

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Fearless - Episode 77 - Feeling Inadequate for the Task? The Fix is 'Simple.'

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 We all have times that we feel inadequate for what God has called us to do. I was recently reminded of a story where my grandfather felt inadequate and unprepared for a mission that God had called him for. And how this story recently helped me prepare for an event.

00:00:16 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to Fearless, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:39 Welcome back to another episode of Fearless. It's hard to believe that summer is here and I am so thrilled. My kids are out of school. And I don't like schedules. So, I'm always excited when they're out of school. But it has been a really busy... Uh, traveling, um, a few speaking engagements. But one of those trips was I had to speak an Apologetics conference, um, at Southern Evangelical Seminary. And um, to be honest, I wasn't their first choice to speak at this conference. Uh, my brother Edward was supposed to speak there. But something came up in his schedule where he couldn't make it. And he asked if I would step in. And I would do anything to help my brother. So, I said, "Of course. I'll do it." A little hesitant because an Apologetics conference at a seminary. I have, um, I'm not a theologian. I have no seminary degree. I'm not an apologist. This was quite the intellectual group I would be speaking at. I just thought, "What in the world would I say to these brilliant people who are attending this conference?" And many of the people I would be sharing the stage with were guests that we've had here. J. Warner Wallace and Alisa Childers. John Cooper, I believe was there and other just some like really great apologists of today's time. And I just started thinking like – a little bit panicked and had to think, "What in the world will I talk to them about?" And their theme was *Remaining Steadfast in an Upside-Down World*. And to me, of course, if you've been here on Fearless before, that's the whole point of Fearless is having this fearless faith in this compromising culture.

So, this was something that was close to my heart. But I was wondering how in the world could I cram in just a couple of weeks to make myself, uh, sound more sophisticated for an intellectual crowd. But, you know, this was a subject that was close. And I – there was a bit of excitement. Um, because I am thankful that there's people in the church, that this seminary, that they're courageous and have felt compelled to sound the alarm. To challenge false and destructive ideas that have been ignited in culture, but they've crept into the church. And they continue to creep into the church. And the church, I think, in many ways was not prepared. But I'm grateful for Christians that are starting to – to rise up, to challenge these ideas, to challenge people with Scripture, and have a better knowledge of God's Word. So, I'm thankful for this seminary and having this conference to contend for truth. But as I was preparing for this conference, I was reminded of a story that my grandfather tells in his autobiography, *Just as I Am*. And it was when in 1955 they were in England, and he was invited to come to Cambridge University to speak. And it was the first time he'd accepted an

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Fearless - Episode 77 - Feeling Inadequate for the Task? The Fix is 'Simple.'

invitation to speak. I think it was about eight days, seven or eight days at the university. And he was invited to come, um, from a student group. And his invitation was quite controversial. And there was a lot of, um, pushback at his invitation to come ... even from clergymen. And the newspapers were printing things about him coming. And they called him a "fundamentalist." And I think their definition was quite different than what we use that word here in America. But it said, um, "Referring to England, mainly to someone who held to the essential tenants of the historic Christian faith as found in Scripture." And that was to be a fundamentalist. That he believed in those core historic beliefs, those foundation, um, historic beliefs of Christianity that have been proven over 2,000 years that we've talked about that here with Alisa Childers here, um, on Fearless before.

So, this was something my grandfather was having to deal with inside the church in England in 1955. And so, as the time was approaching in those next couple of days before he would go, you know, he was getting nervous. And he said, "I do not know that I have ever felt more inadequate and totally unprepared for a mission. As I think over the possibility for messages, I realize how shallow and weak my presentations are." And that's what my grandfather said. And he wrote to two of his friends his concerns because he was debating whether he should cancel and not go, um, not feeling adequate enough and the controversy that was coming around it. And one of his friends wrote him a letter. And ... in this letter, I just think the response is still true today all these years later. It said, um, as he was writing back to my grandfather after my grandfather's deep concern and worry, it said,

"I can well understand your feelings of apprehension about Cambridge. But, Billy, do not worry. God has opened up the way so wonderfully and has called you to it. And so, all will be well. Do not regard these men as intellectuals. Appeal to their conscience. They are sinners needing a Savior. Conviction of sin, not intellectual persuasion, is the need. So many preachers fail at this point when they speak to university men. So, Billy, keep to the wonderful, clear, simple message God has qualified you to preach."

