

Fearless, Episode 74 – Uvalde: The Steady Peace of Jesus in the Darkest of Times

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to Fearless, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:22 Welcome back to another episode of Fearless. And I had another episode that was planned for today, but, um, kind of wanted to pivot and address what was happening, uh, here in this nation. And like you and all Americans, I was just completely just heartbroken over the tragedy that we saw happen in Uvalde, Texas, last week at the elementary school and the loss of those innocent, precious children and the two teachers whose lives were just taken too quickly and too soon and just in such a tragic and horrific way that many of us can't even fathom.

And if there was any doubt that evil is all around us, it ought to be gone now because the world is just such a fallen place. It's full of just broken people. It's full of sin. Um, and it's just like without a relationship with Jesus Christ, evil can and evil will just reign in the hearts of men. And we know according to Jeremiah 17:9 it tells us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick and who can understand it. And I do know that there's only one person that is in the miracle of the heart business. And the only one person that can change the heart that can do a miracle in the heart, the heart of an individual, the heart of a nation and that's Jesus Christ. And we have removed God from every aspect of it. We have removed Him, um, from our schools. We tried to remove His truth, His design for our families. We've destroyed the family structure, and His plans for each of us. And we just have seen the depravity of man, uh, seem to reign over. And when we watch this evil, I think what was really devastating for me in the aftermath of watching what happened in Texas was watching the response. And I'm sure many of you listening, you can relate to that. Um, but watching the response on social media and in the news has just been for me, just painful. It made me more angry. I mean, there was a night ... one day I had just gone to bed, and I was just going through Twitter. Twitter can always make you angry at night. But just going through Twitter and Instagram and watching people's responses from Republicans to Democrats, um, you know, quickly using this scenario for political gain, for attacking one another, for tearing each other down. Is that what we need in a moment like this is blame and tearing each other down? I believe that's where it's gotten us and where we are as a nation now. You see just one tweet after another one social media jam after another. You've got Republicans. Now, they're blaming and wondering where that \$40 million that went to Ukraine should have been spent. And if we're honest, three weeks ago, if we had given them the top three things to spend that money on, it wouldn't have been on school security, but they're using this now as a political platform. Democrats have done the same thing to blame anybody that's a law-abiding citizen that owns a gun ... that we're to blame. And ... but for me, that's just been devastating.

But through all of that, um, and there's a time and place to maybe talk about all those scenarios. And I don't believe today ... because I want to share something pretty, um,

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powerful. Um ... that, you know, when we get to see this darkness and these horrific situations, we know according to Scripture that God is near the brokenhearted. And I think that's a prayer for many of us is that, Lord, be with those. Give them undeniable peace, a divine peace that only You could give them to sustain them. Um, we pray that prayer over them. Um, we know that He is a God of comfort in these dark times. Um, and we know for what Satan meant for evil that God will use for good. And that's a hard one. That's a hard pill to swallow. It's like how could that possibly happen in this scenario. And sometimes, many times, we don't get to see those scenarios. We don't get to see those stories. You know, there's a ... there's a group that I believe are some of the most special people who boldly share the truth of God's love with people who've been hurt by evil and the brokenness of the world. And those are our chaplains here at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. And they're part of our Rapid Response Team. And these chaplains respond to crisis all over this nation. And they're there within hours. And, um, there was a couple that lived just a few hours away from where the shooting was. And they were there in Uvalde in two hours to minister and to serve to comfort those. I believe that they are truly the hands and feet of Jesus in that moment to just listen, to pray with victims, um, to love on them, to pray with them. But there was a unique situation that happened with this couple. And I want you to hear them share a very powerful story. God's always using this team, um, to represent the steady peace of Jesus in the darkest of times. Where they were called to go with a family, uh, followed by, um, I believe it was the Texas Rangers escorted them with a family who lost a child to go share that news with the rest of the family. And I want you to hear their story.

Ken Williamson:

00:05:41 This is Ken. And we actually were part of the death notification teams that were here at the Civic Center. We were asked to participate in going to a family's home because the parents had come here and got a death notification of their child. They were concerned that they were not able to go home and tell their other children what ... and their family what had actually happened. They didn't have the strength to go home and do that. So, we were asked to drive our own vehicle over to the home of this family. And we were followed by police officers in their own vehicles. And when we arrived at the scene, we were met by one of the family members who took us up to the inside of the house. It was a very sad scene. People crying. The children were all sitting with a relative. And they were all wailing. They were crying so hard. They knew that we had come to actually talk to them. So, we ... we ... we did a ministry of presence with them for several minutes just being there and just kneeling down beside them and listening and not making any noise or anything. And then, we just started asking them a few little questions about how they were and where they were during the ... the incident. And did they hear loud noises. And just tried to be asking some questions on their level. They began to be attentive to what I was saying and just the questions that I was asking. And we had the opportunity then just to lead them through explaining what had happened to their brother and just telling them in ... in children's way that they're brother had died. They tried to attend to him and ... and he had died. And to give them comfort and allow them to know that they had family around them who loved them. That their church was going to be able to support them. That God was going to be with them, but it was going to be hard. But they had a good family. And they needed to just trust that God was

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going to be with them. As soon as that was over with the children, then we began to minister to the other people who were in the house because many of them had started to cry and many of them were absolutely in a remorse kind of a situation. So, we would walk around and talk with them. Then, as we were leaving, there was more that had gathered on the front porch. Family and friends. So, we ministered to people out on the front porch. And then, at that particular time, we wrapped it up. And we went out we met the police officers in the street. And they told us how glad they were that we were here to do that because they knew they weren't going to be able to do it.

