

Looking at the Life of Christ

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon calls believers to emulate Christ's life of compassion and service, particularly towards the oppressed, while emphasizing the urgency of mission work.

Duration: 32:52

Scripture: Psalm 73:25, Matthew 9:36-38, 1 John 2:6

Topics: "Christian Living", "Servant Leadership"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of compassion and selflessness, following the example of Jesus Christ. It challenges listeners to consider the impact of their choices and actions on others, especially those in need, and encourages a commitment to serving God wholeheartedly. The speaker shares personal stories and reflections to illustrate the transformative power of faith and prayer in changing lives and communities for the better.

Transcript

There once lived a king in the enchanted land known as India. One of the most culturally vibrant countries in the world today, India is a cross-section of modern ingenuity and ancient tradition. Although hailed as the largest democratic nation on earth, one-third of the world's impoverished are living within its borders.

The 2012 gang-rape of a young woman on a bus in Delhi ignited a firestorm of international headlines. This violence of oppression against the women of India is a problem that has spanned centuries. This cultural persecution follows women from their birth, overshadowing their entire life.

Until death. Is there a solution to this societal injustice? Hope is on the way. There is a remnant of women rising from the ashes, restoring worth and dignity to generations of broken women and shattered lives.

From the producers of the critically acclaimed film, Kim Jong-Il. Take a journey into the heart of tragedy. Witness the adversity.

The triumph. The women of a forgotten world. In a society dominated by men and ruled by a culture of gender segregation, how is it even possible to reach out and help these oppressed women? When the service is over, you'll have the opportunity to pick up that movie in the back of the table.

John will be talking about that. I'm glad to be here. We are kind of neighbors here.

Gospel of Asia. We've been here for quite a long time. Your senior pastor knows us quite well.

We became quite good friends. I'm grateful. Am I speaking on this boat, or should I turn this one on this one? This one here? The captain is sitting up there, directing me.

Thank the leadership and all of you for allowing me to come and speak here today. We are praying that the Lord will have his way among us this morning. Do you understand my English? When I first came to America in 1974, I came to study at Criswell College at the invitation of W.A. Criswell.

For the first two weeks of my life in America, no matter what I said, people say, what did you say? Can you repeat that, please? I kind of got tired of it. Richard Schaefer, somebody from Pennsylvania who was in school with me, said, K.P., just don't worry about it. You speak English, and they speak Texan.

I was a member of the First Baptist Church there, going to school. Then later I was ordained by W.A. Criswell and assigned to pastor a church. Not a large church like this.

We had a couple of hundred families in the eastern part of Dallas and pastored there for four years. My worst experience was really not my English. I remember the first week I was here, I was taken to a Bible study at one of the church members of the First Baptist Church.

I never had some of these foods that you have here. Chips and salsa and all these different things. It was crunchy.

It was nice. It was spicy, too. Then they gave me something to drink.

I watched everybody opening the can. I was drinking it. The only problem was I threw up.

I looked at it. It read, Dr. Pepper. I said to myself, somebody is trying to poison me.

I just can't imagine somebody made a drink like that. Although since then I got used to it, I am addicted. It was later that I felt with my wife that we should give our life on the behalf of some two billion people living in many, many nations.

In Asia, that either entirely closed their door for outsiders to come and do mission work. Or severely restrict from people coming in to do mission work. Preaching and baptizing in planned churches.

That's when we felt we should commit our life to go and train brothers and sisters in these nations. And send them out to preach the gospel in planned churches. And Dr. Edelman and a host of others gave the encouragement for us to do that.

And that was kind of 35 years ago. 35 years. I don't look that old.

Don't worry about it. But today, by the grace of God, we have way more than 10,000 or 12,000 missionaries scattered in 16 nations. And every single day, no less than 16 churches are born among people that never had a church before.

And let me clarify. When we say a church, it means at least 20 baptized adults. Some congregations, we have 500, 800, 1,000 members.

Like in the land of Burma, we have some 500 congregations. People that are serving the Lord. In Nepal, over 400 congregations.

