

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Audio Media Services
Fearless – Ep 108 – Conflict in Israel
Final Transcript

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:02 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:00:21 Welcome back to an episode of *Fearless*, and of course, Saturday, October the 7th, we woke up to the headlines: Israel is at war. And for many of us, we have been glued to our televisions, to the social media, everything that is coming out of Israel. These attacks by Hamas have been horrific. The images we have seen of women and children, the elderly being taken; the attack by land, sea, and sky. People killed, whole families slaughtered, and it is terrifying. And this has been the most devastating attack in history of the state of Israel over the last 75 years. Since the state of Israel was created, this is the largest attack on the Jews since the Holocaust in one day.

I mean, just let that sink in. This is terrifying for them. So to talk about this and what is going on in Israel, I have asked Pastor Gary Hamrick of Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Virginia. He has been a guest here on *Fearless* before. He's a pastor that I just have looked up to, he and his leadership at his church, during the days that our country are facing. So Pastor Gary, welcome back to *Fearless*.

Gary Hamrick:

00:01:36 Thank you, Cissie. It's good to be with you, but unfortunately under these circumstances, not a good time.

Cissie:

00:01:41 Yeah, and you and your wife and members of your church, you were actually supposed to be in Israel as we're speaking right now this week. And I'm sorry that those plans have changed, but I'm thankful God's provision over your church that you're not there in this time.

Gary:

00:01:57 Yeah, we're thankful too. We were supposed to take a couple hundred people with us touring Israel. We were just there in March, taking another group back this week, but yeah, we're grateful—we could have been there. And a lot of tour groups are kind of hunkered down in hotels, so we're just grateful that we're not there right now.

Cissie:

00:02:18 Pastor, I listened to your message yesterday from church. I know Israel is close to your heart and to your church's heart and that you addressed of what was going on. Unfortunately, not a lot of pastors have done so. And maybe over the years

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have not even prepared their church of why we need to be paying attention of what's going on in Israel, how important our relationship as Christians, but also as Americans, is important to our allies in Israel. Almost 50 years to the day after another, you know, attack on Israel and the Yom Kippur War and just the historical aspect of that, but why is the world's attention always focused on this little sliver of land, which is about the size of New Jersey? It's got a population of about 9 million. Why is it always come back to what's happening in *this* land?

Gary:

00:03:06 Yeah, because God chose to reveal His plan of redemption for mankind from this particular plot of land. And for us who know our Bibles, we understand that a lot has occurred in Israel historically, and a lot is still going to occur in Israel prophetically. Things that are going to happen in the future that the Bible tells us about. And so, you know, really what this comes down to is in Revelation chapter 12, it talks about how the dragon stood by the woman ready to devour her child. That's really a larger picture of how Satan has always tried to thwart God's plan of redemption. The woman being a bigger picture of Israel in Revelation 12; the child being a picture of Jesus, of the Messiah that comes forth from the Jewish people, and Satan the dragon has always stood ready to devour this child, doing anything that he can to hinder God's redemptive plan for mankind. So, whether world powers realize it or not, which is doubtful, but they're being inspired by Satan to go after this land because the land represents the promise of God and the promise of God was the plan of redemption for mankind. That's basically why this little tiny piece of land and all of the world is being so attacked over the years and the Jewish people so brutally murdered and dispersed historically and happening now.

Cissie:

00:04:37 Yeah, you know, just to put it, I was driving my kids to school and my son was asking so many questions because one of our dearest friends is Israeli. So they're just asking lots of questions because he's somebody loved. There's actually pictures right behind me on my coffee maker that's been there for two years. But I was trying to explain it to my kids: Whatever God blesses, Satan's going to curse. And I'm always shocked by how many people in the church [assets] because politically, economically—this comes down to spiritual. And it always comes back because Jerusalem is going to be the focal point of God's story. I mean, He tells us in Scripture, it's going to be the focal point of the end times. Why is it so important that as Christians that we are paying attention to what is happening there right now?

