

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Audio Media Services
Fearless – Ep 112 – From Rome with Franklin
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:

00:00:22 Welcome back to a special episode of *Fearless*—and I say special because I'm here in Rome, and I'm here with my dad. Dad, welcome back to *Fearless*.

Franklin Graham:

00:00:31 Thank you.

Cissie:

00:00:32 Dad, when I think of Rome ... this might be one of my favorite cities to visit—and, yes, because of everything there *is* to visit here in Rome, but it's because the special memories I have were just you and me. I think back when I was 19 years old, I went on an around-the-world trip with just you and me. And you and I have traveled a lot since then, but this was the first one of just you and me, and we did two weeks around the world stopping at different Samaritan's Purse sites, and then you had a crusade as well with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. But in Rome, it was our first just kind of stay overnight. It didn't get off to a smooth start because I woke up and I had forgotten all my makeup—Mm-hmm. [**Franklin:** affirmative]—and you took me makeup shopping. Do you remember that?

Franklin:

00:01:13 I do.

Cissie:

00:01:14 I remember coming down to breakfast, and I was just horrified to tell you I had forgotten my makeup and I needed to go buy some. But for me, that trip is what changed my life. So, this was kind of the first night staying here in Rome that changed my relationship with you, that gave me a respect for the ministry, and changed my heart for ministry, seeing what God had been doing all over the world; and as a teenager, He made me realize, as a daughter, I had a father that was obedient to God's calling on his life. So that's why this city's special to me, and the very first time I came here with you. Do you remember the first time you came to Rome?

Franklin:

00:01:49 I do, Cissie. I'm not sure I remember the exact first time because I've been here many times. So, first time, I think, was with *my* mother, and we stopped here, and I think it was 1969. I remember we went to the Mamertine Prison. Mother—*my* mother,

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your grandmother—she fell. She tripped. They didn't have those nice stairs at that time, and she hit her head and had a big, big lump on her head. So that was my first visit, but I've come back over the years many times. Love this city. Love the people of this city. The architecture. To think of the Roman government, their form of government is basically the form of government that most democracies around the world today model their government after. And so, the Romans were tremendous engineers, architects. They had pagan gods they worshipped, and it wasn't until much later that they adopted Christianity.

But, Paul was here. Peter was here. So many of the epistles in the Scriptures were written by Paul from prison here. So, for the Christian, this is a very important city. The military, the Roman military, their strategies and war are still studied by armies today—how the Romans fought, and many of our soldiers, our generals, have used Roman tactics, so it's so much history. And those Romans—that were built—buildings that are still standing today, that are incredible, bridges that are still crossing the rivers that trucks and cars drive on today is incredible what they have been able to do.

But spiritually, Rome has had an impact on the world. And today is, of course, it's the head for the Catholic Church, but yet we're here to preach the Gospel. We've been invited by—not the Catholic Church—but by independent churches, evangelical churches to preach. Paul wanted to come to Rome to preach, and he came in chains and he preached. People could come to him while he was in prison, and so, many people believed. And we're here to preach this week for the first time. This has never happened where evangelical churches have been permitted to preach. And so I'm excited about, Cissie, that we're here with you—got your husband, got the family here, and we're going to take the Gospel to the people of Rome.

Cissie:

00:04:20 And most people don't realize, Daddy Bill—your dad, I call him Daddy Bill—never had the opportunity to speak here in Rome, but I want to go back a couple of years to what brought you here today, because the world has changed quickly. When we look at what happened with COVID and the response that Samaritan's Purse and BGEA had here in Italy. Share how that invitation came.

Franklin:

00:04:42 Well, in 2020, in February, I'd just finished preaching in Guam and came back to the United States. And, of course, the pandemic was just starting. A few people in Japan had COVID. There was, I think, a person in Seattle at a restaurant that had gotten COVID, and I didn't think much about it. I thought to be something like the swine flu or something that would be over with in just a few days, a few weeks. And so, within the next 10 days, COVID hit the world like a tsunami, and here in Italy—northern Italy—was the epicenter for Europe. Lombardy state, Cremona—the hospital was filled, the ICU was filled. They quit doing all medical procedures except pediatrics and

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maternity. Everything else was just respiratory trying to save people's lives—we didn't know what it was.