Bangladesh and so on. And this is possible because brothers and sisters like you, living here, where the Lord has you live, you live for him. And pray and fast and give faithfully and do your part.

So, together, we are reaching the whole world with the gospel. So, being in Carleton, you can and you are touching the lives of people in many, many nations. I know how much involvement you have in mission work in so many countries.

I know that from your senior pastor. And I'm grateful. And never underestimate the potential of your doing even the small thing God gave you to do.

You know, being a pastor of a Southern Baptist church for, you know, over four years, my wife was heavily involved, as you know, with the women's ministry. And WMU is one of the most powerful movement in the Southern Baptist church worldwide. And when we began the church planting movement in Asian countries, actually, my wife took all the available materials that we have from the WMU.

And related ministries and created a 300 or 400-page writer as to how to do this thing on the mission field. Today, we have more than 9,000 women's fellowship units that are functioning, reaching out to the unreached women. And ministering to people and seeing tens of thousands of unfortunate women living in slums and other terrible conditions coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, just think about it. We are all part of a chain. You are one link and I'm one link.

But together, we are changing the world. And I encourage you to continue the journey faithfully and do what the Lord gave you to do. You know, with a pastor like you have who is very systematic, highly educated, and deliberate in his design in teaching and communicating, I really don't want to pretend or think that I'm going to do a great sermon or preaching to you or at you this morning.

Rather, I just want to talk to you. And some things we share this morning, I hope, will become a means for you to do something that would be more practical also. There's a Bible verse in 1 John chapter 1. So, chapter 2. 1 John chapter 2, verse 6. Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

And in the Living Bible, that's a paraphrased version, it reads like this. Anyone who says he's a Christian should live as Christ did. Just pause and think about it.

Is this possible? That as followers of Christ, we can and we should live today as Jesus lived? If this is not possible, then we wouldn't be told so. We agree that. And I agree with that.

But the question is, how do we go about doing that? You see, you tell someone to come to your home for dinner. And that person says, well, I don't know how to get there. And you give direction.

The person says, well, yeah, it's still confusing to me. Especially some alien land in Dallas from some other place like happened to me. You know, one time I drove the car continually until the gas ran out.

Because I didn't know which way to get out of the freeway to get home. It really happened. But you say, well, I wanted to come home to have dinner.

I tell you what. I will meet you where you are. And I'll be driving this car.

This is a license plate. And you just follow me. I don't have to look at any sign board, map.

You know, what is a satellite thing that some English lady talks to people all the time? Turn right, turn left, stop, go back. Anyway. But all I'm looking at is you.

I can see you sitting in the car. And I simply follow you. When you read the four gospels, it kind of describes to us how Jesus lived on earth.

You don't need Greek and Hebrew to figure that out. And it's very simple. Because he was a man.

He lived on earth as a man, depending on his father, choosing continually saying no to himself. And committing himself, embracing inconveniences, difficulties, and pain and sorrow in order to live as his father willed for him to live. Take, for example, all night long you find Jesus praying.

Anybody like to do things like that? You're asking me? No, I don't. Fasting 40 days? Dear me. This is a wonderful congregation.

I don't see anybody carrying Coca-Cola bottles and Pepsi-Cola bottles and all that. You have some reverence. But a lot of places, they're carrying in one hand chips and in another hand Coke.

You know, people are eating and drinking all the time. But take a week to fast, two weeks, 40 days. I mean, for us, we'll talk about it, but that's what Jesus did.

Was it easy for him? No. It says he was weary and he was tired. And when you look at the life of Christ, my brothers and sisters, we see what he lived for.

How do you preach the Baptist who know the Bible so much? But all I can do is remind you, I guess. In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 9, we have a classic story or event that transpired in the life of the man Jesus that we are called to imitate or to be like him. Now, chapter 5, 6, and 7 are very famous, Sermon on the Mount.

You are taught very well. When you come to chapter 8, you will find Jesus dealing with someone with leprosy. He touches them, embraces them.

