

**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Audio Media Services
Fearless – Ep 100 – A Strong Foundation
Final Transcript**

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 So, I'm here in a special place for the 100th episode of *Fearless*. I'm up here in Montreat, North Carolina, at my grandparents' home. You know, I thought of who I could bring, who could I ask that's been fearless in our culture, who would be a great guest? And as I was preparing, God just laid on my heart to bring you the only message that I knew, the message that He had been laying on my heart. The foundation that my family was built upon; how they built a home that would withstand the cultural wars that we're facing and the spiritual storms that will come. How do you have a home that will withstand the storm?

MUSIC STARTS

00:00:38 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:00:58 It is so hard to believe that we're here at the 100th episode of *Fearless* and when I've been thinking back about what I might have talked about in these hundred episodes, sometimes I'm like what in the world *did* we talk about? And we have battled some tough conversations. And I was beginning to prepare for this episode, my team just—we were throwing out some big names like who could we invite, who would be, you know, a star that could come, somebody that's been fearless in our culture and there was just no peace about any name that was thrown out at me.

And, I just kept reflecting back of this year, and I've been honest with all of you that this past year was difficult for me. There was a *really* hard time and a time of darkness for me as I struggled with depression and anxiety with my last pregnancy. And that I had some big life changes, that we had this hurricane that hit our home in Fort Myers, Florida. And I was preparing for this message of what would I want my message to be to each and every one of you? Because I value your time. I have a lot of people that submit requests to be on *Fearless*, but I value your time, and if their message is not *fully* aligned with mine here on *Fearless*, to have a fearless faith in a compromising culture, I don't wanna waste your time with that.

So I started thinking, what is it? And I wanted to share with you what I know to be true to me, as I've struggled over the years with my identity as a Graham, the difficulties of being a Graham. I have very strong and talented men in *my* family, but where do I find and what is my message to people? What do I find to be true? What has God taught *me* through *my* family?

And so I've decided that my 100th episode would be here at the home of my grandfather and grandmother, Ruth and Billy Graham. This was where they raised all their children.

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This is where so many of us grandchildren, we have many memories here. And it is a small home, a cabin in Montreat, North Carolina, nestled up on a mountaintop. And you have to take a long winding road that comes up to it. And this home is quite different now. All the furniture's been taken out, there's no pictures on the walls anymore. But there are some things that still remain. I think of the memories we have on their front porch and all the hospitality that was shared on that front porch with iced tea and apple pie. Even my parents, they were married on the front lawn overlooking the mountains of North Carolina here. It was in these rooms where my grandmother Ruth led my mom to Christ. This is the home where they raised their children, the home where they lived their lives. And ultimately where they went home to be with God was from this place. And it sits empty now, but when I come up to this house, every time, I think of the goodness of God and how all my life He has been faithful throughout, just like the song that many of us have had on repeat. But we can look back as a family and we see His hand through it all.

And this past year my home of Fort Myers, Florida, was hit with a massive hurricane. And the destruction was unbelievable; that you would go down the roads at the beaches and you would see houses that just had been destroyed, that the wind wiped through. Then there were some that you wouldn't even know that there was a home there, but you would see a few concrete blocks still remaining. Everybody's possessions were wiped out to sea. And there were even some homes that might have seemed solid on the outside, but the inside, the concrete that would've held them together was not there. And maybe they should have stood, but the true foundation wasn't there and they were wiped out to sea.

And while we live in a time when the moral and ethical standards are crumbling, the strong spiritual foundation in this home and my family was built upon still stands. And living today feels like we're in a cultural hurricane. We are battered by relentless evil forces threatening to wipe out the foundational truths of our faith in the nuclear family. The storms are raging and the demons have been turned loose. It feels like every demon has been let loose from the pit of hell. And we're fighting every spiritual battle. And the waves of evil disguised as 'tolerance' are crashing harder and faster than we can catch our breath, causing those who have grounded themselves in worldly things and those who are uncomfortable with rocking the cultural boat to be pulled out with the tide.