We got a call from the government here in Italy asking if we would place one of our field hospitals in Cremona. And I said yes, and so, within three days, we had a hospital up and running. And we had the Italian Air Force, the army. We flew our cargo plane into a NATO base. The Italian Air Force helped unload it. Then the military took it and set up on trucks and got it to Cremona, and then we set it up in a parking lot. So, in three days we had patients in the field hospital.

We treated about 300 people over the course of two months, and these are people that might have not made it, might have died. And one of the big problems at that time were you could not have family members, and so people were dying alone with nobody beside them, no one to hold their hand, and we just decided we weren't going to let anybody die alone. Our nurses were going to hold their hands and we were going to pray for them, and so, no one died alone. We lost a few patients, but for the most part, we had success because we treated COVID-19 like we treated Ebola, and we knew how to treat Ebola, and the precautions that we needed to take to protect ourselves from Ebola—and Ebola will kill you. But at that time, we thought maybe COVID-19 was kind of like Ebola, that it would kill us—and it did. It killed many people, but we began to release patients and people would leave the hospital. People would cheer and clap as they would be released, and they would celebrate, and the encouragement this gave to the Italian hospital, to the doctors and nurses, that somebody would care enough to come help them in their hour of need.

And so that opened up a door for us to be invited to preach in Milan last year. Churches here in Rome saw what happened in Milan. They wanted that to be here. And so, they invited us to come to Rome. And so, this was the invitation as a result of the churches cooperating for the first time. It's never happened before. And I just had a pastor say today, "This has never happened in my lifetime." Another pastor told us that it didn't happen in his grandfather's lifetime. It didn't happen in his father's lifetime. It hasn't happened in his lifetime. And no one can remember when the churches ever came together. They're not sure it ever happened.

Cissie:

00:07:46 I want people to—I wanted them to know that story because God used that moment of responding in a time of need, in a dark storm, but He was using it to orchestrate for His good.

Franklin:

00:07:57 He used the pandemic—and God uses things. He'll use tragedy in our life. He will use those things to bring us closer to Him, and I think for here, the pandemic opened up a door for the Gospel.

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Cissie:

00:08:12 When we look at the world now, you know, as a mom of little ones, I have a lot of concern—not fear, but concern, which is different—and when you look at the world right now, when you look—there’s a war in Europe, war in the Middle East now, and this is three years after the pandemic where the world was shut down. The world has just changed so quickly. When you look at the world right now, what do you think? What do you think we’re in the middle of or what’s happening?

Franklin:

00:08:35 Well, I think, Cissie, we’re in, just my opinion, I believe we are getting close to the end of time as the way we know it. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ could come back at any moment, and we need to be ready. As Christians, we need to be watching and looking up because our redemption draweth neigh. So, I think we need to be looking, but that doesn’t mean we stop doing our work. I think if anything, it should encourage us to work harder, to be more evangelistic, to make sure that our neighbors are saved, to make sure our families are saved, make sure that our co-workers know the Lord Jesus Christ. Don’t be afraid. Don’t be ashamed. Some will criticize you. Some may even curse you, but at least tell them how they can have a relationship with God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Tell them that Jesus is the Son of God, that He took our sins to the cross, that He died. He shed His blood for our sins, that He was raised from the grave on the third day, and He’s alive. He’ll come into your heart if you’re willing to repent of your sins and believe on the Name of Lord Jesus Christ. You can be saved. Don’t be afraid to share that, and yeah, there’ll be some people who get mad. There will be some people who tell you, “Get out of here.” Some people will curse you, but there will be others who will say, “Thank you. What do I need to do to be saved?” Just like the Philippian jailer, when Paul and Silas were in prison and the ground shook and the prison began to fall in and the jailer wondered, “What must I do to be saved?” So, people are going to ask that: “What do I have to do to be saved?” So, let’s be ready.

Cissie:

00:09:59 Yeah.

Franklin:

00:10:00 Like Paul, let’s be ready in the middle of an earthquake or storm or war, whatever is coming. Let’s be ready to—

Cissie:

00:10:06 —in your own communities and in private. It’s not time to be private—

Franklin:

00:10:08 Yeah.

