

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Audio Media Services
Fearless – Episode 90 – Christmas
Final Transcript

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 Well, many of you have been asking me on Instagram, what is the rest of the story? Because I posted two months ago when I announced my pregnancy that I had, yes, lost a bet in a bar and I don't even drink, and here I am nine months later with a baby. So you've been asking more of the details. In the words of Paul Harvey, here's the rest of the story.

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:24 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:44 Welcome back to another episode of *Fearless*. And it's hard to believe we're here in the Christmas week, celebrating Christmas, and I know so many of us are just in the middle of the craziness or the never ending to-do list that we all have in trying to check things off. And of course, for many of you that have followed me on social media and Instagram, you know that my husband Corey and I welcomed a little baby girl, I guess about three weeks ago. She's, um, gonna be three weeks old tomorrow.

And it's hard to believe how fast time goes. I always say these first couple weeks as a mom are kind of the best and the hardest and the worst weeks of your life all wrapped up in one. But it really is a sweet time and it's been a different kind of sweetness, I think, having a newborn during the Christmas season and during Advent. And, trying to make time to read my Advent devotional has been difficult, um, between everything of taking care of a newborn. So yeah, her name is Georgia Graham Lynch and we're just thankful to have her. But as many of you know, if you have followed me on social media, I haven't really talked much about it here on *Fearless* as we've been in the "Elephant in the Room" series this fall.

And I'm so thankful for everybody that has listened and been a part of the "Elephant in the Room" series and all those who have sent me encouragement. Those were difficult topics to talk about, topics that I think are needed. And I'm so grateful for all of you that have sent letters and emails and messages on social media. So I haven't talked much about my pregnancy here on *Fearless* and I was kind of late announcing it to the world on social media. Um, I was seven and a half, almost eight months pregnant, when I finally announced it. My father was giving me a hard time that I haven't announced it to the world. But the reason I took a long time to announce it was my pregnancy journey was very difficult. And, all three of my pregnancies that I've had have been difficult for me.

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And I shared a little bit on that on social media, but when I shared it, I said there was a story that I lost a bet in a bar. And yes, I don't even drink—if you listen to the recent podcast on *Fearless*—I don't even drink. And it was, uh, five, 5:00 p.m., five o'clock somewhere, and I made a bet in a bar cuz we were at a birthday party for a friend—axe throwing. We're the only people in the bar cuz nobody's in a bar at 5:00 p.m. And, the story behind it—if I take you kind of even farther back—my husband Corey has wanted a baby, a third one, for a long, long time. And I always thought I would have a huge, huge family. And he's been asking probably for four years. And I think life just got so busy as a working mom, my work makes me travel, and there were just so many other reasons that I thought maybe our family was complete at four.

And I really struggle in all my pregnancies, as I just said, with depression and with anxiety. Those pregnancies were very difficult and dark days for me that I never thought I wanted to go through it again. Um, instead of kind of like the postpartum we all hear about so much, I struggle with kind of the prepartum. I don't even think that's a word, but I, with my first pregnancy, I've shared here on *Fearless* before, I never even knew that. I just knew my personality changed and didn't wanna leave the house. I became kind of a hermit and hid away from the world. So I just always kind of had a fear of going back into that, knowing that that wasn't my personality.

And so my husband had been asking me for four years and we'd gone back and forth and this year being 36, I just knew that window was probably closing. Um, and we'd been praying and praying about it. So, you know what [laugh] I decided to take in my own hands about making a bet with my husband. And I had beaten him, um, just moments before in the axe-throwing competition, I beat him. And I was so proud of myself and feeling very full of myself that I thought I could beat him again. So I said, "Corey, if I win, you never ask me for a baby again. Like, the conversation is done, but if you win, we will try for one month." Well, I thought I was being kind of smart—it was very difficult for me to get pregnant with my first one, it took me almost a year.

So I thought one month was nothing. And, um, he beat me. So I said, "OK, double or nothing. Two months we try, or you never ask me again." Well, I lost again. So, um, I stopped right there and I, I kept my word to my husband and I just prayed that the Lord would close my womb, to be honest. And I say that and I know that so many might be listening that have struggled getting pregnant, and may be wondering why I would pray such a prayer. I know life is precious and I know life is a gift from the Lord. I'm very thankful for all my children. But, as I continue, you'll understand that we've just been in a crazy chapter in our lives. A lot of changes in our family's lives. We're living in 900 square feet, as many of you might already remember me talking about.

