

What Distracts Us

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying focused on our purpose and mission, and not letting distractions and setbacks blind us from our goal.

Duration: 24:57

Scripture: Nehemiah 6:3, Matthew 4:1-11, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 12:50, Ephesians 5:27, Hebrews 4:15, Revelation 13:8

Topics: "Distractions"

Description

In this sermon, Brother K.P. Ohanan discusses the power of focus and how easily we can lose sight of the most important thing in our lives. He uses the example of Jesus, who faced numerous distractions throughout his life on Earth, yet remained focused on his purpose. Brother K.P. also highlights the story of Nehemiah, who stayed on track despite threats and opposition. He emphasizes the importance of not allowing anything to distract us from our calling as disciples of Jesus and living with a sense of urgency in light of eternity.

Transcript

With so many things in this world competing for our attention, how do we keep from being distracted from our calling as disciples of Jesus? We'll consider that vital question today on The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohannan. Great to have you back with us this week as we present The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohannan, Founder and Director of Gospel for Asia. Today we'll be listening to a message centered around the question, what distracts us? Is what we're doing contributing to our calling as Christians? And life spans only a brief time here.

Are we living with a sense of urgency in light of eternity? Or are we getting distracted? Brother K.P. will offer some important insights on what distracts us from our high and holy call, reminding us to make the most of our present and limited opportunities. Somehow I think in all our life, unless we constantly remind ourselves of the purpose, the reason, the focus, we can lose sight of the most important thing. The power of focus is so incredible that we see throughout the scripture also from the life of Jesus.

And you know some 4,000 years Christ would wait for the time of the Father to come to earth to die on the cross. And before the world began, he knew this was going to happen, the lamb that was slain before the world began. So he knew that.

Yet as he come to earth, he will find from the day one how much distractions he faced that would take him away from the purpose of which he came. The 40 days of fasting and prayer, then the temptation that was offered to him to take a shortcut. Then you know how the Greeks came to Jesus.

If you read the context of the scripture, basically you have to read into it. I first learned about that after I listened to Dr. Stanley Jones. That is, hearing about the opposition Christ was faced with, the possible death that he will have to face, the Greeks came pleading with him to come away with them to be their philosopher, their teacher.

And this is where Christ responds, unless a seed falls into the ground and dies, it remains as it is. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. And you know his brothers and his sisters and his mother came in one place trying to take him away by force, thinking that basically he's out of his mind, he's in trouble.

And then he will respond both times saying, who is my father? Who is my brother? Who is my sister? Those who do the will of my father. Another time we said those who obey the word. So you find in the life of Christ, he faced this.

Now when the Bible says he is a high priest who can sympathize with us, for he was tempted in all things that we are. A casual reader who don't think deep enough may read it and walk over it. But if you sit down and think about what is the thing that troubles you the most? What is the thing that discourages you the most? What are the things that causes you to stumble so easily? What are the things that makes you feel so sad and cry yourself to sleep? And what are things that are so strong temptation that you're fighting for your life from giving into it and have a shipwreck of life? For he experienced all these things yet without sin, so he can help us in the time of need.

Now if you leave it like that without going further, we may miss the point. The point is, why temptation? Why struggle? Why setback? Why agony? It was all for the purpose of trying to deviate him from the one reason for which he came. That's the whole thing about it.

And this is the reason why I have to often sit down and think about what this is all about. Some of the decisions I make about where I should go, where I should not go, and what I should do, should not do, is really based on, is this what the Lord called me to do? Is this thing going to contribute to fulfilling the call God gave me to do? Or is it going to be something else? Sometime ago, I was called to attend an international meeting of Christian leaders from almost every country in the world, and my invitation was to represent India and speak on behalf of the church. And it was something that, honestly, every way you look at it, logically, it is a fantastic thing.

But I sat down and thought through this deep enough. It was a horrendous temptation to say yes to it, to be in the limelight. But in my private heart, I said, this is going to take me away from that cause, even for the short time.

There are benefits, there are things, but I weighed carefully whether I made the right decision or not. Honestly, I can tell you, I found peace in the end. I said, well, I'm glad I didn't do that.