Whenever we have a forecast in Florida that there's a hurricane coming, there are always those who always assume it's not gonna hit. They don't prepare; they don't have a sense of urgency and they don't secure up their home. And it's like those in 1 Thessalonians 5 who says everything is peaceful and secure right before the destruction hits. And we cannot make the mistake of being complacent. We cannot rest. We always, as Christians, are called to be watchful. And I know it can be tiring. These battles we're facing can be exhausting. But we are always called to be watchful. And I pray that *my* family will stand firm when the strong winds of culture try to sweep us into

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the torrential path. And I'm here to sound the hurricane warning because I'm sad. I grieve as I continue to watch homes that once confessed to be built on God's truth being washed out into a sea of evil.

And it brings me back to this house, the center of so many memories for my family and so much learning. And I'm thankful for this legacy, the legacy that my grandparents gave to my parents, which they've given to my family. But this legacy isn't just for me. It's not just for the Grahams, it's a legacy and a lesson for us all. This house has stood through so many cultural wars and personal storms. And, how do we build a house?

How do we build a home and a family that will stand in the storms that we are gonna face in the future? First, we have to start with a foundation. Every strong home starts with a strong foundation. And in this home, that foundation was the love of God's Word. God's Word is all you need to live a life to the fullest. My Aunt Anne just shared an inscription that my grandmother wrote in her Bible when she was a young girl. And it said, "To Anne, we give you this Book, your one sure guide in an unsure world. Read it, study it, love it, live it. In it, you'll find a verse for every occasion and hide them in your heart." And that was my grandparents. In this home, they studied it, they loved it, they lived it. They hid God's Word in their hearts so that when those lies of Satan would come and in those storms, they could fight it with God's Word. When you build your house on God's Word, the floors will be level; they will be solid and secure. There is a consistent, constant assurance when we build our house on God's Word, no matter the storms we face.

Life in today's world can feel like a gigantic game of whack-a-mole. We deal with one issue and then rapidly another one pops up. And everything can seem to tilt if we don't make God's Word our solid foundation. It reminds me of the song that we all grew up singing in Sunday school, and the song that I teach my young children, based on Matthew 7, about the wise man built his house upon the rock so that the storms couldn't overtake it. And that came so true for those that live in Florida. And we watched this hurricane just wipe out a town. I was able to show my kids literally what Jesus means, that we have to build our homes on a solid foundation; that Jesus is our cornerstone and God's Word is our foundation.

My grandparents memorized and studied Scripture to their last days. I can remember going into my grandmother's bedroom, which is just right behind me, and those days that she was spending most of those days in bed, she had a table up over her bed and she had these three ring binders with Scripture printed in such large font. She was still studying and reading and memorizing. You would go into my grandfather's bathroom and he would have Scripture printed on his walls. His very last Scripture remembered, Galatians 6:14 was the last one he memorized and maybe 200 font so he could see it. That God's Word was so important to them. They *loved* His Word; they lived by it.

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And there are times in our lives that we can be honest that we don't feel like opening up God's Word. This past year was difficult for me. I felt like God was silent in the storm that I was facing. But it's in those times that we have to open up God's Word out of obedience. We do it because He told us to, that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us—and we do it to keep our foundation level, so we know that in the darkest days, we know His Word will be our sure guide in an unsure world.

And the precepts that I have learned from my family and live in the walls of this house, those have been the foundation that this podcast has been built upon. And I think often, sitting in this house, if the walls could talk, what would they say? What are the stories that they would tell? What did they learn by watching? There would be some good stories. There would be some difficult stories, some sad ones. There'd be some funny ones. But what would they say? How would you build a strong home that can withstand the storm? And the first is being fearless begins with a fear. And that's a fear of the Lord. Proverbs [1:7] says, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of [wisdom]*" (ESV). And what does that mean, "*The fear of the Lord*"? It means we simply take Him seriously. We take a holy God who we serve seriously. We take His Word. His Word doesn't change with culture. We take His Word seriously. We don't try to change it to fit our own needs because we can't be fearless in a scary and ever-changing world if we don't begin with the right kind of fear—an awe of a holy God, that we take our holy God seriously and we take His words seriously.

