

The Enemy of Self Centeredness

by K.P. Yohannan

The biggest hindrance to being all that God has called us to be is often ourselves, our self-centeredness, and our own desires.

Duration: 25:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:16-17, Mark 12:30-31

Topics: "Self-Centeredness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the hindrance that many people face in their lives, which is self-centeredness. He emphasizes the importance of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. The speaker highlights that instead of focusing on loving God and others, many individuals are caught up in loving and living for themselves. He encourages listeners to follow Christ's example and be like Him. The sermon also touches on the meaning of the Christian life and the concept of forgiveness and new life in Christ.

Transcript

The biggest hindrance in many lives, keeping them from being all that God has called them to be, is themselves. Taking down the enemy of self-centeredness, today on the Road to Reality. Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves, Jesus said, there are no greater commandments than these.

And didn't the Lord certainly model this for us as He lived out His life on earth? Rather than loving God and others, many are caught up in loving themselves and living for themselves. Today, on the Road to Reality, we'll address this particular reality and encourage each other really to follow Christ and be like Christ. This is the radio outreach of Gospel for Asia.

I'm your host Richard Bews. Brother K.P. Yohannan will share with us a few opportunities we have right now to express the love of Christ too. He joins us in studio this week.

K.P.? I'm sure you agree, it is our understanding or the way we believe about certain things that make us to behave or do what we do. Think about it. If somebody were to ask you, what is the meaning of Christian life? Or what does it mean when someone says, I'm a Christian? Well, depends who you ask and where that person comes from.

You know, for a lot of people, to be a Christian, first of all, I think they think about my sins being forgiven and I have a new life and I got a family where I raise my children with character and they go to Christian school or I teach them at home and we go to church and someday I will go to heaven. Well, that's all good and I think the concept, the understanding is not bad. But when you read the New Testament, you will find words like this Christ saying in the Gospel of Mark chapter 1 verse 16 to these people.

But when you read scripture portions like in the Gospel of Mark chapter 1 verse 17, of course, you know, the context is he's talking to these young people about following him and he made the statement, follow me and I will make you fishes of men. Quite interesting. The objective of the call Christ gave is that they will follow him, be with him, to understand him, to become like him.

And so we read also in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 11 where Christ says, come, all you are tired and weary and burdened down and I will give you rest, but this is how you should do it. Take your yoke upon you and learn of me. And the call of Christ is for us not just to gather information about how to live a wonderful moral upright life, but our call is to be like him, to be his, to follow him.

And I think we make a mistake that we now being a follower of Christ, we will do all these different things and obey the scripture and understand all the commandments of God. Yeah, that's all wonderful. I think it's important that we read and obey these things.

But remember, in the Old Testament, the Pharisees, they knew the Bible so well. I mean, as a matter of fact, they studied the whole thing and dissected it. They wrote so many commentaries on it and they were so militant about obeying everything.

And you know, when you read about Paul's experience that he describes in the book of Philippians chapter 3, you'll find, I mean, he said, I'm a Pharisee of the Pharisee, upright, kept a clear conscience and on and on all these different things. And then he says, but here's a problem. I was seeking my own righteousness and all the stuff I did, obeying and doing what was right, it was filthy rags.

So I said, I didn't want to hang on to a bunch of cow dung and garbage, and I'm dumping it out. I don't want it anymore. And I follow him that I may know him.

So you see, a preacher can be preaching the best sermons in the world, and he can be the greatest expositor about, you know, Greek and Hebrew and have all the understanding of theology and very convincing. But at the same time, he can be living with selfishness, loving money, greed and lust, hunger for power position, seeking honor from people. And you see, the problem often we have is that our Christianity is so focused and centered around ourselves.

It is all about us. And therefore, just like the people under the old covenant, we keep on doing things, reading books, going to this consultation, this seminar, how to be a great wife and how to be a great husband and how to express your love for someone else and how to raise your children. It's all about how to do things.

I mean, they're all good, but fundamentally, the driving force, the motivation, the impetus that move the heart, it is not Christ and his life. Please think about it. You know, the reason I'm saying this to you, what does it mean to be like Jesus? I mean, you say, I'm a Christian, I follow Christ and I'm born again and I know him.

I imagine you would say, yeah, the more I know him, there need to be his nature in me. It is the call God gave us, not just be an outsider, obeying all the rules and regulations and do all the right things and don't do the bad things. Rather, the call is to become partakers of his nature.

And that will never come until we come to the place of understanding that it is no more I that lives, but Christ lives in me. We are willing to die to ourselves and let Christ be all in all. You know, I remember some years ago, I was speaking at a meeting somewhere in California, and after the meeting, a lady came to me and said, would you please lay your hand on me and pray for me? And I said, Madam, please tell me, what is it you want me to pray for? She said, you know, I have a demon of smoke inside me and I wish you lay your hand on me and cast the demon out.