Not that another time, if I say to the Lord, the Lord will say, well, yeah, you go to that. And I would definitely want to do that. It's not every time you have to do the same thing or not to do the same thing.

So what I want to somehow share with you, you know, being in a place like this, morning prayer meeting, Tuesday night and Friday night and all day working and kids going around with a little book writing prayer

request and talking about manja and talking about the kids and, you know, the Dalit children, all this, I mean, look like we are a bunch of cuckoos, you know, look like we drink and eat and sleep and dream and wallow in the same, you know, stifled atmosphere. This is all we can think about. It is a healthy thing.

Is this the way to live? Is this all about life? Well, I think it depends who is asking. It depends who is answering and what perspective you have. For example, if our life on earth is a very temporary season, especially when you hit 50, I tell you, this really hit home if you are not yet aware of that.

But what I'm saying to you, think about your grandparents, your great-grandparents. Where are they? I have not even seen them. You? Maybe.

But where are they? Where are your grandparents? Where are your parents? Are they alive? Well, it is a matter of few years. If Jesus didn't come back or rapture didn't take place, definitely you are history as I'm history. So if even our carnal reason tell us we are here but for a very short time, then we have to ask the question, what is all about? You don't need to be philosopher for that.

Now that that is we are made for eternity, not for time. And if this book is all that is there to tell us what God is thinking about us and what life is all about, the whole thing, even the wisest, the richest of all men on planet of the Solomon says in chapter 12, Ecclesiastes, the end of all this is this fear God and do what he says. But if you take this whole Bible, it has only two things to talk about.

One is Christ first coming, second Christ second coming. There's nothing else. This whole 66 books is about that.

So if that is the case, we have a short time. The Lord's coming you soon. Our life on earth is, but for a very little time, eternity is where we're heading for.

If the whole Bible talks about Christ first coming and second coming, if you analyze this whole thing, it is all about seeing a group of people come to know the Lord Jesus Christ to be prepared to reign with him forever and ever, a bride for his son. If that be the case, the question is answered. What are you doing here? What am I doing? What is our life all about? I think the answer for me is very simple.

I am given the highest honor privilege of all privileges on earth to serve Jesus, to see people come to know him, especially from a world that never heard his name, especially in a time when people are crying out, saying, come and help us. We don't know how to. If that is the kind of world we are living in, then I think it is such an incredible privilege the Lord has given us to serve him.

And so brothers and sisters, it is our tremendous privilege and honor. The Lord has given us to be a peculiar people, to be a strange people, to be wacko a little bit, if that's what you want to call Keith Green's language gone bananas for Jesus, you know, to be a group of people set apart saying no to a lot of things for the sake of the elect. Now, if that be the reason and the purpose for which we are here, does that mean it's going to help us to survive till the end? No, I don't think so.

I think one of the struggle we face is that if the devil couldn't get you to stay away from the call, if the devil could fight hard enough and you gave in and you didn't get into the battle, didn't get into the place of throwing away everything to follow the Lord, what happens, as he always does to me, to you, it is along the way he will do everything possible to wear us out. In Daniel, it talks about wearing out the saints. It is like an axe you take and the tree is so huge, just one chop, the tree never falls.

But chop after chop after chop, continually, non-stop wearing out the saints until you simply want to give up or get out of the battle or slow down or take a side road, whatever else. And that's why I said Jesus faced that. Let's not make a mistake with that and we will face the same thing.

And many that followed Jesus, keep in mind, they came out with good intention, but when things got rough, the distractions became too strong, they wouldn't make it. And you know that to be true. And many, majority, walked away.

And Paul talks about Demas and several other people in 2 Timothy. In the very last, after having journeyed so long, Paul says, and having loved this present world, he, that's Demas, left me also distractions that took over. So here is what I want to make the statement.

You and I will face throughout our life distractions from the enemy to slow us down, to make our heart grow cold, to lose our focus, our eyes become kind of foggy. Unless you are diligent and be vigilant and be objective and critical about your own feelings and emotions and other people's voices and either your wife or your husband or whatever, I can tell you, you can become blind, not completely, but then you don't see things so clearly. So the finish line, the focus, the end game, the rapture, eternity, being with the Lord and millions and billions and no man can number, none of those things become any more important.