Gary:

00:05:22 Well, you know, God's given us the handbook for life, and part of what He's given us in His Word is a roadmap to understand not only how we can have salvation through Jesus, but He gives us the whole background about Israel and the Jewish people. And so, you know, as Christians, we have the advantage of knowing what is going to happen. And the importance of keeping our eye on Israel is because God is

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stirring things, and all of this is happening according to His Word. Nothing should surprise us because nothing surprises God. And so the church needs to keep its eye on Israel because so much will play out in terms of end-time events. And, the danger of the church has been that we can read every little nuance of what is happening in the news and think, Oh, this is the end. I mean, you know, in the 1930s, Christians thought that, too, when they looked at Hitler, thinking he's the antichrist. Mussolini, you know, was the false prophet, and as Panzer tanks were lining up against, you know, churches in Europe, they're thinking, This is the end; this is the end times. Now, of course, Hitler came in the spirit of anti-christ, small "a," but turns out he's not Antichrist, capital "A," so that's still to come. But there's a little bit of a danger for us always reading *everything* could be this, could be that.

However, Jesus told us we should know the signs of the times. And when we look at what is happening right now in the news, when we look at what is happening right now in Israel, these are all part of the labor pains leading up to the ultimate return of Jesus. And so the church needs to be aware as we look at what is happening and our heart should be stirred. We should always be living in the expectation of the imminent return of Jesus. And so when people see stuff stirring in Israel, as Christians, it should remind us, get ready, because we don't know at what point that trumpet call could sound. You know, the rapture of the church could happen at any time. There's still a lot of prophecy that still has to happen in Scripture, in general, but there's no prophecy that still needs to happen before the rapture of the church and the sound of that trumpet, so, we should always be ready for His return. And these kind of things happening in the news right now, just good reminders to us: Be ready, church.

Cissie:

00:07:43 Yeah, and I'm glad you said because, you know, I don't like to encourage people to think that every single major current event or news event is prophetic, but seems like chess pieces are aligning—

Gary:

00:07:55 Absolutely.

Cissie:

00:07:56 —that we are a generation that is seeing—of course, not my generation—but people who are still living, this generation did see a modern-day miracle with the birth of Israel in one day in 1948. And then these chess pieces are aligning, especially when we look at Russia and Iran.

Gary:

00:08:11 Yes.

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Cissie:

00:08:12 Do you think that this *is* the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy when we look at their relationship, when we look at what happened in the Ukraine, Iran, and Russia's relationship growing very strong, or is this just merely a precursor of something prophetic to happen?

Gary:

00:08:27 Well, it's a little bit of both. I mean, there's *definitely* fulfillment of Ezekiel chapter 38 in respect of the alliance between Russia and Iran because when you look at Ezekiel 38, it speaks about Gog and Magog. Now, Gog is really a title. It means prince or czar. Magog, some of the ancient historians like Tacitus and Josephus, they said Magog was the land of the ancient Scythians, which is north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, so we're talking Russia. So in Ezekiel 38, when it speaks there of Magog, it's speaking of Russia, and then it talks about how there are five different nations that make an alliance with Russia, and the first on the list is Persia. Now, up until 1935, Iran was called Persia. And in fact, until the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran was an ally of the United States and Israel. The Shah of Iran was selling oil to Israel up until the Islamic Revolution of 1979. And so, when we see Persia as one of those nations that aligns with Russia to come against Israel, we're certainly seeing that happening now. I mean, the alliance between Russia and Iran that is happening in our generation is unlike *any* alliance that Russia and Iran has ever had. So, we're definitely seeing some of this coming together. Now, I don't know that the events happening right now in Israel are actually a fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 completely, but it certainly is showing the precursor. It's giving us a flavor of what is to come because there's no question.

In fact, The Wall Street Journal just came out and finally admitted that Iran is behind Hamas. Even our own secretary of state was saying, Well, there's no real evidence that Iran is behind all of this happening with Hamas and Israel. Hamas has admitted Iran is behind them. Hezbollah has admitted Iran is behind them. *Iran* has admitted that they're behind Hamas in this war. So I don't know why the United States is dragging its feet and not acknowledging. Finally, The Wall Street Journal came out and said, Yeah, Iran is behind this. So we're seeing Russia and Iran playing together on the world scene. And certainly the stage is being set for the ultimate fulfillment, but this is definitely a partial fulfillment at least of Ezekiel chapter 38.

