

Fearless, Episode 75 - Father's Day 2022

Cissie Graham Lynch:

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 Fearless. And this next week is Father's Day. I'm actually here at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in studio this week. And as I pulled up into the property here in Charlotte, North Carolina, it's almost every time I drive in, I start to cry um... just of God's goodness, of His faithfulness to my grandfather's life and to my father's life. And I'm just grateful that I've had the opportunity to have a front row seat of how God has used men who've been obedient to their calling on their life and how God has used them in a mighty way but men with a heart to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 'Cause it's the only hope that we have in this dark world, this sinful world that we face. And all these news events that we um... turn on the news every morning and that we see and it can be so daunting to think how can we face each day. But I had a grandfather and a father and a brother who their hope is in Jesus and they want the world to know that message. So, I love being here at the office. It's always fun to be with this team and wonderful group of men and women and starting off our day together. But for Father's Day, I wanted to do something a little different. I wanted to read some poetry for you. And you'll have to bear with me 'cause reading poetry can always uh... sound maybe sometimes awkward when you read it out loud than it does when you read it silent. But if you've followed me for quite some time, you know that I've mentioned I love reading my grandmother's poetry. I didn't used to read it when I was younger. But since she passed away many years ago, I've learned a lot of maybe what she would tell me if I was sitting next to her. Whether if I was sitting next to her bed or her chair of what she would teach me or if she would talk to me about being a wife, about being a mother, or just depending on the Lord in those darkest moments when you're asking "Why this?" And so I've learned a lot through her poetry but this one's a little fun. She wrote it... so in honor of Father's Day, she wrote this um... poem after my brother Will was born. And she wrote it from the prospective of my brother, Will, towards my dad. And if anybody who knows my dad's story, he was the prodigal son. He was the wild child, and she addresses that and this is kind of a fun poem but it says:

God, look who my Daddy is!
He is the one
who wore his guardian angel out
(he thought it fun).
First, it was bikes:
he tore around those hills
like something wild,
breaking his bones
in one of many spills;
next, it was cars:
how fast he drove (though well)

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only patrolmen
and his guardian angel knew;
the first complained,
the second never tells.
Then it was planes:
that was the closest we
ever got – till now.
I never knew him well
except that he
kept that angelic guardian
on his toes.

Not long ago
You touched him,
and he turned.
Oh, Lord, what grace!
(and how quizzical the look
upon his angel's face:
a sort of skidding-to-a-stop
to change his pace.)

And now, he just had me:
which only shows
who needs a little angel of his own
to keep him on his toes.
Oh, humorous vengeance!
Recompense – with fun!
I'll keep him busy, Lord.
Well done! Well done!

And I love this poem. My grandmother always had a sense of humor and I love this about my dad. Of course, when I think of my dad, I always thought he was the coolest dad. He had the leather coats, um... cowboy boots, rode the motorcycles, as she mentions. He always liked the fast cars and I just thought he was cool. He was my protector. There was nothing he could not do and um... she talks about the patrolmen. There was a funny story, that my dad did slam a patrolman's car in their gate going into their house one time. So that was always a fun story. But she wrote it from my brother's point of view as a little boy.

But God knew. God always had a plan for my dad's life. And my dad has shared this story, and I think he shared this on Fearless before, if I remember correctly. But he talked about there was a time that it was just he and my grandfather and I believe they were in Switzerland. And my grandfather had just done speaking and it was my dad's birthday and they went for a walk. And they were just talking and my grandfather started um... asking what he was gonna do with his life. And that just shared that, you know, that he and my grandmother were worried about my father's soul and where he was

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gonna spend eternity. And it really challenged my dad that he was gonna have to make a decision to choose the Lord or to reject Him and that they were worried. And how thankful I am that after that, my dad was in Israel working and he surrendered his life to Christ on the Mount of Olives. One night got on his knees in the hotel up there and surrendered his life. And how at that moment God changed the course of my father's life—changed the course of my life. He went home, um... eventually married my mom. A few months later, my grandmother led my mom to Christ. And that legacy that they have left behind. And when we look at legacy and an importance of legacy in today's time, how thankful I am that I've had a grandfather and a father... You know, actually I have two grandfathers. People forget when you have a famous grandfather that the world knows, they forget that you have another grandfather over here that only his small town knew. But I had two wonderful grandfathers to this day who I continue to learn from. But as a teenager, I really struggled with my relationship with my father. I struggled with his absence. He was gone a lot. He traveled um... a lot and he would come home and, you know, things would change. He would give new rules when he would come home from long trips. And I always wondered, you know, "God, why do You take my father away from me?" I had um... some of my best friends' fathers teach me how to dribble a basketball. Another one taught me how to ride a bike. And I had a hard time that that wasn't my dad teaching me those things. And it was on a trip when I was 18 or 19 years old, it was after my freshman year in college, and I had started struggling in college with some other issues. And my dad took me on a trip around the world, and we got to see various projects. He had Billy Graham Evangelistic Association projects going on. We stopped to see Samaritan's Purse projects around the world. And I remember in this moment, it was the first time that I was so grateful for who my father was because I got to see this man who was obedient to God's calling on his life. Who no matter the cost, was not afraid of what cost him. That he would go boldly in the Name of Jesus to serve those. Especially I grew up kind of um... under the umbrella of Samaritan's Purse um... 'cause my dad didn't come and take over the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association 'til I was older when my grandfather couldn't do the day-to-day activities. And so I looked at that and I saw the 'spanse of like Samaritan's Purse and how God had used that in a mighty way and I thought, "The only reason that it has grown to ways that my father could never imagine the early years is because my father never compromised the Gospel of Jesus Christ." That I was thankful for a dad who was unashamed of the Gospel and took that news all around the world to help those who are sick, to help those who've um... their homes had been flooded. 'Cause the greatest thing you could do with those people is to share the hope of Jesus Christ. And so, I learned all that um... from my dad. And as I've looked as I've gotten older and the things that I've learned from my grandfather and both of my grandfathers. And as we're talking about Father's Day, there's a season in a father's life um... when he leads his children when they're younger and you're in that developmental stage and He leads His children. Then comes a season when his children are grown and the father begins to see them lead others. And, ultimately, when a father's gathered to his eternal home when he's no longer here on earth and he's no longer cutting the way for his children and cutting that trail and that path, when his assignment to his children on earth is done. But it's that voice, those teachings that he did in leading them along the way that is left behind and is that echo that a father leaves behind. And in a Bible verse, Isaiah 30:21 it