By the way, Gospel of Asia, the mission I serve the Lord with, we have 39 places where leper colonies, our people work. When you see this movie, you will see sections in the movie where sisters, missionaries actually cleaning the wounds of these lepers and touching them and praying with them. I don't think it is on the movie, but there are churches where hundreds of people from the leper colonies that came to Christ are worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ.

That still goes on. Then you read on, you will find demon possessed people and somebody was dead and so on and blind and mute, chapter 9, verse 27 on. You can see the disciples are traveling with Jesus and they are watching this.

You see, like you go to a mall, you will see all the shops, all the people walking around and noises and music and what is going on. So these disciples are walking with Jesus. They are watching all these things and when you come to chapter 9 in the Gospel of Matthew, one of those events.

Matthew recalls something that happened 30 years ago and he scribbles down this thing. It says, when he saw, verse 36, when he saw the multitudes of crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers in this harvest field. In the early days of our ministry, we were here on 1932 Waldron Plaza. We sold that building.

I remember one morning my wife came by my office and handed me a letter and said, you want to read this letter? Then she added this statement, oh by the way, please don't speed read. I didn't like that. Well, when I finished reading the letter, I was no more sitting on my comfortable chair.

I was on my face on the floor weeping. No, the letter was not her telling me, you are a creep, I am leaving you or you are mean, bad dude. None of those things, no.

The letter she gave me was a letter that came from one of our missionaries who was working near River Ganges in Haridwar. That week, he writes 35 million people came from all over the country going into this dirty polluted waters, washing themselves for the forgiveness of sins. For that's what they believe.

And this dear brother, one of our native missionaries, having done his witnessing and giving gospel tracts and talking to people all day long, that evening as he was coming home, he saw a young woman sitting by the bank of the river, weeping uncontrollably and pounding upon her chest. In the culture there, when you see something like that happen, it tells you something happened to her that is worse than death itself. He writes, I went to her and asked her, what happened to you? Why are you crying so bitterly? And this young woman responded saying, you see, my husband is so ill, he cannot work anymore, we are so poor.

And my sins are so many. To find forgiveness for my sins and solution to the problems of my home, I have given the best offering I can give to Goddess Ganges. My only child, 6 month old baby boy, I just threw him into the river.

Paragraph. He writes, I sat beside her, opened the Bible, explained to her that God didn't make you poor. He loves you.

Your sins are forgiven 2,000 years ago when Jesus died on the cross. All you have to do is to believe. After hearing his explanation, she wiped her tears, looked into his eyes and said this, but why didn't you come to me half hour sooner? I didn't have to kill my child.

It is too late, isn't it? It is too late. She went back crying again. This was one of those events, as God often uses events in your life and my life, where I would once again kneel and weep and rededicate my life.

Saying, Lord, with all that I have in me, every fiber of my being, everything, I commit to you so that I will never again read a letter like this. And my brothers and sisters, Christ didn't live on earth for himself. They tried to make him the king.

He said, you don't understand, I am not here for that. When he died on the cross, nobody had to fight over the millions or riches or this and that or didn't have to search for where is the will, what did he write, who gets what, nothing. He knew he came here for a very brief period of time.

What about you? What about me? What are we living for? This morning during the prayer time, we heard about some brother who had an open heart surgery or heart transplant and all that. Just can't imagine you going on that operating table. Think about all of a sudden, the whole world becomes simply shadow.

The dreams and ambitions are stuff that we live with and live for. Seeking always trying to figure out what others think about me, how good I look, or how much money I have and how are we going to care for the

future, this and that, a million things to worry about. When I ask you a question, please don't misunderstand me, I'm not trying to put you on a guilt trip or a condemnation trip or get something out of you, none of those things.

But you watch television, you read newspaper, you listen to radio, and you get plenty of information from the mission boards we have. May I ask you, when was the last time you decided that you will take a day or two or three to fast on the behalf of 100,000 people that are dying in poverty or brokenness? Or a million people that are lost, or 20 million people living in Afghanistan with less than 2,000 non-Christians in the entire nation, not one church in that country. A handful of believers maybe meet here and there in homes.

