

Opening Your Eyes to Reality

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a simple life, being transformed by Christ, and walking in reality to experience godliness.

Duration: 38:32

Scripture: Psalm 82:3-4, Proverbs 19:17, Isaiah 58:6-7, Matthew 6:6-9, James 1:27

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, fasting, and living a life of godliness in response to the call of Christ to come, die, and live. It challenges listeners to prioritize spending time with God, to examine their materialistic tendencies, and to consider ways to serve and help those in need, particularly children in impoverished areas. The speaker shares personal stories and experiences to illustrate the impact of living out the teachings of Jesus in practical ways.

Transcript

Well, this is the last service, which means we can go by India time. Not really. Pastor of the congregation can do that, not strangers.

Well, I came back, flew back from India a couple of days ago, and I was in the middle of some very important conferences going on, and then I was attempted to call Pastor Gary and say, I'm in India, on the other side of the globe, can you excuse me? Then I said to myself, he's a mean individual, and it would be a disastrous thing to happen. Now I love him and came to respect him and this congregation, so I said to myself, I must keep the promise. So I came in three, four days and going back again.

So from Frankfurt to Dallas, sitting next to me was this guy who was puffing and coughing and sneezing and gargling, everything else going on with him, and he gave me what he had. And so I thought, I'll come here and give it to you what I have. And by God's grace, you know, I was feeling horrible last night, but today I'm feeling much better.

And so I'm doing very well. And I was pleasantly surprised to run into your worship leader, one of the Duck Dynasty members. I mean, I'm not a Duck Dynasty fan, but I hear, I like the look of these people.

Anyway, I was telling Gary, you know, by the way, I travel, I think now about 300,000 air miles a year speaking in so many places, and I'm sure your senior pastor can say this to you very well, nothing new.

When you stand before a congregation and start speaking, somewhere along the way you get the temperature, you get a sense, you know, the spiritual sense you get of the people. So I was telling him after the second service, I said, Gary, you know, there are churches, even if you turn all the lights on, there's a shadow.

But here, there's a sense of warmth and people's faces are alive. And obviously, it's a result of God's Word being taught and modeled by someone who knows the Lord. And that makes it much easier for me, you know, to share with you.

And I do not believe in condemning people or producing guilt trip or manipulate your approach to get anything out of people. Because God is not in that. He invites us, but then He waits patiently if we will listen to Him and follow Him.

And so, knowing the congregation, I don't want to think that I'm going to preach to you some deep, in-depth sermon or message that you already get very well. And so, the things I share with you hopefully are some practical things that will help you in your journey of knowing the Lord and doing what He calls all of us to do. The question never is, do I need to change? Is there a need for change? I think that question is not relevant because we all do know how often the Lord impacted our hearts with some books we read or some song we heard or some biblical passage that we heard being taught from the pulpit.

And for a little while, we feel emotionally high and we pray and fast and do all those things, but we find ourselves again back in the same place we were before. And we keep on repenting continually, hoping some magic will take place that we'll become spiritual all of a sudden. I want to assure you that is not true.

That's not going to happen. The question then remains, how do we get from knowing and becoming? And the answer is very simple. It is like, you know, somebody goes to a medical doctor with some heart pain, whatever, and they do all the tests and the verdict is, you are in bad shape.

Your heart is in trouble. And so the patient says, doctor, what do you think? Well, there's nothing else. Open heart surgery.

Well, when the doctor says open heart surgery, I don't think any normal human being will say, oh, great, thank God, just do it right now. No, I think, really? And there is such an emotional crisis because you are basically abandoning your life for someone to cut you up and could be, you know, death. In spiritual reality world, this is exactly the same thing.

The call of Christ for you and for me is to come, die, and live. Long time ago, many, many years ago when I was speaking at a church in California, after the meeting, this lady came to me and said, would you please lay your hand on me and pray for me? I said, you know, please tell me what is it you want me to pray for? She said, well, I got a demon of smoke, smoking inside me. Would you cast the demon out? Well, I never had anybody request me like that.