Well, sadly, my grandfather didn't listen to his friend to keep the message simple. Because he said in spite of that, "I worked as diligently as I knew how to put the Gospel into an intellectual framework in eight messages." And he goes on to tell the story that of, um, he went on to meet C. S. Lewis there and how they talked, and over the controversy. And as the conference got started, um, one-fourth of the student body came and attended. But he said he was concerned because there seemed to be very little spiritual impact that he was having on the students. And once again, I'm going to read, and he says,

"Then, I got on my knees with a deep sense of failure, inadequacy, and helplessness. And I turned to God. My gift, such as it was, was not to present the intellectual side of the Gospel. I knew that. What those students needed was a clear understanding of the simple but profound truths of the Gospel: our separation from God because of our sin, Christ's provision of forgiveness, and new life and our hope because

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Fearless - Episode 77 - Feeling Inadequate for the Task? The Fix is 'Simple.'

of Him. So, finally, on Wednesday night, I threw away my prepared address and I preached the simple Gospel.”

And he goes on to share that once he got rid of trying to be so intellectual and trying to impress these people to make sure he did it right, but he did what God called him to do. So, in the middle of the week, he had to get on his knees, pray to God, and ask for God’s just wisdom. And God just made it clear that, “Billy, I’ve called you to preach the simple Gospel.” And after he gave that and he preached it, um, he said more than 400 Cambridge students stayed behind to make their commitments for Christ.

I’ve talked about that on previous episodes before that one of the greatest things that my dad and my grandfather have ever taught me – that the Gospel is simple. That we’re to teach the simple Gospel. Often here recently in the last few months, we’ve talked a lot about apologist or apologetics that we can dig deeper. We can have a better understanding, which I do think those are wonderful tools that we need. But we can often get caught up, um, a lot in the theology and debate over theology. And apologists can get so deep a lot into their intellectuals that they forget the Gospel is what changes the heart of people. And I want to encourage you that, that yes, we need to have a better understanding of the knowledge of truth, and the knowledge of Scripture. But in our day to day lives to remember that the Gospel is simple. And that we are called to share that. The greatest love to those that are around us. And I’m so thankful that I’ve had a front row seat to that to see my grandfather and my dad preach that simple Gospel. And how he had to be reminded of that when he got on his knees to pray as he was trying to appeal to this, you know, this crowd of people, some of the smartest in England there. But he had to remind what God had called him to do. And that was to teach the Gospel. The simple truths of what can save someone.

So, as I was preparing for this conference, um, and remembering the story of my grandfather and that he had faced what we’re kind of facing today inside the church. That even the clergymen came after his core beliefs and the Scriptures that. you know, Jesus wasn’t the only way to heaven. That, you know, maybe He wasn’t, um, born of a virgin birth. These historic beliefs that those are being challenged in the church then, and those are challenges we’re still seeing in the church. And thankful for conferences like this apologetics conference I was speaking at to teach people those core beliefs, to know what they believe, and why they believe stronger, to sound the alarm, to have people, um, talking about these in their churches, in their communities, in their Bible studies. So, that I was thankful for because I saw the parallel that this was nothing new. This has happened since the early church. And that we’re still fighting, you know, Satan’s schemes and his division of the church. But I realize in that too, that I didn’t have to be some intellectual to speak. That’s not what God had called me to do. God hasn’t called me to be an apologist. Although, I study it more and try to have a better understanding. That’s not what He’s called me here to do at *Fearless*. I think if you’ve followed me long enough, you would know that. That, um, that I’m no theologian here, but I speak from my experience. I speak from my heart of what God’s laid on my heart as a concerned woman, as a concerned mom, as a concerned Christian. But I realized in that moment that the world needs truth. And, of course, we’ve talked about that here,

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Fearless - Episode 77 - Feeling Inadequate for the Task? The Fix is 'Simple.'

but including the church. That the church needs truth. Just as that story with my grandfather, those in front of him, many of them needed to hear the Gospel. And that's what his friend had said. And I want to read part of what his friends said. "Do not regard these men as intellectuals. Appeal to their conscience. That they are sinners needing a Savior. Conviction of sin not intellectual persuasion is the need."

