

The Higher Call of Christ, Part One

by K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan's sermon challenges believers to embrace the higher call of Christ by prioritizing God's values over self-centered living.

Duration: 26:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 21:18-19, Acts 12:2, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Revelation 1:9, Revelation 4:1

Topics: "Calling"

Description

In this sermon, Brother K.P. Johannon focuses on the scripture portion in Revelation 4:1. He emphasizes the importance of understanding and following the Lord's values in order to break free from earthly limitations. He shares a powerful testimony of a missionary who faced persecution and physical harm while spreading the Gospel. Brother K.P. challenges listeners to consider the higher call of Christ and how they are running the race set before them. He warns against a life that may appear fruitful but is ultimately filled with empty works that will be burned up.

Transcript

The High Call of God in Christ, next on The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohanan. Welcome to The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohanan, President of Gospel for Asia. If you are not aware of the mission of Gospel for Asia, it's to support native missionaries to go into all the regions of India to share the good news of Jesus.

You can find out more through our website at gospelforasia.org. Today, we're going to bring you a message from Revelation. It's entitled The Higher Call of Christ. You know, the Christian is to live by an entirely different set of values that the rest of society doesn't.

It's a greater calling than merely living to satisfy ourselves. And Brother K.P. will encourage us to seek to live by that higher calling. Please join us in turning your Bible to Revelation chapter 4, verse 11.

With today's broadcast, here's Brother K.P. I want us to look at a scripture portion in the book of Revelation chapter 4, verse 1. After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this. We are as humans, unless we deliberately make decision to understand and follow the Lord with His values, we will always remain earthly, bound by earthly things, earthly values.

And in the end, we look back and regret over a life that was wasted. One may say, My goodness, I spent every penny I had for God's work. I worked day and night at the church.

I was faithful. I worked very hard and labored. But in the end, it may be, it is all wood, hay, and stubble, and be burned up.

Frightening reality, but true. The call Christ gives to us, now I want to talk to you not as a big congregation or a group of people. I hope somehow I can talk to you as an individual.

You may be sitting with your husband or wife or your parents. It doesn't matter. I hope you will listen to me not as preaching to you, but I just want to talk to you.

And I had a clear awareness last night from my Lord what I should say to this fellowship while I'm here. The call Christ gives to us today is the same that He gave to John, his follower, who understood following his master didn't mean forgiveness of sin, wonderful, comfortable, conservative life, full knowledge of the scripture, then finally go to heaven. No.

He understood. Now all his colleagues, his friends, disciples, they were all martyred. Peter was crucified head down.

Now he is all alone, lonely, without anyone, banished to this island. In the midst of such difficulties, he heard the words of Christ, come up here and I will show you things that must take place. It is a higher call.

If we are consumed with our self-centered living, if we are consumed with mine, my wife, my children, my dreams, my vacation, my car, my clothes, my job, my health and wealth and plans and dreams. Even in spiritual things, you can be consumed with self-centeredness. This I understood 23 years ago, living in Dallas as a seminarian, passing a local church.

I was so intrigued and taken up with contemporary Christian music, which I still love. Because today you can turn on the radio and you can hear anything you want. In Dallas too, we have full-fledged beautiful stereo music coming through the FM stations.

But if I heard one song from my favorite artist, I was not satisfied with hearing that over the radio alone. I would go to the Christian bookstore and buy that cassette tape, just so that I can hear that one song. Forget about the rest of the song and I would pay whatever money it cost.

But you know, as the days went by, the Lord began to speak to my heart and said, Son, look at the library. Seven most expensive leather-bound Bibles sitting on your shelf. Books in your library that you may never read.

Music tapes that you buy continually. But He began to speak to my heart and said, Son, half of the world have never seen one page of the Bible. In the mainland China, with some one billion people at that time, there was not one Christian bookstore not one Christian radio station.

In my own native country of India, not one Christian radio station. And the Lord began to speak to my heart, Son, is this not you being so self-centered, even in matters of spiritual things, forgetting there is a world out there, half of the world, that never heard my name. They are going toward hell and forever.

