

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Fearless – Episode 82 – Summer Has Ended--A Fresh Focus and a Brand New
Fall Series

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 Traveling from Alaska to London this summer, God taught me one thing and made it so clear. That I am to keep my eyes focused on the cross.

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

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:32 Welcome back to all new *Fearless* episodes. I'm back from the summer. I hope you enjoyed the summer encore series. Um, my kids and I had a great summer. Before the summer, we spend our summers in Alaska with Operation Heal Our Patriots and Samaritan's Purse. But unfortunately, summer comes to an end. September is here. We're all back to reality of school schedules. And I don't about y'all but I'm just not a fan of school schedules. I don't like my kids going back to school. I love having my kids home for the summer. Um, and we're here. My daughter's in third grade this year. And it is intense. Just this week, I'm back here in the office in Charlotte. I live in Florida. And she's got five tests while I'm gone. And 24 spelling words and vocabulary. So, it is a hard work, but we're back into it. And we had a great summer. And I just wanted to share a little bit about my summer and what God laid on my heart as I was serving with Samaritan's Purse. I went to London with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association with my dad. And just kind of this theme that was God was laying on my heart.

Um, it was a challenging summer. And one of the challenges we did was one with my kids. We did a 100 mile hiking challenge. And that was tough. I know if you follow me on Instagram, you saw it. You kind of followed along. I challenged my kids. If they can hike 100 miles before school started, they could get \$100. And it wasn't, hey, if you got 79 miles, you're going to get \$79. No, you had to get the whole thing. So, at first, they were all on board. And it seemed like a lot of fun on our social media. And one day, I posted like this has been hard. It was challenging, but I'm thankful for those moments that God gave me with my kids. We had some – although they're only six and eight – we had some life lessons that we talked about of, um, perseverance and ... working hard for a goal. And there's days we don't feel like it. There are days that are just difficult in our faith and that we have to keep pushing through and working for that goal and keeping our eyes focused on what that goal was. Uh, I think some days that went in and out of my six-year-old, but they both made it. My six year old, he made it two days before school started, but he got his 100 miles. But we spend our summers in Alaska for the last six years and my husband got out of the NFL. Uh, it was an injury that ended his career. And my dad offered us the opportunity kind of like when we were trying to figure out what to do with our lives of going to serve. And I've always found the greatest healing in serving. I've talked about that a little bit on the episode when I talked about addiction in my life and how I found healing in that through serving others. And so, we worked at Samaritan's Purse. Um, they have a project called Operation Heal Our Patriots with wounded veterans and their spouses. Because when these military

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couples come up, they are truly broken. Um, many of them come up with the divorce papers on their table, and they come up as a last resort.

And we see God change that heart. And I'm humbled that I get a front row seat of seeing that. And our staff loving on them and serving them. And God changing their hearts throughout the week. But there was one couple up there that just sticks out in my mind. And ... it was a couple that they hadn't lived together in months. They'd been separated, not even living under the same roof. And that Friday, they had given their lives to Christ. They had both gotten baptized that Friday before they were leaving. And he said when we go home on Sunday night, our whole family will be sleeping under the same roof. And I'm going to be striving to be a father that sets a Godly example for my children. And I remember one Friday a baptism, a girl came out of the water. And her arms were just straight up into the air praising the Lord. And ... I just thought in that moment ... that no matter who the audience is, if it's an audience of one, if it's an individual couple ... or if it's an audience of a thousand, I'm so thankful I've had a father and a grandfather who set that example of keeping their eyes focused on the cross. Saving the heart and soul of somebody that's lost, that is broken, that is hurt. And the whole purpose that we do here at Samaritan's Purse or the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is for those to know that God loves them. He hasn't forsaken them. He's got a plan. And what He did on the cross for them. Um, another project we have at Samaritan's Purse ... I mean, let me start again. Another project we have at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Alaska is for our law enforcement. This is a new project that we've done the last two years. But this one, law enforcement couples come up, and they get the same treatment as we have done for our wounded veterans. But we saw 16 couples come up. All 16 couples rededicated their marriages in these law enforcement retreats.

And J. Warner Wallace who's been a guest here on *Fearless* many times, um, he was the main chaplain, he and his wife for our law enforcement retreats for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. And then, my husband, if you follow me on Instagram, you're probably wondering where in the world is Corey Lynch. Samaritan's Purse builds churches in Alaska. They go out in the villages. These villages in Alaska, there's 250 of them. They are dark. They're like third world countries. You've got suicide, depression, alcohol, drugs. You know, most of the year can be dark even in the season. No sunlight. Most girls are sexually abused by the age of 15 a lot of times by a family member. So, Samaritan's Purse partners with a church that's in these villages. We go in, and we build a church that is a safe place that's warm, that's efficient. And Corey is the director of that. So, we've only seen him a couple of times this summer. He doesn't come home until October. So, it's been a little crazy house in my home. But I wanted to set that stage of all these projects that we're doing in Alaska, around the world, with both organizations. And then, one thing this summer is we went to London with my dad. My daughter Margaret and I got to go. And the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, my dad, were doing a tour, God Loves You tour, in the UK. And it was supposed to be in 2020. And of course, the pandemic happened. But for many of those that don't know, the BGEA has been in legal battle in London to share the Gospel. We had, um, different

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venues in early 2020, there were eight venues that had planned to host my dad's events. And all of them had pulled out of their contracts. Um, seven of them were under contract. One was not; one was pending. And they all pulled out of their contracts because of the pressure that they were feeling from LGBT community. And so, we had to go to legal battle. Um, some of them were settled outside of court.