We become short-sighted. How easy it is to become short-sighted. So we must take great care to not allow anything to keep us from our calling.

In a few moments, we'll return to our teaching with more important insights on what distracts us. You're listening to The Road to Reality with Brother KP O'Hannon, founder and director of Gospel for Asia. If you're not familiar with the mission work the Lord is doing through Gospel for Asia, please stop by our website.

And while you're there, request your free copy of KP's latest book, No Longer a Slumdog. On page 65, this is what he writes. He says, over and over again in scripture, we recognize God's heart for those who have no voice, for the captives and the oppressed.

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That's 866-WIN-ASIA. Friends in Canada, call us at 888-946-2742 or log on to gospelforasia.ca. Well, let's return to Brother KP. He'll offer four more areas which can distract us from our calling as Christians.

We begin with the example of Nehemiah, whose life shows us how to stay on track. Nehemiah, he was commissioned to go and build the wall. Very unselfish his ambition was, but distractions came.

The prophet spoke so. And there was actually a threat to his own life saying that, don't take it light. Come, let's talk about it.

And then so many voices in there said, you guys go and get lost. I'm tired of raising it. He said, a man like me to come down, no way.

I got a job to do. You guys do whatever. I ain't going to stay on, carry a weapon in my hand.

And the work on the other hand, I'll keep doing it. That's how I finished the work. And it's amazing even to read through the book of Nehemiah, the tremendous amount of distractions he faced.

And Paul had to say this in Acts 20, none of these things move me. The prophecy that came that you're going to be bound up and beaten, abused, and all those things. They were not lying.

They were true prophecy, literally. And Paul believed it. So you want actually knowing that you're going to be beaten up and abused, you want to go into that sink.

Paul said, yeah. And the reason, Paul, I did not think of myself too much. If I die, that's fine.

If through my death, I can finish the work the Lord gave me to do, that's all it is. And so distractions can be not just, you know, people offering you a nice job and more money and better housing and all this different. No, distraction also can be difficulties and problems and trials and all these things we all face.

And I say this to you because some people think the older you are in the ministry, the more theology you know, the more Bible you know, the more seasoned leader you are, the more things get easy. It is not true. Really, it is not.

It get only harder. It is not easy. And Paul was able to stay focused in spite of all the struggles he faced simply because he saw the end.

Remember 2 Timothy says, Timothy, I ran the race and I fought my battle so well. I finished my course. Now there waits for me a crown, not only for me, but those who love his appearing.

You see the key? The key was he saw something at the end of the line. That is something more precious, Jesus and his call. And he would stay focused.

Now for us, what is our call here? It's a very unique call. We talk about the 1040 window. We talk about 300 million Dalits and the possibility of who knows, half a million children.

All you need to do, just type Dalit persecution, pages after pages, after pages, after pages, after pages, after pages of 24 Dalits being lynched, cut into pieces. A young mother was stripped naked, walking through the village and in the end beat her to death. Her crime, her son made fun at an upper caste boy or girl in the community.

10 people butchered because they drew water from the well. And stories not one or two. It just, it just never ending pages.

And no wonder why they're crying out in one voice. We are tired of this. We are quitting.

And this is an incredible, awesome privilege the Lord gave us. So let me conclude in the next five minutes by saying what are some of the distractions specifically you and I may face in our journey in serving God, especially here. One cares of this life.

Jesus said that, nothing new. Whether India, China, Germany, Canada or California, wherever you may be from, we as human beings should always face these kind of things. And brothers and sisters, I would encourage you to think about it.

Is the sale signs, the garage sales and the attractions and all the mega shops and all those things keep on calling you to buy things and invest your life and time? Are you getting crowded out? Half of the world go to bed literally with empty stomach and naked bodies. And we need to be cautious and I need to be cautious how much stuff we need and how much we have that we keep on using it. Please keep your life simple because these are distractions that take so much of your time.

And since I got three or four neckties now, it don't take much time to figure out which one to wear. The time I had 70, it took me a half hour or more. I'm not saying only have four neckties, you have all you want.