And I said to her, without even thinking, lady, I can cast out demons, but not the flesh. And we, I mean, we blame the devil for a million things, and the poor devil is always shaking. I said, I don't know what you're talking about, I have nothing to do with this thing.

I mean, the devil is mean and bad, we know that, but if you know it or not, as a follower of Christ, your worst enemy, more than you realize, is your own self-centeredness. Our unwillingness to die to ourself, and which is suffering in the flesh. And, so how do we, how do we live this brief few years on earth as

Jesus lived? I think both praying and hungering after God, the same time, instead of misunderstanding obedience as legalism, by saying, this I do, and I'm going to say no to sin, I'm going to say no to Facebook, I mean, I'm not against Facebook, but I'm telling you, if you're honest about it, 99% of the reason why you live the way you live, it is simply because of influence.

It is relatives, friends, Facebook, e-mails, books you read, music you listen, and best of friends, and whatever else. And this is the reason why, to be like Jesus, it's a lonely walk, and no one wants to be lonely. But, once you cross that border into understanding the joy of being with him, you do not want to run away.

And people think you are spooky, and you are. But then, I want to read a Bible verse for you, which is very simple, here in Gospel of Matthew, chapter 9. This is in context of, you know, the Sermon on the Mount, you know, chapter 5, 6, and 7, basically it was not a sermon at all. When Jesus saw a multitude, a huge crowd, he called his disciples, and went off and sat down and talked to them, that's what it says.

It is not preaching. In other words, Jesus saying, the answer to the world, my disciples, it is not anything else other than your life being transformed. And, but in chapter 8 and 9, you have stories of people who are sick, and demon possessed, and blind, and crippled, and weeping, and hurting, and in such a crisis.

That brings us to the verse 35 in chapter 9. Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogue, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. Verse 36. When he saw the crowds of multitude, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

You want to keep this in mind, 30 years goes by before Matthew sits down and scribbles this thing. There are incidents in our life we cannot forget, like I remember the day my mother passed away, or my father passed away. You don't know how to even think about it.

Some incidents in Christ's life, so weird, so tangible, so crucial, that Matthew could not forget that. One of those times when the disciples were with Christ and going through all this misery and crisis and agony, finally Jesus broke down. Remember, Jesus was a man.

If you think he was a ghost walking on earth, you are making a mistake. He was 100% man, the same 100% God, and he lived in total submission to the Father's will, saying no to himself in everything. And here he runs into the creation of his own hands, abused, beaten, destroyed by the devil, and then you see the human crisis.

Did he break down weeping? Did he just collapse and just sat down shaking his head and just wept? Whatever it was, Matthew could not leave that out. But it's interesting, you don't read saying when we saw the multitude, quite objective, when he, it will take some years for Matthew to come to the place where he will weep and his heart will be broken and he's willing to give his life to be destroyed for the sake of his pastor. And this is same with us.

And in our life's journey, one of our desires must be the Lord to break our hearts so the things that break his heart, and then give us the grace to respond accordingly, which always cost us something. I remember some years ago, I was waiting in Bombay to catch my flight to Germany, and I picked up this newspaper, this black and white photograph on the front page, very vivid graphic photograph of a little boy. He must be, I don't know, three or four years old, wearing rags, laying on the sidewalk of a busy Bombay street.

And beside him lays a dog, a female dog. And the little boy, you can see in the picture, nursing on this dog. He's drinking milk from this dog.

And the caption reads, this dog is his mother. The three column article explained about over 100,000 children that live on the streets of Bombay, in the slums, not even knowing where they come from, where they're going, and their fate, and the crisis. Oh, by the way, how many of you here have seen the movie Slumdog Millionaire? All of you raised your hand, you will go to heaven.

The rest of you, the rest of you better rent that movie and watch it. You know, I'm not a movie person, but I never could watch that movie the second time, because I cried and cried and cried through that movie. Well, for those of you who have not seen it, there's a part in that movie, you know, there are five million people live in the slums of Bombay.

If you ever went to Bombay, please go to one of those slums. The movie was shot in the slum called Dharavi slum. Over a million people live there.