Cissie:

00:10:53 And, you know, when our enemies say something, we better believe that when they tell us they hate us, we might need to know that they hate us.

Gary:

00:11:00 Exactly.

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Cissie:

00:11:01 It's kind of like you were just saying when Scriptures tells us what's going to happen, we need to pay attention to Scripture. When our enemies tell us they can't stand us, they want to wipe us off the face of the map—because it's not just Israel. It is Americans. They don't want Christians and— Hamas, when you look up their charter, which is they lay out the groundwork, their ideology of what they believe, they want to wipe out Jews, they want to wipe out Christians, all the nonbelievers. They want to wipe them all out.

Gary:

00:11:28 Yeah. I mean, Iran just *yesterday* talked about how they want to destroy Israel and they want to destroy America. I mean like why are we—and so this gets into part of my, I don't know, I shouldn't say anger, but my frustration, let's say that—let's get anger under control as a believer, right, so for us—

Cissie:

00:11:45 I have a feeling I know where this is going. Go ahead.

Gary:

00:11:46 —yeah you know where this is going because you don't shy away from political things either, but I mean the U.S. policy of aiding in any way Iran and helping them with their capability to arm Hamas and to arm Hezbollah—and when I say U.S.'s policy of aiding, when we lift sanctions and allow Iran to have *billions* of dollars—and I know what people, some people are defending it saying, Well, you know, those billions that have been, you know, frozen, those assets, well, they're only released for humanitarian reasons. Those are fungible funds. I mean, let's not kid ourselves. If Iran has money and then this part over here, this pot of \$6-plus billion is designated for humanitarian aid, well, Iran can then redirect their own funds to fund this war. So that's what they're doing. Let's not deceive ourselves.

Cissie:

00:12:37 Which everybody that's on the front lines right now in Israel is talking about. Where did these weapons come from? Where did they get these, you know, new vehicles? Which we know the answer to that.

Gary:

00:12:45 Yeah, the Gazan people are not capable of arming themselves like this. This is coming from Iran and Russia and all these capabilities. So, you know, when we lift sanctions and allow Iran to tap into finances and when we are still part of this Iran nuclear deal, which we need to totally get out of because it only helps to arm Iran to be more nuclear capable. In fact, I just heard today that the U.N. said that Iran has not even followed any of the nuclear deal guidelines. They used to be 2% capable of nuclear vision and now they're 60% and so we have to do everything we can to impose the harshest sanctions on Iran and we can't be aiding them in any way, financially

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materially, because they want to destroy Israel and they want to destroy us. So it just gets my eye or when I think about what we're doing to aid the enemy.

Cissie:

00:13:40 Yeah, it wouldn't make sense. You wouldn't give the person down the street that hates you, you're not going to give them all your money when you're hurting to walk right into your backyard. You know, I'm thankful, President Biden did come out with words of support for Israel—

Gary:

00:13:54 He did.

Cissie:

00:13:55 —pretty quickly—

Gary:

00:13:56 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:13:57 —but, my concerns are the actions don't match the words as you have just talked about, you know, we're just giving our enemy—people who are very outspoken of hating us.

Gary:

00:14:06 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:14:07 And yesterday you said, and I just want to clarify in your message, that we have to stop feeding the beast.

Gary:

00:14:12 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:14:13 And when you say that, you're meaning Iran.

Gary:

00:14:15 I'm meaning Iran. Anything we do to aid them to come against our allies, namely Israel, or ultimately even ourselves. Again, because they keep saying they want to destroy Israel and America, so anything we do to feed that beast is just completely inappropriate. It's wrong.

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Cissie:

00:14:32 You know, those were the president's words on day two. My fear is what happens in two weeks? Or even now, I think we're on day three—Israel, it's nighttime right now or late afternoon as we're talking, and they have retaliated some into the Gaza Strip. People are already starting to switch the narrative.