Um, we had sold our big family home. We're debating of where we're gonna live and what's next. And then just struggling, the fear of going through a pregnancy again and working mom, there's just a lot on my plate. So anyways, I prayed that the Lord would answer my prayers and not Corey's. And it's kind of like that country song where, um,

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we thank God for unanswered prayers cuz now I look back and I'm so grateful. But that was the reality that I was in. And well, I don't need to tell you what comes next. I think you'd probably know. So here we are nine months later with a baby and Corey [laugh], Corey won a bet. I lost the bet and I'm very thankful that I lost the bet, now looking back. But this journey's been difficult. And, there was one point this year, you know, that I kept it hidden.

It's very difficult for me to kind of share that news. Every time I would talk about it, I would cry. My little 9-year-old daughter would ask, "Mom, why is it every time you talk about the baby, you, you cry?" And um, that was a difficult moment because I hated that she saw her mom sad. And I hate the word "depressed" and "anxiety" cuz I think those are words that are overused in our society sometimes. And those aren't words that I would normally describe my own personality. And it's very difficult when I'm pregnant that I don't feel myself. So when you don't feel yourself and nobody can understand, um, what you go through, the darkness that you go through, it's very lonely. My husband didn't understand it, my family didn't understand it.

But you know Who does and Who walks through the darkness with us is God. And I had to surrender it every day to Him because it's not like I just woke up one day and it was okay, it was gone. I just, every day I had to surrender that feeling to Him when I would wake up in the morning. But there was one point this year that I was on the floor in my shower and I was crying uncontrollably. I was like in a fetal position and couldn't get myself up off the floor because I was just angry with God.

And I know that sounds so, so terrible to say to people. Um, but like I said, there's a lot of other life circumstances that are on my plate and that we're facing and making big decisions, and our year has been crazy. If you remember, Corey was gone for 4½ months working in Alaska. So we only saw him twice the whole summer. And then when he did come back, we were facing a hurricane where our whole town was wiped off the map. And, just so many other things. And I'm so thankful I do have a husband that is awesome and very patient with me, even those moments he might think I'm a little bit crazy with all the tears and the emotions he's had to deal with this year. But, um, I was just angry with Him in that moment of the feelings that I had.

I'd always prayed if I got pregnant again, that the Lord would help me enjoy it and know what a precious gift pregnancy was. He didn't answer that prayer either because I hated every moment of it [soft chuckle]. And you just feel guilty for hating such a wonderful gift of pregnancy and women's bodies of being able to give life and carry a baby for nine months. And so I, I would be angry with myself. I would be upset with God. I was upset with my husband. I was just kind of upset with the world and those were the feelings I couldn't control. And for people that have never struggled with anxiety, depression, it doesn't make sense to you. Because before I had my first child, I didn't understand those terms and nobody can walk it through with you. And so sometimes if you're listening to me, you might say, "Well, wow, she's just a hormonal pregnant woman."

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But it was really a darkness that overcame me in those nine months. And so, in that moment, you know—the irony of it all was not lost on me—because in that moment, God just like tapped on my heart while I was in the shower. And He just said, “Cissie.” He just reminded me of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who I've spoken on many times. Um, I've written about her, I have spoken about her, and just saying, “You've always challenged women during those unexpected moments in life, when your life is turned upside down, when your life is rocked in ways that you didn't expect it. You've always challenged women as Mary did, to say, ‘Lord, I am Your servant,’ to trust Him wholeheartedly.” And of course He's talking to me and He said, “You're to trust Me wholeheartedly, Cissie. Are you My servant? Are you gonna surrender and have a peace and,” you know, “commit this child to Me and know that I know what's best?”

And it was just like, kind of like rocked me in that moment. I kind of like sat up. I wiped away the tears. And I said, Lord, as Mary did, when, you know, fear struck her and the angel said, “Fear not.” And you know, I think of all those moments and those thoughts that might have rushed through her mind when the angel told her she was gonna have a child, God's child. And what Joseph would say, what was the world gonna say to her? What were her parents' reactions gonna be? Would Joseph leave her? Would she be, you know, stoned to death, kicked out of the family? All the fear that might have, um, flooded her heart and her soul, but her response was so beautiful.

Her response was so simple to God and she said, “I am the Lord's servant. Your will be done.” And He was basically asking me, “Are you My servant? You've said those words a thousand times, Cissie, are you My servant?” So I just said, “Lord, I'm Your servant. Your will be done.” And I can't say in that moment—you know, I was able to take a deep breath and wipe away the tears and trust the Lord—but that doesn't mean the daily challenges didn't go away. For nine months it was a darkness, even up to the moment I gave birth. You know, and going to the hospital, again, with a third baby, I'm crying saying, “Corey, I'm not ready for this.” And I'm so thankful the moment they put my children in my arms all the depression and anxiety goes away.