And I walked into those slums. You have to pinch your nose because you will throw up. Children by hundreds, little tiny kids naked, running all over the place.

And they look like black as crawl, because they were playing in the black, murky sewage water, right running through the slum. And people living under simple plastic sheets. And in the story, you will see this evil, horrible man goes around, collect all these children from the streets, promising them food and Coca-Cola and all that.

And then he takes them to a faraway house. They're so happy. I mean, laughing and everything.

And then you see a little boy. He must be six, seven year old, maybe, but cute looking, real nice looking boy. He talks well, he smiles, he sings well.

And this man takes him to another room and knocks him out with a chloroform. And now he's laying like dead on a bench. Then this man takes boiling oil and opens the eyelid of this boy and pours into his eyes and blinds him.

The next scene, he's on the street as one of the hundreds of beggar boys and girls collecting money for this man. When I saw that, I said to myself, how many times I saw this, but it never bothered me. Now I'm looking at this little boy trying to survive with this dog.

And I remember asking myself this question. What if this little boy happened to be my little son, Daniel? You know, it was too painful, I confess. I fought to stop thinking about it.

It was too much to handle emotionally. And I think the Lord pressed on with me with a few more incidents like that during that season of my life to bring me to the place. You cannot walk away from it.

This is where I am. This is what I watch. And I want you to be the answer.

And my brothers and sisters, the reason I'm saying this to you is that we watch television and you read news magazines and you see what is going on. I don't know how many of you saw just a week and a half ago this horrendous typhoon on the coastal area of Orissa and all that. And did you know that 800,000 families, homes were destroyed? Millions of people on the streets and our missionaries are working day and night, 24 hours, trying to bring hope for these people.

You know, when you say lost a home, we are not talking about houses like we have here. You are talking mud, little one room space this family had. And we found out there must be three or four hundred thousand children that no more go to school.

They had everything. They're lost. But here is what I find myself, my problem.

I see this. Then I'm so busy with so many things I am engaged in. I don't want to stop.

And I confess this to you. I have to repent and ask for grace that I can take next two days fasting and praying and crying out for these people. And do everything in the world to bring hope and help.

That is where Matthew was struggling to figure out because he couldn't enter into it. You cannot enter into the kingdom reality like this without striving, without dying to something that we all want. So how do we experience godliness? I think walking in reality.

And I wish I could go on with more stories like this. But today in India alone there are 62 million child laborers. If you go and search for it, Google it, child laborers, you'll be surprised.

Like you little boys and girls, grandchildren, they're tied up to steel posts in carpet making factories. Morning to night they work like little slaves making 20, 30 cents maximum. Can you imagine your family need some 30, 40 dollars worth of money for some emergency? And you go to the landlord and ask for this, I'll give you the money but you have to give your children to me, this boy or this girl to work for me.

You know how many there are today? 15 million of them. And this is where Gospel for Asia through our own hearts been broken. We began to go after these children, especially the Dalits, the untouchables.

90% of these communities are illiterates, they never go to school. And we began to set up these bridge of hope centers and we found out wherever we did it, churches began to come up. A classic story, like hundreds of stories, is one place we had a couple of hundred children we took from these slums and poor communities and teach them about Jesus and educate them and all those things.

And there was one little boy, his name is Naboon, and he heard about Jesus healing the sick and all these different things. And he goes home and tells his father, Jesus can heal mommy. And his mother was dying or something that they had no help.

And the father thought, we had a medical doctor named Jesus at our school. And he comes and asks for help. Two missionaries go and explain the gospel, pray for this lady, the Lord healed her.

Today, if you go to the community, you can see a thriving congregation with their own church building, worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ. Once they were poor, desperate, abused, harassed by upper caste, neglected by the government. Today, it completely transformed.

It all began with one little boy named Naboon. And I can tell you story after story. Like the Dharavi slum, I just told you about the No Longer Slum Dog.