And, um, I think so many times "sin," that word, can be offensive to people. So, we don't want to address it. Uh, people don't want to address it; pastors don't want to always address it from the pulpit because they don't want to be offensive. Because, ugh, who wants to talk about sin? Who wants to talk about the conviction of sin? But I realized as I was preparing that even the church needed truth. And we read in 2 Kings 22 that the Word of God was lost in the house of God. And it was under King Josiah who reigned over Judah. And, the Bible says that he did what was right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father, David. And he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. And what had happened was, he had sent his scribe up to the temple. And the high priest up there had just found the book of the law. Maybe it had been hidden for safe keeping. Maybe it had been lost. We don't know. Scholars will debate about that. But when it was read to King Josiah, he tore his clothes. When he had heard the Word of God. And this was a King that tore down all the other altars to the false gods to turn his nation back to the true God. Because see, when you hear the Word of God, it changes people. The truth changes people. It made this reaction, that he would tear his clothes when he heard God's Word. And God's Word had been there the whole time, but it was hidden even in the house of the Lord. And we see that today as God's Word is hidden even inside of the churches today. That they're not teaching it. They're not preaching it. Um, I recently went to a church just to visit and I walked in. And I realized as the pastor was teaching that he never referred to people to open up their Bible. And as we were leaving, I realized I could only count I think less than five people actually had the Bible in their hand. And to me, that was concerning because I want people to open up God's Word. I want them to know it. But we see that pastors now are teaching sometimes even more self-help books. I know of pastors that have taught from books instead of the Bible. They're teaching more of their opinions, more of their feelings, more of these kind of "self-help" kind of – I would call them lectures instead of teachings. And so, I believe that that is one of the greatest concerns that we have. And for us to be able to contend for faith. For us to be able to stand for truth, we're going to have to know it. But we're also going to have to teach it. We're going to have to preach it, because that's what God has called us to do. It's the truth that will rescue people. It's the truth that will pull our friends or our family members out of the darkest pits of their life. It's what will save them. It's the Gospel that changes people. And it's like my grandfather said that when he was trying to be fancy with his words and to be an intellectual, and there is a time and place for that. And there is times where some people are called to that. But he had to be reminded that he was called to teach the Gospel and to keep it simple. I think so many times we can complicate it, especially if we have a moment where maybe we know God's opened up the door for us to share the Gospel, um, and the love of Jesus with a family member or with a friend or maybe it's just somebody that we met just randomly at a coffee shop. And we just kind of know, and we get a little bit nervous. And we're like, "Ugh. Maybe we shouldn't. We don't want

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Fearless - Episode 77 - Feeling Inadequate for the Task? The Fix is 'Simple.'

to offend them. We don't want to make them feel uncomfortable. We should just love on them first." Well, if God has presented the opportunity to share the Gospel and has prompted your heart, I would encourage you to be obedient to that. Yes, we are to love them, but loving is also sharing the Gospel if God's given us that opportunity. And so, sometimes we can get so nervous that we can complicate it and we can kind of our words get jumbled. I've been – I'm guilty of that. I know I've walked away sometimes and I'm like, "I just jumbled that and made it so complicated."

But I do believe, um, when we're not ashamed of the Gospel, for we know that's the power of salvation. That God just commands us to be obedient in that. And when we share the Gospel, that the Holy Spirit will take care of the rest. Maybe the Holy Spirit interprets that in the most beautiful way in that person's heart or into that person's ears and mind. But He calls us to be obedient in that. So, in telling you these two stories of people feeling inadequate, myself and my grandfather going to speak at these very intellectual events ... I've told you those because I'm sure there are times that you have felt inadequate. And I want you to remember that God has placed each of us here in this chaotic time that we're facing in our world, in our culture, and the deceit and the confusion. That he has called you for this time for a purpose. And that's to contend for the faith. And we're to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we're to make disciples. Because it's the truth that's going to change people. And even in the midst of all the confusion and the deceit in this world, every time we turn on the news, we might panic to see what's happening in our court systems, what's happening to our schools and entertainment. We could panic. None of this is new to God. He is at work. And we have an opportunity to be a light in an increasingly dark world. Because after all, it's in the darkest of nights that the light shines the brightest.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:17:26 Once again, thank you for joining me on another episode of Fearless. I want to encourage you if you need to get caught up on any episodes that you might have missed you can check them out on CissieGrahamLynch.com. I also encourage you to follow me on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Thank you for being a part of the Fearless family always helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

CLOSING MUSIC

###