I just have that prepartum instead of the postpartum. But there's many times life is unexpected and we have an unexpected life path that takes a turn. And many of y'all might be thinking of that this Christmas, whether you've had a difficult year—maybe you've had a wonderful year and lots of praise reports—but maybe there's been loss of a family member, loss of a business—I know here in Fort Myers, Florida, where I am, we were just talking to some people down the street yesterday, and they're still just so heartbroken. They lost their home. They're devastated. Many of the people here in my town have lost their businesses. They've had to move away and get their children in a school somewhere else. So life just, it's difficult. And I know the season of Christmas can kind of heighten all those emotions and all those feelings, but the Christmas season for me this year has taken on a whole different meaning.

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I think having a child, as I said during Advent—um, my sister-in-law—I didn't think ahead and order an Advent on time. And so I didn't have a special reading, and my sister-in-law sent me the day after my, um, baby was born, a devotional, and it's called "The Weary World Rejoices." And just the title alone spoke to me because my heart is so weary. My soul is so weary this year of the tears, the emotions, the fear, the doubt, and then not feeling worthy. The guilt that struck me for having all those emotions, I'm just exhausted and I'm depleted a little bit. And so just the title itself, but that comes from, of course, the song, "O Holy Night." It says, A thrill of hope / The weary world rejoices / For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn! / Fall on your knees / Oh, hear the angel voices / Oh, night divine / Oh, night when Christ was born / Oh, night divine / Oh, night / Oh, night divine.

And then this devotional, I read Isaiah 58, it says, "*And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*" When I read that, that just spoke to my soul because I've been praying, "Lord strengthen my bones." And He doesn't always take us to the green pastures to do that. I think we pray that the Lord would take us to the green pastures. And He doesn't often. He takes us to the scorched places. He takes us to those difficult places. He takes us to the fire. But we also know in Isaiah it says the waters won't consume us and the flames won't set us ablaze, but the Lord walks through with us on that. And in that day of that Advent of reading Isaiah 58, it says, "*Perhaps the most significant surprise comes at the end of this passage: You shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.* And in our scorched places, we don't just survive, God makes us a spring that overflows."

And I think for that, I've been telling Corey this year is like, I'm not thriving. I'm just surviving. And I said, "Corey, I wanna thrive." I don't wanna be a mom to my other two of just survival mode every day, yelling at them, short tempers with them and, them seeing Mom crying all the time. It was just an awful place. I hated my kids to see that, that I didn't have the capacity to feel like, to take care of them and love them. But anyways, it says, "We don't just survive, but God makes us a spring that overflows. Not only are we refreshed, but He allows us opportunities to refresh others." And during the season of Advent, we have the opportunity to share the hope that's with us in the midst of our scorched places. He alone satisfies, strengthens, and refreshes us.

So even when we're not out of the scorched places, we can still point people to His hope—we, with our grace, with our hope in Him. And that's where I remember the doctor one time—and that's a whole 'nother story of during this difficult pregnancy, another unanswered prayer [laugh]—but I had to see like four different doctors on this journey. And one of the doctors asked, and I said, I do struggle with anxiety and depression in this. And she goes, well, how do you overcome that? And I said, "Honestly, I have to surrender it to God every morning"—and then like for me—physical fitness, activity, and stuff, getting out of the house is another way. And she goes, "Oh,

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so meditation." And I said, "Well, not quite." I don't call it meditation, you know, the world doesn't understand it. But it was like a constant surrender that even in those moments, I had the hope, I knew the right answers.

You know, I've grown up in ministry my whole life. I've walked this journey with other moms. I knew the right answers, but sometimes those right answers, just the answers themselves don't do it. And I've had to walk through this painful journey with God and He's gotten me there. And I do feel like in these last few weeks, even though I'm physically weak after having a baby, I feel like He has strengthened my bones. He has refreshed me even in this weary season of having a newborn.

And another verse that I've read during Advent was, um, Psalm 25. And it's, "*Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all of my sins.*" I think that was just like such a prayer of mine over and over this year is, "Lord, like I'm afflicted and I need Your ear to be inclined to me." And there were days I felt like His ear was not inclined to me, that He was silent. And I just remember my grandfather always saying in those moments where you feel like God is not near, He's often the closest. And I think this Christmas season, I do feel that now. I feel even in my affliction, He was the closest.

And I get angry with myself cuz I feel so silly. But, it's been a hard season and a time that I felt God was silent. Then I would ask Him like, "Lord, forgive me. Forgive me for all of my feelings and all of my sins." But it also says, "*Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.*" And I want that to be a reminder to people, when you're feeling that you're in a pit and you cannot get out, that sometimes it's just an act of obedience to feel that.