I mean, honestly, it was the first time ever in my life anybody asked me to pray for something like that. So I responded to her and said, you know what, I can cast out demons in Jesus name for he said we can do that. But unfortunately, I cannot cast out the flesh.

I said, your problem, it's not demons. But maybe you're not understanding the need to die to what you want, and what your flesh and what you long for. Well, I'm sure there are a bunch of demons influencing people to do all kinds of dumb things.

But here's the problem. Often we look at the demons and other people's circumstances as the reason for our lack of godliness and radical commitment to Christ. Often we blame all these demons and other people circumstances and all we blame for our lack of commitment and our willingness to follow the Lord.

And somehow we think all this other stuff, they're all hindering me. But honestly, it could very well be your biggest enemy is not poor demons out there. It is your own self-centeredness.

And one of the reason why we are not being effective, being Christ like in our generation. I mean, think about it. It could very well be I say because God is not able to live his life through us and manifest his life for the hindrances our own self-centeredness.

Yeah, you're listening to the Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohanan. K.P. will be right back. We've been encouraged to let go of self-centeredness and to be more eternally minded today.

Now we have a book K.P. has written, which should help us all in that direction. If you're dying to make a difference in this lost world, but aren't sure how to go about it, be sure, would you, to ask for a free copy of Revolution in World Missions. This book has radically changed many lives and the Lord can use it to do the same for you and me.

Again, it's absolutely free. You can request Revolution in World Missions at roadtoreality.org.uk. Got it? roadtoreality.org.uk or call 0800 032 8717. Shall we go back now to K.P. and see how to make our lives count for Christ? This young man came to follow Christ and Christ said, yeah, no problem.

But the only thing you had to do is to sell all you have and then you give it to the poor. Okay, come and follow me. And the scripture says the guy was quite rich and he got very sad.

He didn't want to do it. And the problem was, it is not that he was rich or he had lots of money. The problem it was that his possessions actually possessed him.

His value, his meaning, everything had to do with what he had. And Jesus knew there's no way he's going to follow the Lord unless he was willing to say goodbye to something he loved so dearly. And when I think about, you know, this generation we are living in, you know, just a few days ago, we heard about the cyclone in Bangladesh and the way people are suffering and what happened in West Bengal.

Can you just imagine overnight 200,000 acres of paddy field completely destroyed? And think about 175,000 homes destroyed in the cyclone. Now just close your eyes and imagine the thousands of little kids, old people, young people, women who are pregnant eight months, nine months, all of a sudden everything is lost. And the husbands died and their wife died and kids are gone.

And just imagine in your mind the panic, the pain, the anguish. You know, I heard about the islands where our missionaries work. Some 40,000 people became homeless within hours during the cyclone.

And they're living in camps. And one of our missionaries was telling me over the telephone as he went about ministering to these people, bringing drinking water and temporary shelter and clothes and all those things. They are meeting these mothers who are just weeping their eyes out.

And one woman was just pounding upon a chest saying that I want to die, I want to die. And the reason she couldn't handle the grief, the agony for having lost her children and husband and family members and everything they had. Now, obviously, you heard about it, maybe you never heard about it, at least now you're hearing about it.

But here's the thing. I'm sure a great numbers of preachers, Christians and believers all over the world heard about what happened. But my question is this, did that information, that huge crisis created such pain on the inside that the believers, the Christians who say, I'm a follower of Christ decided that today I'm going to fast all day and pray for the suffering people.

Did that cause some people to turn on the alarm clock to wake them up one in the morning, two in the morning, so they can pray alone in the living room, weeping for these people? Did it cause some people to look up the information? Where is Bangladesh? Where is West Bengal? What happened? Where are these islands? Did it cause some people to call around and find out some mission organizations or work among these people or go to some website and find out what is going on? I suspect more people spend their time going to websites and Google search to find out where to buy a new car or better clothes or buy something, you know, used stuff from somewhere else. I mean, of course, people live looking for these kind of things, but I'm only asking a question. Hey, don't, don't, don't misunderstand me.

I'm not trying to get something out of you or put you on a guilt trip, but I'm simply saying you read the gospel of Matthew chapter 8 and 9 and 10. Would you do that for me? You'll be surprised. Christ, having seen the blind, the crippled, the broken hearts and people who are in such pain and agony and demon possessed people helpless.

It says toward the end of chapter 9, he was moved with compassion for these people. They were like sheep without a shepherd, beaten, abused, bruised and helpless. And then Jesus says, pray to the Lord of the harvest so that he may send laborers.

Then Christ says, pray to the Lord of the harvest that he may send laborers. But then in chapter 10, interesting. He says, I'm going to send you, please go.

But here's a problem. I'm sending you as sheep among wolves. You know, I wish Christ said, I'm going to send you as wolves among the sheep.