The next is if there was a secret to the Graham family, there is no secret. This was not a perfect home, but it was a joyful home. There were challenges, there were failures, but my grandparents were honest about it. My parents were always honest about it. Issues were always discussed. They didn't hide behind some, you know, fake presence, this perfect Graham presence. They were honest about the struggles of life, but there was joy. Forgiveness was given. God's Word was studied and practiced. Prayer, their number one ingredient, was known as powerful and important in their lives and their faith and full reliance on Jesus was known and evident.

My Aunt Ruth shared at my grandfather's funeral the story of when she came back home after her second divorce. She was humiliated and devastated and she shared that as a daughter, you never wanna embarrass your father, but as the daughter Billy Graham, you *really* didn't wanna embarrass and disappoint him. And that she was crying as she was winding up the long driveway, and when she pulled up to the home, there was my grandfather waiting for her at the door saying, Welcome home. And he wrapped his arms around her. And we have a Heavenly Father that all He wants is us to come home to Him. And sometimes that can be a long and winding road, but we come up to Him, He will wrap His mighty arms of grace and compassion around us and love us with His grace. Sometimes I have people send me messages; they might disagree with something and they'll say, Your grandfather would be so disappointed in you. Those messages don't bother me because they didn't know Billy and Ruth Graham.

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There was always grace given and they were never embarrassed by their family. They loved us even when we would make mistakes and through the difficult times.

Today, not only do we hide who we really are, we hide our faith. A recent poll says three out of five are fearful, sharing religious views in their workplace. We are afraid to share our faith. Only 29% of unchurched Americans today say that a Christian has shared with them of how to become a Christian. We must be courageous. We have to challenge bad ideas. We cannot self-censor. The voice of the church brings common grace, even to the nonbelievers. That is our purpose here on Earth. God has given us a mission, and that mission is to share the hope we have in Him and what Jesus did for us. And while we say we're in a culture that is authentic and transparent, far too often we make Jesus our secret. We've become secretive, even silent about our faith. We need only to look on our social media to see that we only wanna share the parts of our lives we want the world to see. And we're afraid to stand up for what is Biblically right because we're afraid of the backlash that may come as a result. We don't wanna be offensive.

But in this house, whoever came in here—and I mean whoever, whether that was somebody local that was coming in maybe to work on the house or some neighbors coming in. Whether it was Bono, whether it was Muhammad Ali, or whether—I think back of President Barack Obama when he came to visit my grandfather, in my grandfather's older age—whoever came here was welcomed with grace and had no question that when they walked through those doors, that Jesus was the Redeemer in this home.

And the next is simplicity is enough. This is a simple home. It wasn't some grand luxurious lifestyle that they lived on top of this mountain. It was a comfortable home, full of unique character that my grandmother would give it. Some people would even criticize her that things she would buy, it wouldn't fit well, it wouldn't go well in her home. And it definitely was not a design center, but this was her home. It was simple.

And that's the same for my grandparents' faith and the faith of my parents. It was simple. They didn't make it complicated. My grandfather made the Gospel so easy for people to understand. And recently I received a message from somebody that listens to *Fearless* and they shared a message that years ago they found out my dad was gonna be preaching the commencement speech at their daughter's graduation. And they were gonna bring her grandfather who was an unbeliever. And they were so thankful because they *knew* my dad would make the Gospel simple and clear and there would be no doubt that their unbelieving grandfather would hear the Gospel. We often make things complicated and we've done it with our churches and with our faith.

