books and medical checkup and meals and all those things. In one year, there we had 37 churches planted. You say, how does it work? One story out of hundreds, I'll tell you.

First grader, Naboon, the name of the little boy, he came to our center, started learning about Jesus, choruses. Of course he learns the normal, you know, math and English and all the other stuff also. And he learned Bible stories because every day, an hour and a half, they learn about Jesus and Bible stories.

So he goes home and tells his father, Father, there is Jesus who can heal mummy. His mother was dying without any hope. They went to which doctors and all kind of stuff they did.

The poor woman was laying on the mat in the little hut, dying. And the father thought that there is a medical doctor called Jesus who can come and heal his wife. So next day, this man comes with the boy to the school and says, you have a medical doctor named Jesus.

Would you please tell him to come and help my wife? And our people realize, he didn't know what he was thinking. Two missionaries go with him, explain the Bible, share the good news, lay a hand on the dying woman, say, Lord Jesus, for your name's sake, would you do something? And the Lord heals the lady. Hallelujah! And that became the first stone, the beginning of the church, now a beautiful church in the community.

Today we have 35,000 children in our 280 centers. And recently I asked one of our leaders, how long it takes for the kids to give their heart to Jesus? They said, what do you mean how long? Within hours! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! And then the same leader said, you know, I tell you, interesting, last week, a nine-year-old girl who was in our school, became responsible for 14 members of our family and relatives come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, all got baptized and now became part of the local church. They become evangelists and missionaries.

But then there's also some sad stories. That touched my heart one time when one of our pastors was telling me about one of our schools. The school was let out three o'clock in the afternoon.

All the kids running home, their little huts and places they lived with their backpack and such laughter and making noises. The teacher saw a young girl, seven, eight-year-old young girl, standing outside the school just weeping. She's not part of our Bridge of Hope school.

And the teacher said, what are you doing? Where are you from? What's your name? Why are you weeping? She won't say nothing. She just stood there just crying and crying. And finally, the first sentence she uttered goes like this.

My brother also died. She and her parents lived on the railway tracks. And one by one, they all died.

And the only thing she had left was her brother, a little boy. And he also died. And then she said, I had a friend who plays with me.

If you're wondering what I'm talking about, when you go to the railway stations in Bombay, Calcutta, places, you'll find kids running like mad when the train come to a halt to go into the compartments looking for crumbs of food laying all over the place. That's how they survive. And she said, my friend who used to play with me, he's no more playing with me.

He comes to your school. And I have come to ask if he will take me or so I have nowhere to go. Of course, you know the answer.

We didn't say no, there's no place for you. Who knows, someday that girl will be Amy Carmichael. Or someone like you who will raise a family and love Jesus.

How can I explain this to you better than showing you a few pictures. It takes just hardly a couple of minutes. I want you to look at some of these pictures and see what actually goes on on the mission field.

And if you can have the lights turned off and look at this. And as you watch this, please ask the Lord to speak to your heart and give you His heart, His compassion. Let's look at this.

I thank God for the 15,000 plus aggressive well-trained missionaries we have on the mission field. And I have a dream. The dream is, Lord, I'd like to see at least 100 million of these untouchables come to know you.

Since they are crying out, telling us, please come and help us. In Nepal, in Bangladesh, in India, in Sri Lanka, these nations, the heart of the 1040 window. And my dream is this.

Not just 35,000 children we just got. What is that? When you think about 160 million child laborers and the lost generation. But then, I know the way to get these people to come to know Jesus.

It's not just handing out food and clothes and medicines. No, it is bringing Jesus along with all these things. And that's what you see we are doing.

The question is this. So, what are you going to do with this little one? What now? My brothers and sisters, for me, it was a journey with Jesus. Repenting, changing, learning.

And I'm one of the most happiest human beings on planet earth. With the dream that I can now be like Jesus, embracing these little kids. They are not so far away.

They are so near, so close. I wish I had time to tell you story after story of little kids like you saw on the screen this morning. How their lives are transformed.

And some time ago, one of these little boys that came to our center. His story is a perfect story to tell you the story of hundreds of thousands. And listen to these words that is explained in this brief poem.

Dark, skinny body, this was my mother. Eyes sunken with pain, turns and look at us. As she disappears into the woods.

It is late in the afternoon. All we children eat nothing all day. Waiting and watching for mother.