It's a good way to survive, but no, you are going to be like sheep among wolves. What does that mean? You see, it is as the wolves devour the little lambs, that they become lambs. It is a call for us to go in his name and give up what we want, lay down our life, embrace the cross and let our hearts break with the things that break his heart.

Causes us to pray and be willing to say no to the stuff that we want for his sake. The reason I'm saying this to you is because, you know, it's been 40 years since the Lord called me to follow him and serve him. And the more I get to know my Christ, my Lord, the more I find my heart ache and hurt for the lost and dying around me.

Because heaven is a real place. Hell is a real place. And he said, as a father sent me, so sent are you.

How do we do that? Now, you know, right now the economy and the crisis going on and people are scared and obviously a lot of people lost a lot of money and they're so worried. You think all these people invested their millions and millions of dollars in all kinds of companies and taking shares, thinking that someday it's going to fall apart and they lose all the money? Obviously not. They did it having carefully studied or got whatever advice they got from whoever happened to be the expert or whatever and invest their money.

It didn't happen without their planning, thinking and going after it. But all the stuff that we can accumulate and gather, it is going to perish and end here. But when it comes to eternity, being Christ-like, how many are willing to go after, seeking and searching out for opportunities to pray and spend their time and fast and give their resources and if need be, as God calls them to go somewhere and surrender their life.

How many parents are there that are praying, dear God, call at least one of my children to serve you. How many grandparents are praying, dear Lord, call my grandchildren to serve you. What are we praying for, working for that they will have the best education, they'll be so well trained and upright and self-sufficient and they'll find a good job and go to the best university and do well.

But is that is Christ all about? No, I'm not against you sending your kids for the best education and having them become medical doctors or lawyers or whatever. No, that's not the issue. The issue is, is there something on the inside of us that think about Christ and who he is and why he came to this earth and what he lived for and what he died for and our call in the light of eternity.

Well, the opportunity God has given to us is unbelievable right now in our generation. I know, I just think about India, for example, the country that I was born and raised. 1.2 billion people and Orissa is a state where thousands of Christians were going through huge persecution and their houses are destroyed.

Oh, by the way, you need to pray for us because this month we are actually starting the rebuilding of the thousand homes, houses of Christians. They all were destroyed by the anti-Christian, you know, fundamentalist that hated Christians and the suffering was immense and unbelievable. And our people are going back to rebuild these houses and you can get information about this on our website, by the way.

But think about the children, millions of little children that are living on the streets, child laborers. Recently, somebody was telling me on a secular television channel here in the United States, they saw between 1 and 5 million children in the Indian subcontinent are used for sex trade. Can you just imagine that's

happening to our little children and grandchildren? No, we can't even imagine that.

But the question, what is Christ and His feelings and what is He thinking about these precious children that are abused and misused and living in such poverty without clothes and food and I'm certain His heart breaks. And this is where, you know, our ministry and where I am part of this movement, we believe that knowing Christ and being devout to Him is the number one priority more than anything else on earth and spend time with Him, get to know Him, but then give everything we have, do all we can to reach the unreached in our generation. In Afghanistan and Pakistan and Africa and China and India and Bangladesh and Bhutan, oh, the opportunity is unlimited, unbelievable.

One of my prayers is this, Lord, thank you for allowing us to help 53,000 plus children in these nations from the Dalits and the slums and abused communities, Lord, please give us the grace and the means to help at least half a million children. I live with that dream and I pray that you will take some time to think about eternity and make your decisions and the way you spend your time knowing that just a few more years, it's all over. Make your life count and Jesus lived like that.

So He says, come, follow me, not you follow a bunch of doctrines and systems and regulations, no, look at Him, read the four gospels and see the heart of Christ, the man Jesus and how He lived and what He lived for and then ask the Holy Spirit to help you to become like Him. And if that be the case, I sure like to be a part of what God is doing in your life. We are all in this journey together.

Please go to our website and seek out for more information as to following the Lord and what does that mean, how you can get involved in demonstrating His life and His concern for the lost world. There are plenty of booklets and books and materials you can download and listen to it and I really appreciate your willingness to listen close. And think about these things.

The Lord bless you. Thanks K.P. Oh, and thank you for joining me, Richard Bews, for the Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohannan. As K.P. said, there are staggering opportunities to share the love of Christ in this dying world.

We offer a few of those at our website. You can check that at gfauk.org. Again, gfauk.org. And before we say goodbye, be sure to request K.P.'s book called Revolution in World Missions. It's our free gift to you.

This book serves to help us all let go of a life of self-centeredness, die to ourselves and follow the Lord. Again, it's called Revolution in World Missions. Available through our website at gfauk.org or phone us free at 0800-032-8717.

That's 0800-032-8717. Reaching the unreached of this generation with the gospel of Christ, this is the Road to Reality brought to you by Gospel for Asia.

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