And they were settled favorably. Some went to court. We have had victory in one. Some are still pending. We're waiting to hear the outcome, but they look very favorably. And it has been ... a huge battle for our staff. I mean, they've had to be in the trenches. They have been persecuted. They have been, um, fighting for religious freedom there in the United Kingdom and taking a stand. 'Cause these communities had come after dad saying it was hate speech. And the pressures that these venues felt and they caved to that pressure. And never in the history of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association have we ever been, um, after an event has gone that we're accused of being hateful. They might not agree with dad's stance on marriage and sexuality, but ... these communities are so aggressive. And they do not stop. They go after the vendors. We've been in cases where they are, um, banners were taken off buses. And so, there's such a need to take a stand. And unfortunately, so many smaller organizations don't have the resources or the ability to fight these cases in court. So also, our lawyer here at the office, he said, you know, I'm so thankful that I had this opportunity. I never thought my career would take me here. But he said in different stages in life when our career seem beyond our capability that God will give you the resources to do what He's called you to do. He will equip you for the call that He's called you to do.

And it reminds me of the song, um, I believe it's by Hillsong, "There's Another One in the Fire". And that we will go through the fire, but God goes with us. And He gives us grace under that pressure. He gives us grace under that fire. And the lawyer also told me, he goes I'm so thankful that I know that my client, his boss, my dad – he goes I know exactly where he stands. When this happens, he says, we are going to fight it. We are going to stand for truth. 'Cause the gospel always faces opposition. It doesn't matter where you go, it will bring opposition. It will bring spiritual warfare. And we're not to back down. We're to stand strong. We're to stand on His truth and preach the Good News. And I'm so thankful for a father who has that vision of not backing down. So, on this final night of the tour because of relocating on some of these venues and having to reschedule because they weren't in 2020. We couldn't get them all back-to-back. London was the final stop. And I'll never forget it. It was an emotional night. I don't think there was one member of our staff that was not crying because of how hard it was to get this one event to happen in London. What they had faced over the last couple of years. And we had Michael W. Smith and CeCe Winans. You can't get much better than that. It was a pure worship night. CeCe Winans singing "The Goodness of God". And everyone was crying. But at the invitation is something I'd never seen my dad and nobody at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has ever seen. When the invitation was given, Michael W. Smith was just playing instrumental. He was playing on the piano. No words were being sung. Those who had come forward in the audience – first, people fled forward to the invitation. There was one man that stuck out. He was a very

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tall younger man that even our staff had met at the hotel and invited him to come. And he had come, and he gave his life to Christ.

But when that invitation was given, the audience began to sing the words to the song. And everybody's eyes ... we had never seen that before. We had never heard that. So, when I look at that and the opposition that we faced in the U.K. and still facing. We're still waiting these outcomes of the courts. When I look at these projects, it might seem small to some people or it might seem large that I get to be a part of at Samaritan's Purse in the summer or traveling around the world with Operation Christmas Child or Internet Evangelism. There's one goal, and that is to share the Gospel. And with that, my dad and my grandfather have never taken their eyes off the cross. And I just remember that. We were sitting on the lake or by the lake and that day, Vice President Mike Pence had happened to be there. He came up to visit with our ... our soldiers, our veteran couples. And there was also another man, Coach Kennedy. Many of you might have heard of him in the news. He's the one that just won the Supreme Court case. Um, he came up just ... dad had offered him to come up for a week of just being kind of refreshed and renewed with his wife and to spend a week in Alaska after he's been battling court cases for the last couple of years. And it doesn't matter who my dad's ever been in front of. If it's an audience of one or a thousand, his eyes are on the cross. And when I look at that, my grandparents and my parents, they never said those words exactly to me. It's not like we sat down around the table and we said this is, you know, you've got to stand for the cross. You've got to keep your eyes focused. They lead it by example. I learned by watching them. I learned by watching them in these moments of, you know, with the organization being persecuted in the U.K.

