

The Most Important Thing in Life, Part 2

by K.P. Yohannan

Making Jesus the most important thing in your life is the key to true fulfillment and living a life that overcomes all.

Duration: 24:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:21, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 8:34, Luke 14:25, John 17:3, Acts 20:24

Topics: "Seeking God"

Description

In this sermon, Brother K. P. Johannon shares his personal journey of serving God for over four decades. He recounts how he left his home at a young age to serve God and faced suffering and persecution along the way. After many years of ministry, he realized that he had become disconnected from the pain and lostness of the world. His board members encouraged him to take a vacation, which he initially saw as a punishment, but ultimately embraced. The sermon challenges listeners to consider what they need to walk away from in order to fully follow Jesus, using the examples of the apostles who left everything to follow Him and the rich young ruler who was unwilling to do so.

Transcript

What's the most important thing in life? Money? Good friends? Family? Or is it being happy, as some suggest? Well, let's see how God answers that question here today on The Road to Reality. If Jesus came to you and said, I want you to leave everything, come and follow me, would you do it? You know, the disciples of the first century were willing, and they did, but there was a rich young ruler who said no. Now, how we answer that question really says a lot about where we're at and who we are serving.

Today on The Road to Reality, Brother K.P. O'Hannon stresses the importance of giving Christ the preeminence in all things. He's to occupy first place in our lives. Anything less is missing out on what's most important.

This is the weekly radio ministry of Gospel for Asia, and we're thankful to the Lord for this time together with you. We catch up with K.P. now in Luke 24. What a joy it is to have this opportunity to talk with you again.

I don't know where you are, maybe in your car or in your bedroom or kitchen. Well, wherever you may be. And, you know, times like this, and I say, Lord, I am so blessed to have this opportunity to talk to my brothers and sisters.

Well, after all, before you know it, our life on earth is over and we are going to be with the Lord. So here we are, pilgrims and strangers on this earth. And my part in this journey is sometimes to talk to, you know, the people of God like you and share what the Lord put on my heart.

And I hope it will be an encouragement to you. You know, the other day I was talking to our Gospel for Asia staff here. You know, we have this Tuesday night prayer meeting.

Our entire staff meet. We have some 70, 80 kids and 105 families. So it's a fairly large group of people.

And every Tuesday we meet for prayer. And whenever I'm here, I share from God's word, you know, before our prayer meeting starts. And I was telling them, you know, it's been, you know, over four decades that, you know, I've been serving God.

And I was barely 17 when Jesus called me to give my life and everything to serve him. I left my home, traveled 2,000 miles North India and spent eight years serving him along with other young people. A few times I was beaten up and abused and faced quite a bit of suffering along with many others doing the Lord's work.

And it's been an incredible journey. Then I told them also, it's interesting that after 44 years of being in your so-called full-time ministry, I took the first vacation. Now, believe it or not, I just didn't know even how to do this thing.

My board members during one of the board meetings said, you know, Brother KP, we are really worried about you. You need to take a break. I said, yeah, what do you are talking about? Then they said, you know, we would like you to take a week off and go for a vacation.

And I was silent. And I said, dear me, what a punishment. And I know these dear brothers loving and gracious and kind.

And I said, yeah, I will do what you tell me to do. In any case, you know, this is a meaningful week. My wife Gisela and my son Danny and his wife Erica and the two little kids.

They have Esther and Jonah, the tiny boy. Then, of course, my daughter Sarah and her husband, Dr. Danny, they both are in India. He's a medical doctor serving God, caring for the children and suffering people.

Then, of course, their little boy. So, I mean, it was a wonderful experience, by the way, and I don't regret it. Although it was kind of difficult for me to adjust the first two days.

What I'm trying to tell you is that my life, entire life, been one of perpetual nonstop going after reaching the lost. And I weep about it and I work for it and dream about it. There's nothing more significant in my life than knowing my Lord and doing the one thing that he's most concerned about, that is to seek and save that are lost.

But then I said to my people last night during the prayer meeting, you know, my brothers and sisters, after all these years of serving Christ, there is one thing of great importance. The only thing that is important to me now than anything else, that is to know the Lord Jesus intimately and to be his so completely. I said world evangelism.

Absolutely. I work for it. That's that's my life.

But that and everything else like that is overshadowed by one thing. I want to know him better. And those are words I understand.

You heard those kind of words people talk about and you read about it. But how do we come to the place of total abandonment? There's nothing we seek for ourselves. Our life completely his.

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not talking about some spooky mystical thing. No, this is basic biblical teaching of the New Testament.

Christianity in the Western countries, especially here in America. You will agree with me. A lot of times for a lot of people, it is what they can get.

Not what Christ is asking. And Paul very well said this in second Corinthians chapter five. If you remember, since one died for all, that is Christ died for you and for me.

Now, those who live no more live for themselves, but for him who died for you and for me. We are not our own anymore. This I call it the radical Christianity.