Gary:

00:14:51 Right.

Cissie:

00:14:52 You know, that's my fear is in two weeks, who's going to stand and in three months, four months, as long as this goes, you know? Israel's known for short wars.

Gary:

00:15:00 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:15:01 They're talking very differently about this one. This one might last a long time. Why do you think that is?

Gary:

00:15:05 They are. I heard today: weeks, maybe months. I don't know. I think because they were so caught off guard. They're saying this was an intelligence failure for Israel, and it could be simply that, but the ability for Israel to surveil what is happening along the Gaza border—because there's a fence that is highly sensitive to any movement and for Israel not to get notified when they broke through the fence and they're coming over into Jewish homes and slaughtering men, women, and children, and the elderly, they're saying, Well this is an intelligence failure. Yeah, but—OK, it is, at some level, of course, but it looks like there's some other evil players in this that have disrupted their intelligence and their surveillance capabilities, so we don't know all the details there, but yeah, it looks like this is going to be a protracted war. I heard today weeks, perhaps months, and I think it's because they were caught off guard. You know, in 1973, when the Yom Kippur War happened, President Nixon came to the aid of then Prime Minister Golda Meir in an instant, and when the United States says we're here to help, that always is an encouragement to Israel.

Cissie:

00:16:10 Now we got Hezbollah coming out against that. Hezbollah today announced that if America gets involved—

Gary:

00:16:16 Yeah.

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Cissie:

00:16:18 —or they just warned us that we shouldn't get involved.

Gary:

00:16:20 Yeah, and Hezbollah is on the north of Israel at the southern Lebanon border, and they've got over 100,000 Katyusha rockets. They're ready to lob into Israel. They fired a few to just kind of sound the warnings. I heard former Ambassador David Friedman talk today about how, you know, ultimately Israel doesn't need America's help. I mean, it's nice when America comes alongside, but look, Psalm 121 says that "*the one who watches over Israel [neither] slumbers [nor] sleeps.*" And so God is going to take care of Israel, but it sure is nice when America comes out with strong support of our allies with Israel. And yes, President Biden did make that strong statement, and I appreciate that.

I said to our congregation yesterday, We have to watch now, as you said, Cissie, we have to watch now the next few days and weeks to see whether the international community will continue to stand behind Israel, because Israel is in a fight to defend itself for its survival. And so when it starts to go into Gaza with ground troops and it starts to destroy Hamas, and unfortunately some Palestinian civilians are going to get caught in the crossfire, the international community is going to come out. Mark our words, right? Because we know this and they're going to say Israel's the aggressor, Israel's the bully. Congressman Tlaib already said that the reason why Israel is being attacked is because they are the occupier of the land and they've emboldened Hamas and so it's kind of like they deserve this. It's just awful what is coming out of the mouths of some people. Her point is that the Jew shouldn't be in Israel at all.

Cissie:

00:17:59 Period.

Gary:

00:18:00 So she sees them as the occupiers and if they would just get out, then they wouldn't have Hamas attacking them. It's incredible.

Cissie:

00:18:07 Yeah and to your point though, Israel did give warning—

Gary:

00:18:11 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:18:12 —for those people to get out.

Gary:

00:18:13 They did.

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Cissie:

00:18:14 No enemy gives a warning saying, Get out because they were going to retaliate. They gave them time.

Gary:

00:18:21 But unfortunately Hamas sets themselves up with their rockets behind schools and hospitals. So then when Israel goes in to eliminate these rockets and the stronghold, they end up having to hit hospitals in some way or schools in some way. And then, again, the international community comes out and says, Look, you know, you're hitting hospitals, you're hitting innocent children and stuff. Hamas does not care about the Palestinian people. Their anger and vitriol and their evil intentions towards Israel are so strong, they don't care about the Palestinian people. And that's the unfortunate truth.

Cissie:

00:18:59 Noa Tishby, if that's how you say her name, is an actress and model, and she said, Israel uses weapons to defend its people, but Hamas uses people to defend their weapons—

Gary:

00:19:10 That's absolutely right.