This is what all about following me. It was not condemnation, guilt trip, and beating me on my head. It was love and kindness and mercy.

But in His grace, I was able to listen to Him. My life was totally changed. If you think about the church at Ephesus, you read in the book of Acts, it will amaze you.

I mean, you American people don't understand the depth and the seriousness of that because your culture is not helping you for that. The reason, these people in the midst of such sold out, 100% heathens, witchcraft, voodoo, deep darkness, and things that they did to worship God, I cannot mention in public. To turn away from Diana, to turn away from their faith and speak against it, means you will be killed.

But think about those Christians who heard the gospel, their commitment to Christ was so radical, finding Christ was so wonderful, they forgot the consequence they must pay. They brought together all their books and artifacts of witchcraft and religious services and burned it in public. But this church with such incredible commitment, they were into the scripture, studying it, meditating, memorizing from cover to cover, to the extent, if some strange things they hear from the pulpit, some traveling speaker like me come along and say something, if I said something wrong, the newest believers could stand up in the church and say, preacher, you are off the wall.

California language. That means they were so well taught in the scripture. That was a church of us.

But what happened? In chapter 2 in the book of Revelation, they are not able to see things the way Christ is able to see things. The Lord said, I am going to put out the light. I am going to kill you.

I am going to walk out. I am no more happy. Lord, what? I mean, the commendations you just told about us, the hard working people, the most sacrificing people, the most fundamental Bible believing people, they memorized the whole scripture, every doctrine they knew.

Lord, then what on earth are you talking about? Christ says, yeah, you did all those things, what you are doing now, then because of love, you love me. But now you do the same thing for your reputation, for your gain, for some approval from some other people, for salary, for name, for something that you can get out of it. You don't do it anymore for me.

Therefore, I will put out the light. Only if they come up and see their own life as He sees it, they can say, Lord, you are right. I will change.

Then you go to the book of Revelation chapter 3, the church at Laodicea. Jesus says, you people, you say you are the greatest, the biggest, the most fundamental, the most righteous, rich and famous, established. But I'm telling you, He said, you are poor, you are naked, you are destitute, you are ugly.

I counsel with you to come and buy of me. That's what He says. A friend of mine who was so confused about a church and leadership.

These people were known to be the most evangelical, Bible-believing. I mean, this is all that was about. And he came to Jesus and said, Lord, how come these people know the Bible so much, but their lives are full of jealousy and bitterness, unforgiveness, loving money and power and position, honor from one another, and they have no concern for anything else.

Their own self-centered life is all they're concerned about. The Lord spoke to his heart and said, son, the problem is they spend time with the Bible, not with me. And he said, interesting statement.

If you want to know God, study Jesus, love Him, follow Him, imitate Him, embrace the cross and follow after Him. But if you want to be smart and famous, study the Bible, get a PhD. No, don't misunderstand.

You cannot know Jesus except through the Bible. There's no extra curriculum activity, some revelation out there. No, this is it.

But the question is this, why do we study? Why do we memorize? So we can be smart or for us to know Jesus. The more we see Him, we are able to see things about our own life and everything from His perspective. My early days in America before I came to this country, I was in Europe for a little while and picked up a habit of using a certain bar soap, deodorant soap, you know, soap you take a bath with.

I just want to make sure you understand me. So when I came to America, I started buying the same thing made in England, \$1.50 per bar every time you buy that soap. And, you know, I mean, I was in seminary and not doing any wicked things and living for the Lord, preaching four times a week.

But, you know, a couple of years went by, the Lord began to speak to my heart and said, son, 60,000 people in your country of India die every day and plunge into hell and forever. What are you doing with your life? Is this what I called you about? Didn't I say to you to love me more than father, mother, son, daughter, even your own very life? Oh, I said, please, can you say everything except the last statement? To love you more than my life, my wife, my children, my likings, my wishes, my vacation, my future plans, my deposits, my house, my cars, my clothes, my health, what I want for my children, you mean? He says, yeah, blood was the price I paid to purchase you. You are not your own.

