

# Overcoming Self Centeredness - Part 1 by Dr. k.p. Yohannan, Metropolitan

by K.P. Yohannan

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming self-centeredness through genuine worship and servanthood in the Christian faith.*

**Duration:** 25:14

**Scripture:** Mark 10:35, James 1:22

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Self Denial"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being active participants in our faith, not just passive listeners, using forgiveness as an example. It challenges the mindset of attending church solely for personal gain or experiences, highlighting the true essence of worship as giving worth to Jesus. The message delves into the need for a sacrificial approach to worship, focusing on serving others and God rather than seeking personal fulfillment. It also addresses misconceptions about spiritual experiences and the role of self-centeredness as a greater enemy than demons.

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## Transcript

So the Bible says very clearly in the book of James, we must be doers of the word and not just be hearers of the word. Now I'm saying something that we all have to deal with. For example, I teach a lot about forgiveness.

I have written books on it. But I find myself sometimes quite difficult to forgive certain people. And our memories are never erased, you know.

But the mark, the proof of forgiveness really is that we remember but it won't hurt us anymore. But it's not always true of me. So I have to do it again and again and again and again.

It's a learning, growing, becoming process. People come to church or go to Christian gatherings with the frame of reference as to what they're going to get. Are you surprised when I tell you this? How many times it was true of you? You left the worship or a religious meeting like we have and said to yourself, oh my goodness, that was not a good service.

I didn't get anything out of it. I couldn't feel anything. The preaching, the teaching was so dead.

There was no life. That is, you say to yourself because you're a spiritual person but if you're a little carnal, you will say to the person next to you and say, what a lousy service it was. And say, why Father, so and so was preaching, it would have been a better day.

If you're a little more carnal than that, when you have the lunch with your family, you'll be talking about it. But have you ever considered this, really? We have gathered here, not for us, not for me to get something. What is worship? It is giving worth, honor, homage to someone other than us.

It so happened, our worship is not to any man or any object or anything. But it is Him, the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember the story in the Old Testament when Elisha, the prophet and his servant had to deal with this huge problem, that is, the enemies, multitude, soldiers, now surrounding them, they're going to just kill them and wipe them out.

So the servant goes out, I guess he went out to fetch some water or something in the morning and he found out they can't escape, they are surrounded. And he comes back screaming, saying, Oh master, oh master, we are in trouble, we are going to get killed, this is a bad situation. And the prophet said, Calm down, don't worry.

They got some people there, but those with us is much more than with them. And I imagine the servant looked at Elisha, Elisha looked at him and looked around and maybe peeped through the window, and he couldn't figure this out. So he must have done a quick calculation, 1 plus 1 equals 2. So masterji, you won, me, I won, makes 2. So there are thousands out there.

Then the prophet prayed, said, Lord, would you please do me a favor, open his eyes that he may see. So all of a sudden, something happens, supernatural. His natural naked eyes now receives a supernatural ability to see things that natural eyes cannot see.

Then he realized there are, that the whole surrounding completely packed, and angels are all over the place. And of course, you know the story, how it goes. So I ask you, have you ever considered this scripture? That Jesus said, if two or three gather in my name, people are gathering every day for all kinds of reasons, but if you do that, acknowledging my name, and you do this for me, he said, I make a promise to you, I will be there.

So if that be the case, Christ is here. He's here in the same sense when he walked with those disciples on the road to Emmaus. They couldn't figure out who it was, but then he allowed them to see and understand.

The doors were closed and thick walls, but he just walked in and said, peace be to you, to the disciples, the risen Christ. And Mary couldn't figure out who it was until he opened her natural eyes and senses. But then, we are often like Thomas, don't you agree? We say, yeah, fine, wonderful, I know all these spiritual things you talk about, I read about it, but if I can't feel it, if I cannot touch it, if I cannot get some vibration, and some kind of way I can sense and understand it, my five senses, then Christ says, Thomas, the problem is this.

That's okay, you are reasonable maybe, but bless him. It's more wonderful to believe having not seen. So our gathering makes, our worship makes, authentic and real and biblical.

When we come, we go to church, we go to worship, not for getting rid of our anxieties and problems and sorrows, and find some answer to our current dilemma, how to do this, how to do this, and how I can get other people to pray for me, or I don't have peace, and maybe I can find some peace by going to the

service. There's a thousand needs, felt needs we have, and church service can become another shopping mall, another bazaar we go to get something for us. So the gifts becomes more important than the giver.