Cissie:

00:19:11 —to your point.

Gary:

00:19:12 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:19:13 Let's talk a little bit about antisemitism, because Israel—and we already discussed this a little bit—but the hatred, when you look what happened coming out of the Holocaust, Israel going back to their land, but the hatred, it feels like in the last few years, has continued to grow stronger. You look at some of the images that are coming out of even our cities like New York and some of them that had demonstrations yesterday in the streets, pro-Palestinian holding up Nazi signs. It is so full of hate and they're always on the receiving end of that. Why?

Gary:

00:19:47 All antisemitism is Satanism. Satan incites people to hate the Jews because we love a Jewish Messiah who died for the whole world, but God brought a Messiah through a race of people that He designated, that He brought out of nothing, really. When you look at, you know, Abraham was a Gentile. He was living in Iraq, basically; he was living in Ur of the Chaldean region. And God determined that out of this man's seed would come a race of people, so that ultimately a Messiah could come from this

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race of people. And so because of that, Satan incites people with hatred towards the Jews. Antisemitism is simply rooted in Satanism. He is at work to incite people towards hating the Jewish people, and we've seen this in history; we see it now. The only reason that Hamas came into Israel is because they hate the Jewish people. It's just that simple. It's not a battle for resources. It's not even a battle for land. I mean, they make the argument that they think that they deserve to be in the land, but the truth is that the Jewish people are the indigenous people of the land. It amazes me how we always talk about making sure that we respect the indigenous people of every country and yet when it comes to Israel, the indigenous people, they're like, Well they've been there for 4,000 years but no, we're dismissing that, and we don't think that they should belong in the land. But the real vitriol, the hatred, the animosity of Hamas was just towards the Jews themselves. If they get the land as a benefit, great, but they just want to slaughter the Jews because it is rooted in Satanism. He's the one that incites and inspires people to hate the Jewish people. And I think as we get closer to the return of Christ, we're going to see more and more antisemitism around the world. And it's unfortunate, but I think it's part of the end times.

Cissie:

00:21:47 Even inside the church, we're starting to see a younger generation, and even some churches—I hate to use the word like left-leaning churches, because then it takes it political, but maybe it is. We're seeing this younger generation becoming, you know, just Palestinian sympathizers. And of course, there are innocent Palestinians, there's Christian Palestinians. This is the sad, just the horrific realities of war: Innocent people are going to die on both sides. But there's this growing trend I see inside the church. And why do you think that is?

Gary:

00:22:20 You know, I think that's a good question, Cissie. I think that this younger generation does have a heart for what I'm going to call the underdog, because they're very into social justice as we all know, and so they're looking out for anybody that they believe is disadvantaged in some way. Now, that's noble on a lot of levels. I love the fact that our younger generation is looking out for people who are disadvantaged. The problem when it comes to *this* story about the Jews and the Palestinians is that they just don't know their history. And so therefore they look at Palestinians being isolated in Gaza, high unemployment rate, resources that are limited—by the way, Israel supplies all those resources, like electricity and food and medical supplies. People don't always think about that. But they look at, you know, the West Bank, they look at the Gaza—West Bank by the way, Judea and Samaria, that's what it is Biblically—but they look at these territories and they say, Oh, the Palestinian people are oppressed and Israel's the oppressor. And because they don't know their history, they instantly kind of default towards how can we take care of the most disadvantaged people? And they see the Palestinian people as being disadvantaged. Now, they are, but their conditions are not because Israel's the oppressor. Their conditions are because they don't believe, the Palestinians don't believe, that Israel's entitled to the land, and therefore they're doing

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everything they can to kill and annihilate Jews and Israel as a nation. And so what does Israel have to do? They have to secure their borders, they have to defend their country, they have to defend their citizens. And so, yes, are Palestinians relegated to a certain territory? Yeah, but it's for the safety of the Jewish people, that the PLO Charter called for the destruction of Israel. So, Israel's just defending itself for its own survival, but it ends up looking like, Oh, they're the bully, they're the oppressor. No, they're not. They're trying to defend themselves and they're trying to be as gentle about it as possible. But this generation, because they have a heart for the disadvantaged, they tend to look at the Palestinian situation, and they think they're the ones that we should really be more concerned about, and Israel's the bully, and they just don't know their history.