But that sounds spiritual, unless I act on it. And that's when I prayed, Lord, my heart is so cold. I know Bible so much, Greek and Hebrew and philosophy and interpreting everything, Lord, but my heart is so cold.

There's no tears in my eyes for the lost world. Change my heart, take eternity and stamp on my eyes. And that's when the Lord began to change me.

I remember the following week when he went to the store, I switched from dollar 50 cents bar soap to ivory 35 cents. I don't like ivory. Don't you think I'm recommending it? Even today, I don't buy it either.

But at that time, I was so, so deeply gripped with the reality that the difference between dollar 50 cents and 35 cents will mean 200 more people reading about my Jesus that never heard his name, that Jesus died for them and they don't have to go to hell. And that's all I could think about. Everything I was looking at my life from eternal perspective, the way Christ.

But when we live by the higher call of Christ, even the small things take on great meaning. You're listening to The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Johannan, the founder and director of Gospel for Asia. If you're unfamiliar with the missions work of Gospel for Asia, please stop by our website at gospelforasia.org and find out more.

It's there that you can order a free copy of Brother K.P.'s life story, by the way. It's called Revolution in World Missions. Again, the website address is gospelforasia.org. Or call us at 866-WIN-ASIA.

That's 866-WIN-ASIA. As we return to Brother K.P. Johannan, we'll be reminded of the very dangerous work of sharing the gospel in India. And Brother K.P. will talk about one missionary's willingness to lay down his life for the Lord.

Once again now, with The Road to Reality, here's Brother K.P. Pastor Brian, when he went to India, he was at the place where we have now 450 plus students. And over the years, over 500 churches been planted in that part of the country. Last time when I was there, one of our leaders said, I want to introduce you to one of our missionaries.

So he took me over to this young brother who is hardly 22 years old. Years prior to that meeting, he came to Christ and his parents disowned him, called the temple priest into the house, had the cow dung mixed to the water ceremony, done to say that our son is dead. He is no more our son.

He walked away from his home. Having lost everything and came to our Bible school and studied there and graduated, went to the mission field. So when I saw this brother, the first thing I noticed, such glow on his face.

But then I saw the scar from this end to this end on the forehead, deep scar, the mark of stitches, but all kind of so vivid. And I said, whatever happened to you? He didn't say nothing. But the leader began to explain.

His mission station, he won a whole bunch of people to Christ. They were baptized. And one day, as he was teaching the Bible, a group of men came with iron rod and chain and weapons began to beat him up.

His collarbone broken, his hand broken, and the deep scar on his head was the wound that inflicted and blood was oozing out on his face. And the left team saying, this is only a warning. We are coming back to bury you next time.

Don't stay here. Hearing about this, our leaders told this young brother, maybe it is better you don't stay here. Please go somewhere else and we will assign some of the missionaries.

His reply was not one sentence reply. He went to the book of Acts and from memory, he caught the answer. Quoting Apostle Paul, when they said, don't go to Jerusalem, it's going to be dangerous.

They're going to bind you up. They're going to beat you. They're going to persecute you.

Please, Paul, don't go. It was prophet speaking. The Holy Spirit says, you're going to be bound and persecuted.

Which means, if I'm telling you, I know 100% if you get in your car and drive from here to Denver, when you get half of the way, you're going to have a car wreck and you're going to be killed on the spot. If you really believed 100% that this is from God, would you do it? You're asking me if I would do it? I love my wife and kids. Paul responded, oh yeah, okay.

Wherever I went, the Holy Spirit said the same thing. Which means, I affirm what you are saying is true. Then I'm sure some others said, what a relief.

After all, he believes this is true. That means he's not going. Paul responded, I know, but I do not regard my life dear unto myself.

All I want is somehow let it go and fulfill what he wants. So he took off. That's the answer this young 20 year old brother gave to his leader.