But Jesus said the opposite, that we are called to be his, and he said, if you will want to be mine, you have to give up everything else, and only seek me. To the extent he said, you must love me more than what? Father? Mom? Mother? Son? Daughter? Am I making it up? So he said then finally, which when you think about it confuses a little bit. Okay, Christ I understand, giving up father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, wealth, all these I understand.

But then why? Why do you want to add this? Unless you love me more than your own self. You cannot be my follower. My question to me is do I really take it serious, and do I really believe it? My question is when I go to church, do I really believe Christ, the risen Christ that I cannot see with my naked eyes, the man Christ, the risen savior, is actually here in that service? But now I ask where is he? Now to make my point, I now and then tell people I am not a Pentecostal, I am not charismatic, I am not looking for any supernatural spooky experiences.

I am not. I am a committed radical disciple follower of Christ that read God's word and want to obey him and follow him, which involves a lot of dying to self and suffering and giving up and tears and agony and loneliness and being misunderstood and forsaken. But don't misunderstand, I do believe every word in the scripture.

As a matter of fact, I say for our church, book of Acts is our textbook. We believe everything that is in the book of Acts to the extent Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, he still raises the dead. He heals the sick.

And the Holy Spirit still gives gifts. And everything that is in the scripture is for ours. But I make the statement what I am not, just to say this to you, there were just a couple of times in my life's experience, which is a couple of times is what when you talk about 40 plus years of journey serving Christ.

But when I was speaking and teaching, representing the Lord, just a couple of times in my life's journey, I had this strange or wonderful experience. The experience was out of this knowledge I tried to develop. It's an evolution that dear God, Christ is here.

I'm speaking on his behalf. I'm not saying anything for myself. I asked him what I'm supposed to say and he gives me some leading and the best I know in my limitations, my language, my feeble words, I try to communicate this.

So just a couple of times during this life journey of mine, I felt Christ standing next to me. It was so real, the knowledge of that was so real, it was actually spooky. That means you just want to touch him and be confused about it.

But it was not scary. It was not strange in the sense what was going on. It was a formation.

It was a positive energy. It was a sense, I am here with you. You are speaking on my behalf and I'm glad you're doing it.

In my imagination, there are times I imagined, not that it was so really, I imagined Christ sitting somewhere actually listening to what I'm saying. Sometimes I felt like he's standing somewhere and looking at the people and looking at me, not with condemnation or any bad feelings, no, but just he's here. Because

wherever Christ shows up, even among the worst of criminals or sinners, he's not coming with condemnation and saying, I'm going to send you to hell.

The only people he got mad at, as you know, were the Pharisees who pretended to be authentic or real, but they're actually not real. So he said some very unkind words to them. So when we gather like this, God really is not so worried about how many people, the crowd, the multitudes.

And Christ had thousands of people follow him, as you know. But then he would break it up once in a while, saying, you are following him because you want food. Go away.

I mean, he didn't say those words, but he said things to make it difficult for people to follow him. And one time, as you know, he said, you want to come after me? You want to be mine? You are to eat my flesh and bring my blood. And the people said, what on earth this man is talking about? It's cannibalism.

He's asking us to drink his blood and eat his flesh? And they said, it's a hard saying. And they got up and left. Have you ever considered about the Pharisees what actually that means? You really think they understood as Christ said, well, bring me a knife.

I'm going to cut part of my flesh and give it to you and cut the vein and pour some blood and you can drink it. You think that's what they thought? Yeah, superficially. But the fact that they picked up their belonging, saying this is a hard saying, and they walked away because they understood a little more, something more than just a superficial statement.

They understood in the context of his teaching and his life and what he was saying. You know what he's asking us basically is to share in his suffering and death and nothingness. And this is not going to work.

There has to be something in this whole thing for us. And so we have the occasion like Peter saying, Jesus, can we ask you a question? He said, yeah, go ahead. Well, you see, we have left everything.

Now what are we going to get? Legitimate question. So I want to remind you that you and I, we can go to 100,000 services like this, but in the midst of this, God is looking for a mighty minority that actually are committed to know him and to be his. Not what they can get from him.

So the individual that says, oh my goodness, today's service was, I didn't get nothing out of it, and there was no goosebumps, there was no feelings. You know the problem? People sit in the service or go to these meetings. They're waiting for some thunderbolt, some shocking thing to happen, some extracurricular activities, some new knowledge or some feelings.