We think we need the church marketing strategies and LED screens and all those fancy toys, like a smoke machine—and some of those are great tools to have and there's nothing wrong with them, but we can be tempted to making sharing the Gospel complicated. We worry about how it'll be received. Is our timing right? How and what

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should we say? You know, “I don’t wanna offend somebody, I don’t wanna turn them off from church.” And that’s true for even our church staff and that’s true for our individual lives inside our community. We have to remember that we have to be evangelizing the simple Gospel in our communities. And that keeping it simple is enough. My grandparents lived a simple life and they preached a simple Gospel. It’s the simple Gospel for those who believe. Romans 1:16 says, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes”* (NIV).

My grandfather would share the story of one time he went to Cambridge University to preach and his first few messages, he tried to make kind of more stately and more scholarly because of his audience. And he realized he wasn’t getting much of a response with it. And he said, I have to take it back to the simplicity of the Gospel because *that’s* the power that speaks. It’s the simplicity of the cross. The cross was central in every message my grandfather would preach because it’s what Jesus Christ would do on the cross for you and for me that could save a world and give a world hope. He would speak of God’s love and the sacrifice of Jesus because that’s what we need. It’s like I said, that very last Bible verse he memorized, he said, *“May I never boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”*

But my grandfather, Billy Graham, was reminding himself, it wasn’t about Billy Graham. His whole life was about the cross and the message of the cross. And his definition of “belief” was simple. You don’t have to understand everything. We are not gonna open up this Bible and God’s Word and understand it all. And we kind of live in a time right now that we wanna come up with these complex explanations, that we have to have a reason for everything. And my grandfather would say, Belief is a commitment. A commitment to follow God even when we don’t understand. And it is a simple charge to have devotion to God. And that’s not just a charge to the Graham family. This is a legacy for each and every one of us who are a child of God. We are called to tell the world about Him. Those are the last words Jesus spoke to His disciples [indiscernible]: Go and tell the world about Me and one day I’m coming back. But until then, that is your job, that is my job, and it’s so simple that even a child can understand, is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ because that is the hope no matter the times we live in.

And lastly is an eternal perspective. As solid as *this* house is, my grandparents always knew this wasn’t their forever home. That they had an eternal perspective in this house. That my grandparents made Heaven the focus of their lives and they longed for Heaven. My grandfather taught on Heaven, wrote on Heaven, spoke on Heaven. And the unwavering promise of Heaven was central to my grandparents’ lives. It was the urgency behind my grandfather’s ministry, that as many people as possible would know about Jesus and how He made a way for us to have eternal life. When Larry King asked my grandfather what was his purpose in life, my grandfather said, To take the message of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, to let the whole world know about the hope of Jesus Christ.

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And with all the messages we hear in church today, we rarely hear about Heaven. But without Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross, giving us a way to inherit eternal life, where can we find hope in this dark world? That's what sets us apart as Christians, as believers, of what Jesus did on that cross for us so that we can have eternal life with Him. And when we have an eternal perspective, it keeps our eyes fixed on the cross, that no matter what the storms bring, that our eyes will stay unwaveringly focused on the cross. That is our purpose in life. The cross was central to all of my grandfather's messages. Even in this room, he preached his very last message that he would share to the world and what he wanted the world to know. And of course that message was about the cross and the power of the cross.

MUSIC STARTS

Billy Graham:

00:22:12 There is no other way of salvation except through the cross of Christ. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh [to] the Father, but by me."* The only way to the Father, Father God, is through His Son, Jesus Christ. Now, why Jesus? He's the only One that was born into this world without sin, but more than that, He was the righteous One. And when you come to Him, you're clothed in His righteousness. God no longer sees your sin, He no longer sees your own heart, He sees Jesus.

MUSIC FADES

Cissie:

00:23:03 And in our present cultural hurricane, I wanna be a conqueror, not a coward. When it comes to living for God, that that is the heartbeat of this podcast, to live a fearless faith in a compromising culture. We have to live a courageous life, challenging the lies of the world, and to share truth because it's the only hope for a lost world. It's the only hope for the community around you. It's the only hope for your family.