He said, I'm already dead. How can they kill me? My life is no more mine. Please don't ask me to go into anywhere else.

I want to go to the same mission field. He saw something that others could not see, seeing things from his perspective. One of our dear brothers, his name is Kunjur, a tribal convert who finished his studies and wanted to go to a mission field where our people leaders thought it was a risky thing he's going to do because he wanted to go to a place to preach in Bihar which is known as the graveyard of missions.

In one part of Bihar, 22 million people live without a church or missionary at that time. And they said, this place you're talking about is not good because the entire region is controlled by a priestess who had so much power through her supernatural powers, she can kill people kilometers away from her through her witchcraft. But he said, Jesus want me to go there.

So he ended up in that place and found out that for the last three years, this Manjula, the priestess, was paralyzed, neck down, laying in her house. Hundreds of devotees come and pray but no good, nothing happens. So he went straight to her house, which I wouldn't recommend somebody to do right away, but he did.

He didn't have a PhD to figure this out, thank God. So he said to her, if Jesus would heal you, what would you do? She said, if your Jesus can make me well, all my gods, nobody can help. I will follow your Jesus the rest of my life.

And he said, Lord, if you ever did anything like this, this is the best chance for you. And he prayed and fasted, went back and laid his hand on the woman, prayed in Jesus' name that his name will be glorified. The Lord healed her miraculously.

She was baptized. Can you imagine temple priestess getting baptized publicly? Following week, another 25 people and more and more. And now, within a four years time, he has five churches established in the neighboring villages.

And when I heard this, I couldn't believe it. Hundreds of people following Christ, wherever you go, people are drawn to Christ. And I called our leader and said, what is the magic? What is the secret of this brother's life? He said, I don't know.

He's just like any other brother. He's just preaching Jesus, living for him. He doesn't have anything except this Bible.

I said, anyway, he find out something about him that is unusual. Two weeks later, they called me back and said, we found his secret. I said, what is the secret? He spent three hours every morning in prayer and one hour reading God's word and meditating.

He never tells that to anyone. Very humble, simple young brother. Now it hit me.

And the Lord working with them. It was not money and power and agendas and computer printouts. No, it is simply the invisible one.

He just following after him and seeing things from Christ's perspective and just simply living his life for him. When you are willing to walk away from your own self-centered, tiny world of me, mine Christianity, you will see something so beautiful. The door in heaven opened and Jesus says, come up and I will show you.

And you know what you see there? The values of heaven. Here on earth, we put gold on our head and neck and nose, everything, right? In heaven, gold is under our feet. Did you know that? If the heaven's value is right now in our hearts, gold will still be under our feet, not on our head.

Why heaven is such a happy place? Because no one is self-centered there. It says in Luke, the angels in heaven jump up and down and dance with joy. When one sinner, what brings you abundance of joy? You've been listening to The Road to Reality with Brother KP Yohanan, President of Gospel for Asia.

We've been listening to a message from Brother KP entitled The Higher Call of Christ. And if you would like more information on the work of Gospel for Asia or to begin supporting native missionaries, stop by our website at gospelforasia.org. I'm pleased to tell you also that Brother KP's new book is available. It's called Against the Wind.

You know, we all face obstacles in life, be it sickness, disappointment. Now in this eye opening book, KP Yohanan challenges you to consider how you are running the race God has set before you. Against the Wind encourages us to finish well in a world of compromise.

You can order Against the Wind for just \$15 through our website store at gospelforasia.org. It's there also that you can find other resources to encourage you in Christ, such as the book Brother KP mentioned a moment ago, The Road to Reality. Again, you can get more information through our website at gospelforasia.org or call us toll free 866-WIN-ASIA. And again, that phone number is 866-WIN-ASIA.

The Road to Reality is sponsored by Gospel for Asia. Join us next week, won't you, for the conclusion of this message. It's called The Higher Call of Christ.

Until then, may the Lord bless you and strengthen you as you seek the high calling of Christ.

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