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says, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.' Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to left." And I love that verse. It says, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'" This Father's Day maybe your father's already passed, maybe he's um... in heaven or no longer here with you but they're still guiding you. You hear that echo behind you telling you to the left or to the right. That the Lord uses that voice through your parents or your grandparents or other men in your life that have been like a father figure to you. It's that echo and that is my um... my heart for Father's Day. You know, of course I'm not a father and I look at it more as parents, as a mother and as a father that as we are instilling that into our children now for that legacy of generations to come. Because it's not just here for our children, but its generational that they would hear that echo of what we have instilled with them, those Godly principles, those Godly foundations, those biblical foundations, that biblical world view that will guide them along the way. I was thinking just a few things of Father's Day. This is more of parental, because I'm speaking of things maybe my husband and I have been discussing as parents, things that we've wanted to do for our own children and just the different roles. And I'll share some of that of what we have struggled with and how we're kinda navigating the ways as we're learning. We're trying to navigate in this stage. I feel like from zero to five, maybe we kind of like knocked it out of the park. Those are the easy stages, I think. I don't think those were the difficult stages 'cause that was the "yes," "no," teach 'em to be obedient, um... you're protecting them; you're keeping them safe. It's this... as my daughter is getting older and asking these really tough questions, I mean, she's already starting to ask some really tough biblical questions. And then you're starting to deal with the cultural and those issues that I've shared on a previous episode recently of some of the tough questions she's asking from school.

But going back and looking at some of the roles of a father. And, once again, it could be father or mother, depending on the Bible verse. But Deuteronomy 6:6 through 9, it says, "These commandments that I give to you today are to be on your hearts, to impress them on your children, to talk about them when you sit at your home and when you walk along the road, and when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads and write them on the doorframes of your homes and on your gates." And this is one that's been pretty important in our lives is that dads, you are to spend time with your children. And that's not empty time. We're to be intentional with that time. You know, I think something we were just discussing in my own home is that we're living in nine hundred square feet. I don't know if I've mentioned that in the last year on. My family's living in nine hundred square feet and so it's quite cozy so we're always together. But just because um... we're present and our presence is there, it doesn't mean we're present with our children. And that's hard in this stage of life because work is always on our phone. The emails are always there. They're coming in at all hours of the night where it used to be the generation before us, when they left work, work was at work and they came home and they were home and there were no distractions. And we have so many distractions pulling us in different directions, from social media to TV to Netflix, to all these movies that are at our fingertips now. We didn't even have movies at our fingertips when I was growing up. You either had to watch it, if you missed that first ten minutes, you've missed them and you're not gonna catch back

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up. So we have everything on demand. But um... I was challenging my husband with that. You know, he was doing work. He's gotta do what he has to do. But he's on his phone constantly checking. And my husband researches all the time so I call him "YouTube certified" on everything. So, he's constantly on YouTube learning to do stuff for around the house or something. But still, our children always see our faces on the phone and for us to be very careful and to navigate that right. So I would encourage you to set up boundaries, realistic boundaries, 'cause it is the life we live in. So for your family, set up those boundaries. But, of course, the father is to provide for your family, according to 1 Timothy 5:8. It says, "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." And that's a pretty strong verse so, father, you're to be a provider of the family. Proverbs 13:24, "good dads discipline their children." I won't go into discipline now. I am no expert on that. But one thing I would encourage is, let your "yes" be "yes," your "no" be "no." Especially in the stage that I am with young children. As a father, my husband is very good if I say something and my children are disobedient in that, he backs up my word. And that to be obedient, to be obedient the first time. And we've been trying to teach my kids why now they have to be obedient. And it's really to set their heart that they would be obedient to a Heavenly Father one day when God calls them to do something. You know, God calls us to do it now. He doesn't call us to do it in three seconds. He calls us to be obedient then and now. So ... that begins to prepare their hearts.