This I call the most important thing in our Christian life. And so we have a passage like this in Luke chapter 14, where, you know, lots and lots of people want to be near Christ. Like we have mega churches, you know, huge numbers of people gathering and being in one place.

I mean, it's a wonderful thing. I'm not against it. I'm so happy for that also, because there's an opportunity for people to hear biblical teaching, provided the shepherd is teaching from God's word, not, you know, whatever he, you know, think about or interpret stuff.

But in any case, in verse 25 in Luke chapter 14, you read these words, large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them. He said, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Then in verse 33, in the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. You know, it's a weird situation that our preachers are spending so much time trying to explain what Christ didn't mean. Oh, no, no, no.

Jesus didn't mean that way. It's like this. And we are so worried about being so politically correct.

We don't want to offend anyone. For example, how many books you find in the Christian bookshops that says that if you divorce your wife or husband for any other reason than this one reason of unfaithfulness, you are living in sin. I know this is not a popular theology.

And I'm not saying there is no forgiveness of sin and there's no God's grace. And I know people who've been divorced and remarried. God's grace is abundant and his mercy is forever.

I'm not knocking at these kind of situations. But what I'm simply saying, when will Christianity and the shepherds that are set to lead the people will come to the place where they are more afraid of God than the people they are speaking to. Thank God there are prophets.

There are people who are willing to risk all for the sake of Christ. And these are people who don't seek anybody's honor, reputation. They don't care.

And I know quite a few people like that. And I'm so grateful that they are my example. But coming back to the subject we are dealing with, what is the most important thing in our life? Answering that, I would say God will never take the second place in your life.

If you don't give him the first place, he says, I'm sorry, you are free to go and do what you want to do. That's exactly what happened in Mark chapter 10. The rich young ruler came to Christ.

He was upright. He was holding very significant position, recognized and respected in the society. But Jesus saw something deep down about his own private longing and his attitude.

And Jesus said, oh yeah, I'm so happy that you want to be mine and follow me. Oh, by the way, go and sell everything you have and give it to the poor. Then you come and follow me.

And the scripture says this fellow was quite sad. He was not mad and angry and said, Jesus, you are crazy. No, he said he was quite discouraged and sad.

He didn't want to do it. And Jesus didn't go after him and say, no, no, no, just wait a minute. Just wait a minute.

No, I didn't mean that. And let's look at it. Maybe he can take the first step and then second and third.

And gradually we will work it out. Don't get offended. No, Jesus didn't go after him.

Then, you know, in the early chapters of Mark, when Jesus saw this bunch of young people quite busy with catching fish and he said, hey fellows, come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And the next thing you read, they left their boats, their nest and left their co-workers with their, you know, other buddies and parents. And they simply walked away and followed him.

And they became the apostles. Quite a contrast there between the apostles and the rich young ruler. The apostles were willing to leave everything, follow Jesus.

And the rich young ruler, he wasn't. Which of the two camps would you fall into? We'll get back to brother K.P. Yohanan here in just a second. Here on the road to reality, we're considering what's important in life right now.

And maybe all of this has you thinking of where you're at with the Lord. And I'd like to recommend K.P.'s book, No Longer a Slumdog. In this book, K.P. will encourage you to think less of yourself, more about God and others.

You'll see the world through eyes of the suffering children of Asia. You'll share in their sorrow, rejoice in their victories. And in the end, you'll be left with what's most important.

We'd like to send this to you absolutely free of charge. Just go to winasia.org and request No Longer a Slumdog. That's winasia.org. I'll give you our phone number too, in case you'd like to call us.

Toll free 866-WIN-ASIA. That's 866-WIN-ASIA. Now, for our friends in Canada, you'll want to call us at 888-946-2742.

Or visit gospelforasia.ca on the World Wide Web. And K.P. is in studio today. He joins us now once again with more about what's most important in life.

Now, thoughts like this is hard to translate into practical living, especially for us here in the United States in the Western culture. But I trust the Holy Spirit will give you understanding. You know, I met a man who actually is a multi-millionaire.

He's still my friend. He's extremely rich. But in my private conversations with him, many, many times I found out here is a man who's so devout to Christ.

He walks with him so intimately. I was in tears when he told me, Brother K.P., I heard you talk about having an alarm clock. Not to wake me up so I can go to my office, but rather it will wake me up two in the morning, one in the morning, so I can pray and be alone, meditating, being with Christ, weeping over a world map, taking the television news and radio news and magazine news and reports as prayer request.

And he just telling me how he makes decisions about spending his money, decisions about people that work for him, the way he spent his time, and I said, Lord, I have a long way to go. You see, here is what you need to know. You have to stop comparing your life with someone else.

And when the disciples try to figure out, Jesus, well, you talk about him like this, but what about me? Jesus, it's none of your business. If it's my wish for him to live until I come back, that's not your problem. But you come and follow me.