After selling the sticks to come home with food. This is a poor broken Dalit woman that goes into the forest to collect woods. Firewoods that go to the market and sell to get pennies to buy food and bring it home.

Next answer. Our father left for nearby state looking for a coolies job. For untouchables here like us.

There is no job except cleaning latrines, that is toilets. Poverty and hunger took its toll. My mother died without help.

My brothers and I didn't know what to do. Wandering on streets all day long. Our father came home, a broken man.

Held us in arms, cried bitterly. He sits and gaze into the dark. Mutters to himself, I don't know what.

The sun rose with bright hope. Some kind people took us to school. At first I didn't know much at all.

Now I know we have hope. Often my eyes seek my mother. I still cry and grieve.

When I see a dark skinny vendor of wood. I wish I had money to buy her sticks. For me, I'm so grateful that little boy finally says I know I have hope.

My brothers and sisters, some of us don't realize our life on earth is very brief. I tell you a secret. A hundred years from now, you are not going to be living in your house.

Driving a car. Wearing your clothes. Looking for the diamond ring.

Planning to buy that new car. Impress some people around you. Don't be so foolish.

It's over before you know it. But the question is this. Can I be like Jesus? To embrace a bunch of people that will not perish in time.

Along with all the materialism. But I can take them into eternity. And that take.

Commitment. And determination. And compassion.

May the Lord continue to break my heart and your heart. For the things that he's concerned about. You say, Brother KP, now what am I supposed to do? I hear you.

And I understand. This is my request. Not because of guilt or condemnation.

Or any other reason. If the Lord speaks to your heart. Would you think about helping us to touch the lives of a few thousands more kids.

So desperately in need. We have right now about 20,000 children. That desperately need someone to love them.

To embrace them. Take them home. To help them to find life.

If you say, I'd like to know what you're talking about. There's a card like this in your bulletin. If you please look at your bulletin.

You'll find a card like this. Wow, that's cool. Look at that.

This amazing machine. The green stripe. It simply says there, I want help.

Starting now, I'll probably help sponsor. You can help two or three or ten or 15 or 20 children. Whatever.

About \$28 a month. You can provide food, clothes, tuition, medical help. Whatever for that little one.

I have two children. My both kids were born and raised in America. They finished their studies.

They are missionaries on the mission field. But my wife and I took two children to begin with. Then we added more.

And I know this Christmas time, some of my staff in Dallas. We've got some hundred people that work on our staff in Dallas. Some of them gave Christmas gifts.

Little kids. And somebody gave me a Christmas gift. They didn't give me a nice shirt.

But they gave me a little kid framed. This is the gift they gave. They're supporting the kid on our behalf.

And what happens is this. If you have two or three children. Take three children with you today.

You say, what are you talking about? See, when you fill this card out and bring to the table outside. We actually give you your child, your children. It will go, your girl, take home with you.

And they become part of your family. They actually are yours. No one else supports the little kid.

And no one else is there to pray for them and care for them. And every year they write to you a couple of times. You can write back to them.

It's a wonderful relationship. If you ever went to the field, which I believe this church will send people. You can visit those schools and see these kids.

And what a day it is. Just to realize that they be some of the best missionaries in the days to come. For Jesus' sake.

And if you're grandparents, pick up the number of kids according to the number of grandchildren you have. If you're not married, if you're thinking about getting married and have about 25 children. Get 25! And whatever the Lord lays upon your heart.

And all you need to do is just fill out the card. And bring to the table and we'll give you the number of children that you want. And you say, well, I didn't bring any money or check with me.

Don't worry about that. Even if you don't have any money, nothing, you still can get your children. All you need to do is fill this out.

We'll write you a letter later. And you can send your money back. But we encourage most people to support through the credit card system on the back of the card.

So that a lot of work is also avoided for us. And we save money in all the processing. So on the back of the card it's explained about that also.

You may look at it. I encourage you and I pray that you will ask the Lord. And see this as a privilege, not as a burden.

And I tell you something. When the Lord broke my heart. When I see thousands of people getting baptized and come to Christ.

And I said, I only wish I understood this 20 years ago. But I want to do the right thing right now. And with your help, I tell you.

You have one church here. There will be not two or three. Maybe 50,000, 70,000 churches in these nations as we go after these kids.

And they find hope too. I love you and appreciate you so much. And may the Lord give us the wisdom to do what he calls us to do.

Amen. John.

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