But God says, I thought you came here to offer your body, your life as a living sacrifice. I thought you came here to find out what it means to give yourself away. I thought you came here to pray, intercede with a broken heart for somebody standing next to you or somebody who may be hurting.

I thought you came here to be part of the body that is active and alive and giving, not just taking because that is cancerous. And so you go away just as you came. And so we have a moral obligation to make this decision, saying that no, I want to go to church today to bless someone.

I want to go to church today to bless the Lord. I want to go to church today so I can give my worship to him. I want to go today, regardless of my feelings or what I hear, I'm going to church today because I'm going to just sit there, I'm going to pray for the individual who minister God's word.

I'm going to sit there and pray on behalf of the worship team. I'm going to pray for people to come to know the Lord. So today I'm going to give myself completely because today my hands are Christ's hands, my legs are his legs, my eyes his eyes, my tears his tears, and his dreams and ambitions he realizes incarnate today through my earthen vessel.

So I want to be completely his. So what happened? The promise then comes true. You want to find life? You find it by giving it away.

You want to be the number one? Become the servant of all. Now that may be a long introduction, but that takes us to the biblical passage in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10. If you are looking there, verse 35 on, you'll find this interesting passage.

About these disciples' special request to Christ. They came to him just like we do. Mark's Gospel, chapter 10, verse 35.

Then James and John, the son of Zebedee, came to him. Teacher, they said, we want you to do for us whatever we ask. What do you want me to do for you? He asked.

They replied, let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory. You don't know what you're asking, Jesus said. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? We can, they answered.

Jesus said to them, you will drink the cup. I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.

Verse 41. When the ten heard about this, they became angry, upset, indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the high officials exercise authority over them.

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, your slave. And whoever wants to be the first must be the slave servant of all.

For even the Son of Man did not come, did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. Some years ago, I was speaking at a large Christian believers gathering in a different country. Must have been about 5,000 people there, so right now the service was over.

You know, customary, you stand and say around people to say hello to you and being a speaker. So this lady came to me and said, I have come to ask if you would please pray for me. And I said, I'd be glad to, but would it be possible for you to tell me what is it that you want me to pray for? And then she responded, You see, I have a demon of smoke inside me.

Would you please lay your hand on me and cast that demon of smoke out? I never had any kind of request like that ever in my life, before or since, by the way. So it took me just a second, then I remember asking and saying, You know, I sure can pray and cast out demons if there are demons, but in this particular case, I cannot cast out the flesh. Your problem is not demons, it's basically self.

There's no way I can cast it out. But I can pray for you. It startled the woman.

Obviously, I prayed for her, but I never said, now demon of smoke, get out of her. None of this nonsense. Poor devil.

Really poor devil. Gets blamed for so many things. The devil did this.

The witchcraft they are doing. And all the demons are against us. And you say, Metropolitan, every time you get on to the subject, you seem to become very agitated and very angry.

I'm trying not to be angry. I'm trying to be very nice. But you know the problem? I am one of those people that read tens of thousands of letters people wrote to me.

From young girls to mothers to boys and men from all walks of life that painted the picture of destruction that came upon their family, their home and community through this kind of nonsense. Why am I saying this to you? You see, the devil is surely our enemy. Demons are there.

If you don't know that, read some of my writings. As a matter of fact, while we are talking, there must be a whole bunch of demons hanging all over the place. And some must be sitting there or some space between you all.

And sometimes maybe demons are sitting on your shoulder just whispering into your ears saying they don't believe anything you say. And putting thoughts in your head. And what do you think when you are praying, all of a sudden your mind, you travel 10 million miles to another country, another time, another space, somewhere else and just before the person next to you says Amen, you come back to senses? What happened to you for the last 15 minutes when that person was praying? What happened? The demons just talked to you about a whole bunch of stuff that is going on, real imaginary and a movie is going on in your mind.

See, that's what I'm telling you. Now you believe me. Even when I'm talking to you, maybe a couple of you are traveling somewhere.

But, we, more than you realize, we blame the devil and the demons for so much of our problems and the demons must be shaking their heads saying, I don't know what they are talking about. I have no clue. I have nothing to do with it.

I was not even anywhere near. But I am getting all the blame for all the stuff they are going through. And the demons laugh.

That's okay. Let them think we are the ones doing it. The real problem is there is an enemy that is 100 times more powerful than us put together.

The name of the enemy is self-centeredness.

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