You're not always gonna feel the feelings. You're not always gonna feel the emotions of a spiritual high. But for me it was a commitment out of obedience to meet with Him, to talk with Him, to open up my Bible. I can be honest, there were days I did not feel like opening up my Bible, but it's out of obedience because when it's out of obedience, He will meet you. And it's not always in the morning. You're not always gonna flip to the right page and it's gonna speak to you, like sometimes you hear. There were days that I was like, OK, well I just read that and that didn't mean anything to me, Lord. And I would cry out like, "I need to hear from You." But I am now at the perfect timing of Advent. And my sister-in-law, when I was, um, in the hospital, you know, she had known just the pain I was walking through this year and she's been very gracious and encouraging me and walking with me, and she sent me the Christmas song, "Breath of Heaven," and the version of Amy Grant.

And we all know it, we've all heard it a hundred times, but to me it just took a whole different meaning. And I think that could be to any mother, to any parent, that God has

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given us children to raise in a world. And right now, we might have a lot of fear in the world that we're living in politically, economically, the things that we are facing every day when we look on the news, it can be a fearful time. Especially if you're raising children, you don't have to be raising children to live in a fearful time, but, that's another one for mine is like what kind of world are they gonna grow up in? I grew up in a wonderful world, but what are they gonna grow up in?

And the rumors of war and, you know, economies crashing, you know, whatever it could be in the future—will they lose their religious freedom here in our nation? All these doubts can rush a mother's mind, but in this song, "Breath of Heaven," it has taken on a whole new meaning. And I wish I could sing it for you. I wish I had the talent to sing it right here on the podcast for you, but I'll save you that. So I would encourage you, when we're done with the podcast, go and listen to Amy Grant's "Breath of Heaven." But it says, Holy Father / You have come and chosen me now to carry Your Son. Well, of course I'm not carrying His Son, but He's chosen me now to carry this baby. And, I am waiting in a silent prayer.

And that's been mine. I've had silent prayers. I couldn't tell the world my struggles. They've been silent. And so many times I would hide my tears. I remember my grandmother saying, "Sometimes we have to silently pray and silently cry." I don't need to take all my tears to my husband all the time. And I would just lie in bed and I would silently pray. And it says, I am frightened by the load I bear. And I was frightened. I'm frightened as a mom for my feelings. And you know, I was frightened that maybe those feelings wouldn't go away this time once I held my baby. What if they continued? But the song continues and says, In a world as cold as stone / Must I walk this path alone? And of course there are many times that I felt so alone, but we know the correct answer. And the song continues to say, Be with me now / Be with me now / Breath of Heaven / Hold me together / Breath of Heaven / Lighten my darkness / Pour over me Your holiness / For You are holy / Breath of Heaven / Help me be strong / Help me be strong / Help me be strong / Help me / Breath of Heaven / Hold me together / Lighten my darkness / Pour over me Your holiness / For You are holy / Breath of Heaven / Hold me together.

Maybe you need God to hold you together because the pieces seem to be falling apart. But that is our hope, that God sent His Son Jesus, the Light of the World, even in our darkness, that we can trust in that Light, that we know God can be trusted. Even in our darkest moments, in our struggles, God can be trusted. And that's what—I did know that the whole time, and I wanna be on in all of these feelings I've had, my doubt was never in God. And it's OK to be angry with Him. It's OK to take our feelings to Him. It's OK. But I want you to know never to doubt Him. And I never doubted God. I never doubted that He's gonna have a plan for this baby. And, no matter what you're facing this holiday season, I pray that if it's struggles or praise reports, I pray—maybe your prayer is—Lord, help me be strong and hold me together, and lighten my darkness for He is holy and we can trust in His holiness.

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MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:23:00 Once again, I wanna thank you for just listening to *Fearless* and making it a podcast that you've continued to come back to. I encourage you to subscribe to *Fearless*. You can go to my website, CissieGrahamLynch.com, and catch up on all the episodes that you might have missed, especially the "Elephant in the Room" series. I'm gonna be honest, I don't know exactly what date I'm gonna come back with *Fearless*, uh, in January, February. I might just enjoy sitting here holding my, my baby girl a little bit longer cuz I know once I start work, work will continue to be there. But if you subscribe, we'll keep you updated on when the next episode of *Fearless* will come. I wanna thank you all who have encouraged me, who have sent me notes. I have read them. I might not have been able to respond to all of 'em, but I'm so thankful that you've been a part of the *Fearless* family. I hope you and your loved ones have a very merry Christmas. Thank you for being part of the *Fearless* family, helping you have a fearless faith and a compromising culture.

CLOSING MUSIC

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