But I'm telling you, I'm telling you, all you have is little time, money you can make. How much of your time are you spending on taking care of your personal life, your children, your family, your cooking? When you realize the reality we live with in this world of millions slipping away into crisis eternity on a daily basis, it is too painful. Let us not lose focus on that.

It's very important. And to the Lord give you wisdom. I cannot dictate to you how you should be none of my business, none of anybody's business.

But you ask the Lord to give you wisdom. I tell you what, you will never sacrifice too much for the Lord and accept suffering for which he will not take care of you. He is never your debtor.

But you go after constantly your health, your welfare, your children, your wholesomeness. You keep on doing it. In the end, you will find its emptiness.

I advise you to be sober, not to lose sight of what which God called you for. Second distraction, relatives and friends. No greater distraction you will face in life, someone said, as much as well-meaning parents, uncles and brothers, sisters, co-believers who will counsel you with so many wonderful Bible verses to keep you from embracing the cross and going forward.

They cannot face it. If William Carey didn't have friends, even his own wife said, you go your way and I'm staying here. If that be the case, you need to know there are times when the best well-meaning friends will advise you, then cut into the call of God.

And you have to be discerning about it. And again, this is not somebody can make decision for you. It's up to you.

Third, the preoccupation with yourself. I call it introspection. Okay, I speak English, you speak Texan.

That is, there are people who never seem so victorious in their life because they always think about themselves. You know, I am not good enough. I am not strong enough.

I don't read Bible enough. I don't fast enough. You know, I don't have faith enough.

They all they can think about the negative things, the lack in their life. And that's a, that's a trip of the enemy. I'm telling you what, till the very last minute of your life on earth, you still be imperfect.

After 20 years of preaching, Paul said, I'm the chief of sinners. If somebody says they are holy people, they have no sexual temptations. They're always pray fast.

And they hear of what I tell you, they're liars. Usually the people who pretend to be more holy, usually got more problems than anybody else. And I'm not saying we shouldn't talk about the good things in life.

God has given to us, but let's be honest. We are human beings. God called the weakness, but we need to stay focused, trusting in him.

As George said, nine, look at Jesus and one, look at yourself. Don't look nine times yourself. And then one look at Jesus trying to make it.

No, look at Jesus 10 times and look at yourself one time because he's making us, we are not yet there. So please don't let the enemy come in and show up with a whole bunch of struggles you have from the past or now, whatever. I'll say, listen, you keep moving.

Okay. That's what it's all about. Okay.

The next thing, majoring on minor things and get sucked into the present losing sight of the goal for which the Lord called you. You know, it's a very interesting thing. When we are taking a trip from here to New York or Los Angeles, wherever, you know, you get in the car and go, the journey is not easy.

You know, the potholes, the delays and car wrecks and all kinds of things. You can get so preoccupied with the events along the way, and then you lose focus where you're going. And in our life, there'll be disagreements with the coworkers.

There'll be disappointment. There'll be misunderstanding. There'll be setbacks.

There'll be some struggles you will face in life and all kinds of things, but let not those things blind you from the most important thing. What is that? To see a world come to Christ. But what I'm saying, you can get so brainwashed with all these issues that you lose sight of nearly 200,000 people dying every day and plunging into hell.

And we spend more time agonizing, arguing over these stupid things, and don't have one day to fast and pray and weep before God for the lost world. Where are we? See how the enemy can trip us up with all these different things. As long as we live, there's going to be struggles we face, all kinds of things.

But let's label much of these things are the distractions from the enemy to keep us from seeing the lost world come to Christ. And that's what I would encourage you for. Well, having the Lord is having everything.

And when we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus, well, no earthly glory can compare. That and any suffering we may face in this present life is simply not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. You've been listening to The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohannan.

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For those in Canada, you can call us at 888-946-2742 or go online to gospelforasia.ca. Well, The Road to Reality is brought to you by Gospel for Asia. Remember, don't let anything distract you in your walk with the Lord. And join us next week when KP will encourage us to be clothed in humility.

Until then, may the Lord bless you and strengthen you.

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