When you hear this kind of information, what does that do to you? What happened to Jesus when he saw he was moved with compassion? Now, for Matthew to write something like that that happened 30 years ago, it must have been something so tangible, something so physical, something that he could not forget. It is like if you have a major car wreck or unexpected, some horrible event, or somebody close to you just died. No matter what, how many years goes by, you cannot forget that.

And as Matthew looked back over the journey with Christ, he remembers, oh man, I can't forget this. When he saw the demon possessed, the hurting, the lost, he just broke down weeping. He just collapsed.

How did he react? I don't know, but something that affected him so much that no one could easily forget. How can we live as Jesus lived? It will never, never, never be possible with all the Bible knowledge you get, memorizing Bible, but only through willingness to suffer and say no to ourself. Whatever that means.

It could very well mean your dream to buy something or go somewhere, you will say I choose not to do that so that these resources can go to help people like the women, the suffering, the unreached as you see in the movie or whatever. Anyone here remember the name George Burns? When I came to America, one of the amazing things was television really worked. But there was a show on television.

I liked this guy. He had a long cigar. And he talked funny.

He looked like Gandhiji. He's the one who played in the movie Oh God. But often when he finishes stage show, I heard him sing this song.

I wish I was 18 again. He's dead. I remember.

I was barely 17. When I left my home. Walked by the river to the bus station.

Then to the train station. Boarding the train. 2000 miles journey to North India.

It was just like it happened yesterday. And now I'm 64. What ever happened to time? How did it happen? And my brothers and sisters, I plead with you.

There's not a whole lot of time left. May I say it more kindly? I see more gray hair in this congregation than most places I go and speak. America is an amazing country.

You can hide your driver's license. You can get a new nose. A new set of hair.

But nothing's going to change. Before you know it, it is over. Take your driver's license if you will sometime.

And look at it close. And look at it carefully. And see actually your age.

And add 100 years to that present age. Then ask the question. What is this all about? And Jesus lived with the one thing on his mind.

To do the will of his father. And that was only doing what the father tells him to do. But he had this intention to give his life to reach and redeem the lost going to hell.

And he gave his life for that. He chose to do it. So, today as I conclude, I encourage you to make the right choice.

And someday when it's all over, you will have no regret. And you will say, thank God for every minute I was able to pray. Every penny I was able to give.

Every individual I was able to share the gospel with. And my children, I prayed that they would follow the Lord and serve him. Time will not permit me to tell you this.

I grew up in this tiny, tiny village in the extreme southern tip of India. And my family, we grew up in an ancient Syrian Orthodox church community. My mother knew the Lord so intimately.

And as a matter of fact, you sang that song, whom have I in heaven but you and on earth. I just said no one beside you. Psalm 73 verse 25 came to my mind.

Because that's what my mother's life was. Her ambition was that one of her six boys would go and serve God. And she prayed for that.

Didn't tell anyone. And when all her sons were going into business and farming and all those things, she kind of began to lose hope. Especially when I was growing up, timid, shy, withdrawn.

And she says no hope for him. But that's when she began to fast and pray every Friday. Every Friday, complete fast.

For three and a half years, crying out to God. Please Jesus, before I die, call one of my sons to serve you and be a missionary. And when I finished my high school, when I told my parents my wish, she was the one who instantly responded saying, you must go.

I thought she hated me. I was an accident. Because I didn't know that was her prayer.

It was very private. Only later, two years after I left home, I learned the story of her life. I have two children.

My son was born in Baylor Hospital. My daughter was born in Oklahoma. From the day they were born, every single day, my wife and I prayed, Jesus, please help my son to know you the earliest possible.

Then Lord, please call him to serve you. They will never know the days and times I fasted and cried out to God. Today they both are serving God with their families.

What do you want? What do we want in the end? This world is not our home. We are just passing through. Before you know it, it's finished.

Commit your life with inconveniences and difficulties. Thank you for listening. May the Lord guide all of us to know him intimately, and to be his completely, and live as he lived in our time.

John.

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