If you go there, you will find, I think, three some congregations right now in that very slum that started as a result of us taking children instead of some mean, devilish man picking them up and abusing them. And this is one of the most significant things we need to understand. Using our life on earth as a normal life and looking always, Lord, how can I live your life now? And then he will show you because it's real.

I'd like you to look at a couple of minutes of pictures I have, kind of help you to sense this. Now, this is what I'm asking you to do. Just as the disciples walked with Jesus and saw the multitudes and what was happening.

Walk with the Lord to these places and faces and events and then ask the Lord how you must live today, tomorrow, and the days to come. So may we have the pictures on. She is eight years old.

Her home is a hut made of rags. Going to school is an impossible dream. She is a dullard.

Viewed as subhuman by the Hindu caste system. Her people are commonly assaulted, raped, murdered. Deep in their hearts, they hunger for love and reassurance.

To be told for once that their lives are worth something. Gospel for Asia has long wanted to tell these people that Jesus loves them and offers them hope. But how? Now, God has provided a way to reach them through their children.

Bridge of Hope. You can help build this Bridge of Hope by sponsoring a child today. For \$35 a month, You can give a child an education, clothing, food, and medical care.

And most of all, you give your child the message of Christ's love and hope for the future. To sponsor your Bridge of Hope child today, simply fill out this card and bring it to the GFA TV. You'll receive a picture and information about the child you'll be helping.

I just want to give four simple applications. Things that I recommend you think about and do in the light of the scripture. And in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 10, of course, after all this, Jesus simply says to them, I send you as sheep among wolves, not as wolves among sheep.

To be his sheep, we must learn. How do we do that? My first recommendation is that you ask the Lord for grace to increase the time you spend with him in prayer. Average Christians, it is said, spend less than eight minutes a day in prayer.

No boy or girl with any sense in their head want to marry someone having not understood the other person a little bit more. You don't want to be shocked when you go to heaven and say, Jesus, I didn't know you looked like this. You cannot know God and understand his heart without being with him.

And prayer is not just talking and talking, but listening also. And I have a little book, it's a little booklet, Learning to Pray, and you can get it free. Just go to our website.

All my materials are free for download. And you can read that also. And I recommend you ask the Lord to give you an understanding.

And it's like exercise. Once you start doing it, you'd be surprised you get to the place where you find such joy. And that's all I can tell you.

But then see if you can add one day of the week for fasting. It's a missing art in the church. Very precious to the Lord, knowing him.

And I can assure you if you fast one day of the week, you will not die. And if you do die, you can let me know. But only you can do this while here on earth, by the way, you will not be fasting after this.

So don't miss this opportunity. Second, I encourage you to have the Lord walk with you through your life, especially material things. I am personally convinced the biggest obstacle and enemy of godliness is materialism.

Comfort and ease and whatever money can buy. I have friends who are extremely rich, but deeply godly and devout to the Lord, following him. I'm not against rich people or factory owners or multimillionaires.

I know some of them. But I'm telling you, when half of the world go to bed with empty stomach and naked bodies. And people by millions are dying of hunger.

Why you want another diamond ring? Why can't we be satisfied with the best of music that is on the radio? Why we have to spend all the money for whatever? Please believe me, I'm not against your lifestyle. I got a whole book I wrote, wrote reality that talks about it. And 30 years ago when the Lord broke my heart, I realized I just need two jackets.

And a couple of ties which I don't wear unless somebody demand me to wear. And this is one of the two jackets. When it get old and worn out, I throw this away and get another one.

But I don't look bad, do I? I'm a handsome dude. But I'm telling you, if you know my life background, I was a slave to the things, not sinful things, good things. And I can't tell you how free I am to live simple.

And I drive a 1962 Volkswagen Bug, which runs perfect, by the way. And I drive that around and enjoy it. And I talk to the Lord, look like he's sitting next to me in the passenger seat and he talks back to me.

I'm not a spooky person, please understand that. But I don't have to worry about somebody stealing my car and this and that. If they steal it, they got nothing.

Please be sober. And you'll be surprised how it will help. And change all that to reach the lost world.