Interviewer:

00:08:44 Stacy, what was that like on the ride over to this family's house? How did you both prepare?

Stacy Williamson:

00:08:53 Well, we knew that this was going to be a new experience we were going to notify the siblings of the child that had died, um, for the parents. So, we prayed, um, constantly as we ran over. And um, preparing our own hearts. Trying to prepare the family that was there and waiting for us to arrive. Um, also praying for the parents who were not going to be in attendance at that situation.

Ken Williamson:

00:09:24 And we were able to just ask God and the Holy Spirit really to be with us and give us strength. Give us words to say that were going to be on a child's level. Because that was really what we were asked to do was to give a death notification to children. We were saying there's no book we've ever seen that talks about this. So, we're ... Lord, we're in Your hands. We need to hear from You how to do this because we're here. And we pulled up, and here we are at the front door of the house. And ... and we knew we just had to rely on God, get out, and go up to the house, and do it.

Interviewer:

00:10:00 How many siblings were there?

Stacy Williamson:

00:10:02 There were a total of three siblings. And then, a cousin who is right there who is also very involved with the situation.

Interviewer:

00:10:12 What ... how did that moment impact you both?

Stacy Williamson:

00:10:17 One thing is I was there to comfort the children while Ken presented, um, the information. I was there to comfort the children. And I was amazed how God was working in the situation. Because Ken was kneeling there trying to be at the same level as the children. And he was starting to talk and describe. And those kids turned their full attention to Ken as he described what had happened. They were so attentive and ...

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you know, they ... they ... they locked out their understanding of the other adults in the room. It was all Ken and his communication.

Ken Williamson:

00:11:00 And... And I would say that when we got inside, they ... just the impact of ... of not knowing how do we really feel about – for me, it was like how do I really feel about all these people? Maybe 25 people that were there all grieving the loss of one little fourth grader. And ... and knowing that we've ... I've had fourth graders myself who are now grown. And I have grandchildren who they were once in fourth grade too. And you ... you put yourself in the place of trying to think. Even though we're going through what we were there to do, your mind is on like a two ... two avenue road. And that is trying to figure out what would I do if I was in their case. At the same time, we're trying to do the ministry that we were called to do. Obviously, that's hard. But obviously, we just had to rely on ... on God to kind of keep things moving forward so that it wasn't like a stumble that we made. And that's what God did. We really continued with the ministry and knowing at the same time when we left, we were able to sit in the car and just talk about what did we just go through. What ... what was that really like? And we really just were able to ask God to strengthen us and restore us. Because it takes a lot out of you when you're ... when you're ministering, and then you're feeling the same thing from our personal level as the same thing that we're doing in ministry.

Interviewer:

00:12:35 Have you had people, um, come up to you and say how could God allow this to happen?

Ken Williamson:

00:12:46 I... I don't know that they've said it that way. But they have hinted in such a way that I ... it appears that they would be asking not necessarily the why question but what do we do now. What ... what do we now? Because this has been so terrible. The community has been impacted. And there's nobody around this community and farther that is outside of what this devastation has done to us. So, I think they're asking that question, but they're using different words. We've just been able to go back to what we really know and that is that God loves you. And we don't have answers. And we don't know that anybody has answers right now. And so, we ... we go with that with just allowing people to understand that we love them. God loves them. And He will direct your paths in the way that we know the Holy Spirit will do that.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:13:47 When I heard that interview for the first time, of course I cried. But I was just amazed at the peace that these chaplains have when they go into moments like this. A peace that only God can give them.

I want to ask you to pray for our chaplains. Our chaplains who serve all over the world but especially those in Texas. And to pray for those families they're ministering to, um, with the unimaginable pain that they're experiencing. I just encourage you to. I know many of you have been praying for them over the last few days but to continue to pray

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for them. And, um, many of you might have questions. Maybe many of you are just suffering with dealing with the aftermath or dealing with something personal in your life. And I always want to remind you that the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association does have a prayer line 24/7 for someone there, um, to pray with you, to listen to you of whatever is going on. That number is 855-255-PRAY. Once again, that's 855-255-PRAY.

And, I did hear just recently Greg Laurie speaking on FOX News. And he was sharing. You know, he's a father who's lost a son and the grief that he faced. And he just reminded that so many people want to blame, blame. You know, why would God allow this? And, um, you know all these questions against God. But he just reminded us that during these times who should we turn to and to turn to the God of comfort. In the evil times, you are to turn to Him. That we know His Son, Jesus, is our hope. That our hope is eternal life and to know in that instant where Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me." In an instant, in that horrific instant that we can't imagine what was going through those children's minds and those last seconds that they were welcomed in the arms of Jesus. And that, as Christians, is our hope. And we have to be willing to stand on that unwavering hope and to be unashamed of the truth that can set people free. The truth that can change a nation to not be ashamed to speak when they try to silence it in our schools, and to our ... as a family unit. Maybe even silence in our churches or even in the, um, public square. This is the hope, the hope of Jesus, that can change the heart of a person and the heart of a nation.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:16:13 I can't say enough about the work of our Rapid Response Team at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Our chaplains are precious people who represent the peace of Jesus in these most horrific times. And maybe you or maybe you and your spouse are in a stage of your life where you might have a little more free time, and maybe you're interested in seeing how you could be a part of our chaplain, um, and our Rapid Response Team. Or maybe you just want to see more of their stories and how they're serving. I'll put a link to that in my show notes. But I want to say thank you for joining me on another episode of Fearless. If you need to get caught up on more episodes or ones you've missed, I want to encourage you to check out my website cissicgrahamlynch.com. You can also follow me on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Once again, thank you for joining me on today's episode helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

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