Another one is compassion is a dad's characteristic, according to Psalm 103. And when I think about a father being compassionate, my husband has really stepped up that game lately of really being there. I might be on the tougher scale these days and he's been the balance of the compassion. When I think of the word "compassion," I think of my grandfather. It didn't matter how his children failed or his grandchildren failed. My grandparents never acted like they were embarrassed. "I'm Billy Graham, how could my children or my grandchildren act like that?" They were compassionate in those moments of failure.

And I always think of those moments when my grandparents showed those examples of compassion. If you happened to watch my grandfather's funeral um... here in Charlotte, North Carolina, my Aunt Ruth shared an incredible story of my grandfather's compassion.

Ruth Graham:

00:15:34 After twenty-one years my marriage ended in divorce. I was devastated. I floundered. I did a lot wrong. The rug was pulled out from under me. My family thought it would be a good idea for me to move away, to get a fresh start somewhere else. And so I decided to live near my older sister and her family and near a good church. The pastor of that church introduced me to a handsome widower, and we began to date fast and furiously. My children didn't like him, but I thought, you know, they were almost grown. They didn't know...they couldn't tell me what to do. I knew what was best for my life. My mother called me from Seattle. My father called me from Tokyo. They said, "Honey, why don't you slow down. Let us wait to get to know this man." They had never been a single

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parent. They had never been divorced. What did they know? So, being stubborn, willful, and sinful I married a man...this man on New Year's Eve, and within twenty-four hours I knew I'd made a terrible mistake. After five weeks I fled. I was afraid of him. What was I going to do? I wanted to go talk to my mother and my father. It was a two-day drive. Questions swirled in my mind. What was I going to say to daddy? What was I going to say to mother? What was I going to say to my children? I'd been such a failure. What were they going to say to me? "We're tired of fooling with you." "We told you not to do it." "You've embarrassed us." Let me tell you. You women will understand. You don't want to embarrass your father. You really don't want to embarrass Billy Graham. And many of you know that we live on the side of a mountain, and as I wound myself up the mountain I rounded the last bend in my father's driveway, and my father was standing there waiting for me.

As I got out of the car he wrapped his arms around me, and he said, "Welcome home." There was no shame. There was no blame. There was no condemnation, just unconditional love, and you know, my father was not God, but he showed me what God was like that day. When we come to God with our sin, our brokenness, our failure, our pain and our hurt God says, "Welcome home," and that invitation is open for you. Thank you and God bless you.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:18:29 My father has shown me that compassion in his service in both ministries at Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. When we go to serve people, we're there to show them mercy and compassion and that's how a Heavenly Father sees us as well.

Another one is, dads, you're never to give up on your children and, of course, I think of um... Luke 15 and the story of the prodigal child. Of course, everybody knows the story of my dad being a prodigal son. But when that son comes home and, once again that father wraps his arms around his child, he never gave up on his child coming home. We, as parents, we are to be a doer of God's Word according to James 1:22. And dads, of course, we are to pray for our children. In 1 Chronicles 29:19, we see David's prayer for his son Solomon in that transition time and his deep heart to pray for his son. So, of course, we are to be praying for our children. And I think that is um... so important and especially in today's time. You know, I've been convicted over the last few months of praying for my husband in that role of a father in a way that I can't be there for my children, but my husband can. That God would impress on his heart how to father; not how I think my husband should parent but how God would lead him to parent. In these days that we're following with this culture being so aggressive to the family role, to the role of a father. And we see what's happening in our culture with the absence of fathers and the breaking down of the family and its heartbreaking. So I encourage you as a family to be intentional, to seek God, to walk with God, to pray for God's wisdom because this is the hardest job as parents we will ever have. And that is our greatest responsibility, according to Deuteronomy that is the spiritual impact that we will have on our children; the legacy that we will leave to them, because it's not just to our children but its generational. So I would encourage you this Father's Day to pray to the Lord that

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He would give you wisdom of how to impact your children to leave a Godly legacy in their lives.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:20:52 It's easy to celebrate Father's Day, give a quick card, a present or maybe a call or a text. But I wanna encourage you to take maybe an extra step to call your father or your grandfather or maybe somebody in your life that's been a father figure. I'm thankful that I've had a father and a grandfather, but I've had many men in my life who have been a father figure that have helped me in ways that my dad didn't or that my grandfather didn't, that they stepped into that role as well. So, I wanna encourage you to call them up, to be intentional with that message. Take this day. We know life is short. Something could happen so quickly. Don't waste the time. Take the time to thank them for being a father who is compassionate, for being intentional, to be present. Thank them for being a father who was in God's Word, who walked with God. Be specific with what you're thankful for this Father's Day and not let this day pass by without telling them how you truly feel.

Thank you for joining me on another episode of Fearless. I encourage you, there's other episodes with my dad. If you've happened to miss those times I've interviewed him, things I share about him and um... our relationship, you can check out those episodes on cissiegrahamlynch.com. I always encourage you to follow me on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

CLOSING MUSIC

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