I watch him stand unwavering. An unwavering focus of the cross. And um, the English preacher John Stott, he described the centrality of the cross. He says it was by His death that we wished above all else to be remembered. It is safe to say no Christianity without the cross. If the cross is not central to our religion, ours is not the religion of Jesus. And the Apostle Paul preached on the power and the pardon of the cross. Um, in 1 Corinthians, it says for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God and the power of the cross. And I think I see so many people whose eyes lose focus whether it's churches, whether it's Christian leaders, whether it's just believers. They've gotten caught up in life, or work, or business. Whatever it may be, and their eyes get taken off the cross. And my dad said one time is wherever I go to proclaim the Word of God, I preach the cross of the Lord, Jesus Christ, where His blood was shed for the forgiveness of my sins. You cannot preach the gospel without preaching the cross. It humbles men to know their sinful state and offers the only way to the Father. But why don't people preach on the cross? Because the cross is offensive. My grandfather spoke many messages of the offense of the cross. He spoke his very last message called "The Cross". And it's offensive because it makes people come face to face with their sins and what Jesus Christ did on that cross. And we don't want to be confronted of our sin. We don't want to hear that we're sinners and that we're wrong. And the cross is offensive

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because it directly confronts the evils which dominate this world as my grandfather said in his very last message.

Billy Graham (11-17-2013-The Cross):

00:14:11 I want to tell people about the meaning of the Cross. Not the Cross that hangs on a wall or around someone's neck... but the real cross of Christ. It's scarred and bloodstained. His was a rugged cross.

I know that many will react to this message, but it is the truth, and with all my heart I want to leave you with the truth. He loves you...willing to forgive you of all your sins. The Cross is offensive, because it confronts people. Even so, it's a confrontation that all of us must face.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:14:50 You know, earlier this year, I was at an event in DC at a March for Life. And I met this young man. Um, and he just kind of became this internet sensation in this past year. He's very popular on social media as a Conservative, as a Christian, and being outspoken. And he wanted to meet me. And I got to meet him. It was just a joy. He's got so much passion. But I encouraged him as he continues to grow in popularity and numbers and opportunities come his way, that he remembers his one purpose. And God will give you avenues. He will give you opportunities. But your purpose as a Christian is to always point people to Jesus and to the cross. And not to lose that focus as you get so popular and you want to gain influence and you want to gain popularity or you want to gain power in whatever community or setting that you are in. And we see it happen so often. When we have to live a life ... I shouldn't say when we have to. God calls us to live a life with our eyes focused on the cross. That takes a lifetime of keeping your eyes focused and a long obedience in the same direction. And that's the direction of where God has called you, and that's where your eyes focus on Him. So, this summer, God just really laying that on my heart is always keep our eyes focused on the cross. And unfortunately, we see Christian pastors who fall. We see Christian leaders who walk away from their faith or don't live a life separate of the world. Um, or just some of our own Christian friends who have walked away from their faith as they struggle with things in life. It's laid on my heart that the church is missing something. And I think that is a big part of it. We've taken our eyes off the cross. We've taken our eyes off of some of the big things that we should be talking about. And our eyes have been focused on these little things. So, it's lead me to this series that's coming up on *Fearless* on the next episode as we start. It's called "The Elephant in the Room". Subjects that we have missed talking about. And these are going to be some tough issues that we're going to tackle here. That's nothing new here to *Fearless*. We've talked about a lot of these issues here on *Fearless*. But I really want to focus on some of the things I think the church is missing. And I think it's caused division. It's caused hurt. It's caused brokenness. And we need to bring that focus back and address some of these. But have you ever wondered where the phrase " elephant in the room" came from?

A colleague at the office ... she looked it up for me. And it comes from a Russian fable writer, uh, Ivan Krylov, if I said that correctly. I'm not sure. I'm not Russian. I should

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have asked. I do have, um a Russian friend who works here at the office. But he introduces this character in his fable called “The Inquisitive Man”. And he goes to the museum. And he sees all these little things and all these little creatures as he goes to the museum, but he missed the central object in the room. And that was this elephant in the room. The largest object, and he missed it. And that’s how I feel, to me, is the church today. That we’ve gotten focused on all kinds of things, but we’re missing some huge issues. We’re ignoring them for many different reasons that we will address here. Um, we’re missing talking about it from the pulpit. We’re not taking public positions on them. We’re missing the responsibility to stand fearless and stand in truth and to stand on God’s Word. And these are elephants in the room that I think people don’t want to dabble around, but they have eternal significance. We’re going to be tackling things about like social drinking. We’re going to talk about that and seeing where the church is today when it comes to alcohol. We’re going to talk about has church become such a production that we’re missing what God has called us to do as a church because it’s become such a huge Sunday production. We’re going to talk about co-habitation. That’ll be a fun one as we talk about sex and co-habitation. So, these are going to be some fun things because I feel like the church hasn’t wanted to address them because we don’t want to offend. And as I said earlier, when we talk about the cross, when we talk about truth, it is offensive ... because we have to address that we are sinful. Our lives are to turn as a 180. We are to change our lives to live separate of the world.

So, are these controversial topics? Of course they are. But that’s nothing new to *Fearless*. And I’m excited for this new series. Maybe excitement is not the right word. There are going to be some tough ones that I’m truly praying about as I bring them to this platform, as we’re going to talk about them. But I hope all of it will be an encouragement to you. To stand fearless in your faith in this ever-compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:19:26 Thank you for joining me here on *Fearless*. As always, I encourage you to follow me on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Also, if you’ve missed any old episodes and would like to get caught up, you can check them out on CissieGrahamLynch.com.

CLOSING MUSIC

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