So to you, my sister, there in the kitchen, my dear brother driving the car, or in your bedroom, in the hospital room, or wherever you are, please listen to me. When it is all said and done, that day when you and I stand before our Lord, your wife will not be there, your pastor, your bishop, and your archbishop, and your friend, and your colleague, and nobody will be there. Basically, it's you and him.

And that's all that matters. So now you must make a decision based on the Lord's dealing with you, where you are, as to what you must walk away from. For me, I remember the year I came to the United States.

It was 1974. The early years of my life here, I kind of got lost in the world of trying to be like an American. Oh, what do you mean by that? Well, one thing I learned to eat hot dog, and I found out it was not dog meat.

Well, a whole bunch of other things. But then I found myself becoming more concerned about my dress, the way I look, and the way I pray. Now believe me, I was in seminary, and I was fully involved in Christian work.

Yet it took two years before I realized that I couldn't cry anymore. My eyes were dry. My heart was cold.

The lost world, people by hundreds of thousands, dying without Christ and going into eternity. It was all facts and figures and numbers. I couldn't feel the pain anymore.

And that's when I said, Lord, I am so lost. I know all the answers. Please change my heart.

Take eternity and stamp on my eyes. The strange thing, I mean, that few months of what I call spiritual journey, learning about a whole new chapter in my life again. I realized that I was spending so much time trying to figure out the kind of clothes I wear, and this and that, and all these external things.

And I said, Lord, what do you want me to do? The answer was very simple. Son, you have to make those choices. And I will say this to you with much care.

For me as an individual at that time in my life from 30 to 33 years ago, it was to say no to a lot of things that I was living for. Expensive dozens and dozens of imported silk, neckties and suits and library books and this and that. All these stuff that actually burdened me down.

And I said to my wife, you know, I just want to keep a couple of ties and a couple of jackets and a couple of shoes and a few little things. And one other thing the Lord had to deal with my heart was my, although I didn't think much about it, wasting my time and life away for material things, being consumed with music and books. I was reading things that didn't have a whole lot to do with meditation and contemplation, being alone and being silent before the Lord.

So when Jesus says, sell all you have and then come and follow me, I will say this to you. Jesus will never take the second place in your life. If in your life, if you want to know, if you are a backslider, if you are a half-hearted follower of Christ, ask this simple question.

Is there anything, anyone more important in my life than Jesus? Jesus, Jesus and him alone. And if there is something in between, someone in between, I'm telling you, you don't need somebody to come and convince you about it. Your heart will tell you.

And so if you put money as a priority in your life, and your job, your career, your wife, your husband, your children and your education and your future plans and your girlfriend, your boyfriend and your fiancé, and if your thoughts, your life is consumed with your health and wealth and relationships, I'm telling you, please don't misunderstand me. I am not trying to condemn you. Let the Holy Spirit give you understanding.

And the Lord is calling you to be his, to follow him. And when our relationships and what we have and our job or even ministry, even being in full-time Christian work, once they become priority number one, once they possess us, I'm telling you, we are in trouble. And, you know, I don't know this is true or not, but I read a study, somebody did a research or whatever, that average Christian in the United States spent less than eight minutes a day in prayer.

That means there must be millions who don't pray even. Then pastors or priests or preachers spent less than 12 minutes a day in prayer. Now, if you are a priest or a pastor or a minister or an elder, or a deacon, I want you to know I'm your best friend.

I'm proud of you. The Lord gave you a very special call. But as a colleague, a friend of yours, may I plead with you, please understand, you can be most useful to your people by spending most of your time with the Lord and be his.

Listening to him and then saying what he says. Then too, as a follower of Christ, wherever you are and whatever you are called to do, may I ask you, make Jesus the most important thing in your life. Not doctrines, not denominations, not what is good for you or bad for you, no.

But knowing him and that is eternal life, Jesus said. The kind of life that overcomes all. May the Lord bless you.

Amen. Well, there's nothing more significant in life than knowing the Lord and doing what he calls us to do. Seek and save those who are lost.

That's what life is to be all about. And as we leave you today, I'd like to share one of the ways that we can do that. Again, this is The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. O'Hannan.

Well, can you believe it? Christmas is close to a month away, and no doubt some of you have already started your Christmas shopping. This year, would you prayerfully consider giving a gift that makes a difference for eternity? Gospel for Asia Christmas Gift Campaign is in full swing, and we call it the Critter Campaign. This year, you can select from an even wider variety of gifts.

For instance, you can give something helpful like a goat, a sewing machine, a radio, Bibles, even a pull cart. And believe me, this will really bless a family in Asia. This Christmas doesn't have to be about getting many things you really don't need.

Rather, it can be about giving to those in need. Go online to winasia.org and browse through the Gospel for Asia Christmas Gift Catalog. That's winasia.org. Our friends in Canada, you can go to gospelforasia.ca on the World Wide Web.

The Road to Reality, brought to you by Gospel for Asia. Be encouraged to live for what's most important, and then join us back here next week at this same time.

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