Cissie:

00:24:43 Yeah. Of course, we know Psalm 122, and it's pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Gary:

00:24:49 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:24:50 How do we as Christians, how should we be praying for this situation?

Gary:

00:25:53 Yeah, you know, because we also know as Christians how it all plays out, that ultimately we can only have peace when the Prince of Peace comes, sometimes it's hard to know how to pray because we know that whatever peace we pray for is only going to be temporary until Jesus comes. Having said that, Psalm 122 verses 6 to 8 still requires to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And so I would pray for the safety and protection of the Jewish people. I would pray for the Palestinian people too. They're caught in the crosshairs of this war and it's going to get ugly. And it's all because there's a terrorist organization called Hamas, and potentially Hezbollah—I pray that they don't get involved—that are trying to destroy the Jewish people. And so we pray for the protection of Jews and the land of Israel and we pray for He who watches over Israel, the Lord, who never slumbers nor sleeps, to continue to give peace and comfort to those who are there. There's been hundreds of families now that have lost loved ones and so we need to remember them and pray for their comfort as well.

Cissie:

00:25:58 Jesus says when we start seeing the signs, and—which seem to be unfolding before us, maybe, maybe not—

Gary:

00:26:06 Yeah.

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Cissie:

00:26:07 —that we should look up—

Gary:

00:26:08 To look up.

Cissie:

00:26:08 —because our redemption is near. So one more question is: How do we put that into practice by looking up to know our redemption is near?

Gary:

00:26:15 That means—and He also said, Occupy till I come. So we should be living out our lives to the fullest. We should be ambassadors for Christ in our world. We should make a difference as long as God gives us breath, advancing the cause of the Gospel, but at the same time remembering that our hope is in the Lord, looking up, not getting distraught about what is happening on the Earth. Sure, our hearts get grieved over things that we experience on Earth and we look at what's happening in Israel, our hearts are grieved, but we have to keep our eye on the prize and remember that He is going to return. And until then, we have to do our best to live out our lives for His glory and continue to trust Him.

Cissie:

00:26:57 And as Christians, I think we need to remember our time is short.

Gary:

00:26:59 It is, yep.

Cissie:

00:27:00 This time could be short to let people know about that love.

Gary:

00:27:03 We're not guaranteed tomorrow, Cissie, so every day counts.

Cissie:

00:27:06 Yeah. And I think the opportunities are going to get less and less and shorter and shorter for us to be able to share the Gospel—

Gary:

00:27:11 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:27:12 —and we need to be faithful in that. I pray that we as a church here in America, we will stay faithful—

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Gary:
00:27:17 Amen.

Cissie:
00:27:18 —to serve Him to those days.

Gary:
00:27:19 Amen.

Cissie:
00:27:19 Pastor Gary, thank you so much for joining me on a day that I know you had plans to be elsewhere—thankful you're not, but thank you so much just for your leadership and your words today.

MUSIC STARTS

Gary:
00:27:46 Thank you, Cissie, and thanks for all you're doing to get the word out, so appreciate you.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:
00:27:38 Thank you for joining Pastor Gary and I on today's episode of *Fearless*. And, I think so often, we can put on our social media, or we see something that says, "Pray for Israel," that sometimes we actually don't stop doing what we're doing and pray for the peace of Jerusalem. So I just encourage you, wherever you're listening to *Fearless* right now, take the time, go before the Lord, praying for the people of Israel, the innocent men and women. Pray for those that are fighting on the front lines, and as Pastor Gary said, of course, pray for those innocent Palestinians who will be caught in the crosshairs. I would just encourage you: Trust in the Lord. I think, of course, as a mom with young children, these can be dark days, days you could worry about, but we are to serve Him faithfully, look up, for our redemption is near, and trust in Him. And, take time to pray.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:
00:28:33 Thank you for joining me 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.

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