In Revelation 21, it tells us that for those who overcome, they shall inherit all things. When we talk about Revelation, that hope of Jesus and those in Heaven in those last couple chapters, that all the old will pass away, that's when our tears will be wiped away, that's the hope we have, that there will be no more death, that all things will be created new and we shall inherit all things. That those who overcome, they will be children of God. But, for those who are cowards, those who murder, who are walking in immorality, those who put their own ideas and ambitions before God, which is idolatry, they will not have the water of life. They will face an eternal second death.

And when we live in a time where we just wanna talk about love, even inside the churches, we just have to love. We just gotta love them. But we have to remember that we can't sacrifice truth in the name of love because it's not gonna be *your* love that will save your friend who is lost. It's God's love. It will be the love of Jesus Christ and what

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He did on that cross. To remember that Jesus Christ spread His arms out wide, He surrendered His life for you and for me, and He did it before a world that was mocking Him, that made fun of Him at that moment, that He should save Himself if He was the Son of God. And today, 2,000 years later, the world is still mocking Him. They will mock you and they're gonna come after you.

But He stood before the world and surrendered His life for you and for me. And He made it so simple that all we have to do is believe in Him, surrender our life in Him, and know that three days later He conquered death, He conquered Satan, and He beat him. And that we know that He went to Heaven to create a home for you and for me, He's preparing it. That our hope is Heaven. And that He's coming back and He's gonna come back in His full glory for you and for me. That is the hope, and we wanna be conquerors. We don't wanna be cowards in these last days. We want those who we *love* that might not know Him, because we wanna be conquerors.

We wanna hear Him say, "It is done," that, "I am the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end. I will give the water as a gift to the thirsty from the spring of life." "The victor," which means the conqueror, "will inherit these things and I will be his God and he will be My son, but the cowards, unbelievers, vile, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolators, and all the liars, their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." That should grieve our heart. That should be our urgent call.

We don't want those that we love, we don't want the world to experience that second death. This is an urgent time, and I believe that the time is getting so short to be able to share the Gospel. It is gonna get harder and harder. And that is the heart of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, that is my dad's heart. This time to share that hope is getting shorter and shorter and the time is urgent.

It is my constant prayer that in these times that we face—because we don't know what the storms are gonna be. And, it is gonna get hard and we don't know when they come after our livelihoods and they come after our children, how we'll be in that moment—but it's my constant prayer for my family and for you that we have a heart of obedience to trust and follow God, not based on our anxious thoughts and our emotions that can be washed away with the sand. We know that He can be trusted in the darkness. Even if it's dark, you know the house of your heart is secure where you've laid a foundation of God's Word that you can stand. And the covering of His covenant will be your roof.

But the time is urgent and the time is now to make sure you're building your life, that you're building your family on precepts that will withstand the coming storm. And when we build our house on the solid rock of God's Word, we can have a consistent and constant assurance that we can remain standing after the storms. And this is my hope for *Fearless*, that you know how to stand against this storm, that you have the courage to be fearless in a culture that is getting louder and louder against the message of the

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cross. It's why I started this podcast, to remind each of us that to survive a life in this world, we should always be seeking Heaven. That's our focus, that God's love is simple and available for everyone.

My grandfather used to say that "the ground is level at the foot of the cross." So lay your foundation there, where it's level, with the belief that Jesus came to save you. Kneel there, submit your life, submit your family there, and then rise and stand against the howling winds of our present cultural storm. Ephesians 6:13 says, "*You will be able to resist [an] evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm*" (NASB). I encourage you, study His Word, love it, live it, stand firm, because it's your sure guide in an unsure world.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:29:16 Whether you've been with me and *Fearless* from the very first episode to now the 100th or all the episodes to come, I hope and pray that you know in this world it is all about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We cannot be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus. That is the hope that we have in this world and the storms that we're facing, whether they're political, financial, economical, whatever we're facing, it's all about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether you are called to preach that from a platform or whether you're called to live that out in your daily lives in your community, we have to be sharing the Gospel. We cannot keep it a secret, we cannot hide it. That's the only hope that's gonna change the heart of a person.

CLOSING MUSIC

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