Ask the Lord to give you the grace, not because of guilt or condemnation. Number three, if you're a young person, we are inviting young people, when they finish their high school, to come and spend two, three years with us. Two years in school or discipleship in Dallas and one year overseas.

And we have hundreds of young people that came and their lives completely transformed. And if you are parents, want to get it off your kids, good chance. But if the Lord is calling you to go somewhere to serve him, please do that also.

And finally, the last thing I encourage you to do, we have 67,000 children that we rescued. But what is that when you think about millions? And my dream, someday, somehow to help at least 500,000 children. And today you can be part of the answer if the Lord tells you to do that.

I want to read quickly a letter I got that I think will explain this. He writes, My name is Jim. My beautiful wife and I have been sponsoring children since we first found out about Gospel for Asia's Bridge the Hope program.

We had always wanted to have a large family, perhaps a dozen children. But our hearts were changed as we saw the incredible need of the poor children throughout Asia. Instead of a dozen, we have had two children.

Then we got four more through GFA Bridge the Hope. They are our hearts. They are our little hearts.

Children whose letters we read over and over again. Their pictures are mounted on our wall. And every day, the four of us pray for them.

I consider them to be my children and love them as my own. Although I was sure we would never meet this sight of eternity. But God blew my socks off and sent me to India on a business venture about a year ago.

My wife reminded me about Gospel for Asia and said I should give them a call to see if I could visit a GFA Bridge the Hope center while I was there. Amazingly, I could. My heart was not ready for the sight of India.

Still the images of the people. I can only assume they were Dalits sitting on the roadside without any life in their eyes. Everything looked so hopeless.

I felt incredibly burdened for these people. It almost brought me to tears to see them and still does to this day. But when I went to the Bridge the Hope center, I was simply astonished.

The joy, the laugh, the sight of these children. Hundreds of them, beautiful, laughing, singing. It was so different from everything I saw around them.

They were so vibrant and full of life. This group of over 100 kids was laughing, studying and learning about the Lord all at once. It was amazing.

But all of this did not prepare me for what was about to happen. There was one little face in the crowd that I recognized. When I saw him, my little money, I just froze.

The teacher told him who I was and he locked eyes with me and he smiled the largest smile I have ever seen. He ran up to me and latched onto me like I was a life raft in the middle of the ocean. This little 8-year-old boy stepped back and looked at me straight in the eyes.

Dad, he said, thank you for loving me. I burst into tears. After that day, I have never been the same.

I left India with a new perspective on life. Anything we could do to help these children, we must do. Now, my wife and I sponsor two dozen children.

Twice as many as we ever thought we would have as our own. They are scattered all throughout India and Nepal. I cannot imagine doing anything more worthwhile with my life.

This is it. My family and I, we are dedicated to saving as many people as we can. And God's profession enables us to do it.

I read that and every time I read it, my emotions are there. Because my wife and I started helping two children. Then they got married.

We added two more. Then we have grandchildren. We added more.

You know, never in my life anyone addressed me father except my own children. But after we began to help some of these children, some places I went like in slums. I was absolutely shocked.

Some little kid finding out that I'm helping them would address me papa. And there's one little girl that we are helping. Beautiful, incredibly beautiful little girl from a slum.

And I pray for her every day and feel like someday she's going to be a medical doctor. And she knows the Lord by now. And her people live on the streets.

And it's not a welfare program. But all of us here, there, everywhere praying and being part of Jesus' life as he would walk here on earth. And if the Lord leads you to do that, as you saw on the screen, you can fill out this card and bring to the table that's on the card.

And you don't have to have any money to do that today. But on the back of the card, it explains how you can do it more easily. But when you bring it, the number of children you mark, you get those children.

You are the only person who helps these children. Someday, if he cannot, we'll find somebody else to do that. But I pray that you will decide to help a whole lot of children.

And if you are not married and hope someday you'll have 15 children, you don't have to wait. They have them today. Thank you again, Pastor Gary.

What a blessing it is. You are such a joy. And I'm blessed more than you know just by being here.

The Lord bless you. Thank you.

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