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Cissie:

00:10:09 —keep your faith private. It's time to share it with those that we love and not to be afraid. When you travel the world, do you see a hunger for that truth right now, that people are hungry for it?

Franklin:

00:10:18 I don't know if it's a hunger. I think people are searching, but they don't even know what they're searching for, and they've realized that materialism hasn't satisfied and alcohol or drugs don't satisfy. Sex doesn't satisfy. They're missing something and they don't quite know what it is, and they're searching, and I think there's a lot of searching hearts out there, searching souls. And there *is* a spiritual hunger among many people, no question about that, but again, they look into Eastern mysticisms and, you know, various other religions thinking that's going to satisfy them, but it doesn't.

Cissie:

00:10:51 People, even young people, they want to know, what can we do right now? I get text messages from people—they've never really paid attention to what's going on in the world or politics, and they're concerned for their children—and, you know, when you look at your grandchildren and you see the concerns of the world today, what would you tell these young families like when they ask, what can we do? We know we should be praying, but what else can we be doing?

Franklin:

00:11:15 Oh, be studying the Bible and make sure that you take time with your kids every day to study God's Word. Memorize the Scripture. Remember when you were little, we had the Gospel alphabet, you know, that we would memorize together with you when you were younger? My mother always insisted that we memorize Scripture, and I didn't see the need for it. But today I look at the verses that she had me memorize and how meaningful they are to me—that we're able to hide the Word of God in our heart so that we may not sin against Him, and that's important to have God's Word in our hearts, to *know* His Word. My mother always felt that day was coming, that Bibles would be taken and we wouldn't have them anymore, so she wanted us children to memorize as many Scriptures as we possibly can, so we'd have God's Word in our hearts. We've got Bibles in our country. There are lots of places where Bibles *are* taken away from. There are places where Bibles *are* burned. So, young families, study the Word of God with your children and not only God will bless you, the parents, but the children.

Cissie:

00:12:17 What would you say to those parents that are scared right now? You know, there's rumors of World War III, wars going on. What would you say to those parents that are scared?

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Franklin:

00:12:25 Well, again, we need to be ready—Mm-hmm. [**Cissie:** affirmative]—because those things could happen. No question. We're living in a very dangerous period of history, but the world is not going to come to an end. We know that there's going to be wars. We know there's going to be pestilence. We know there's going to be these things coming because Jesus told us it's coming. So we don't need to be surprised and we don't need to be afraid because we know who writes the last pages of history, and just read Revelations and you'll figure, you'll find out exactly how it turns out. Jesus is coming back and He's going to establish His kingdom here on this Earth, and for those of us that have put our faith and trust in Him, we're going to be with Him.

Cissie:

00:13:02 When you look at our own country—and we have an election year coming up—what do you think our biggest challenges are in our nation?

Franklin:

00:13:10 Well, first of all, it's truth. So much of the information we get from the media is false and it's misleading and it's skewed. It's filtered the way they want it to be filtered. I think the thing is it's not that every candidate is good, but I vote for candidates that stand for the Christian faith. I would certainly vote for them if they're running, not all of them are going to be running. But then if they're not running, vote for the candidate that's going to be at least friendly to our Christian faith. They may not be Christians themselves or they may not have it evident in their life because they're lost, but at least they're going to be friendly and supportive of our faith, our beliefs, and it's important to vote for those people, because there are lots of politicians out there that stand for policies that go against what the Bible teaches.

Cissie:

00:13:58 And as we get ready to close, I know heavy on your heart has been evangelism, especially these last few years, because you believe we have maybe a short time. Why is it in your heart to continue to go to all these cities in these countries to share the Gospel?

Franklin:

00:14:12 Well, because it's what God has called me to do, and I think in life, we have to carry out God's calling. For 2020, we missed a couple of years where we couldn't do this, and so there's an urgency while I still have strength and health to preach the Gospel, so, I'm going to do that.

Cissie:

00:14:28 And I want to encourage people that I think even our churches, they've forgotten evangelism and discipleship—

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Franklin:

00:14:34 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:14:35 —and that’s just important. I’m thankful that I’ve been able to see that firsthand: A father that has never neglected of what we’re all called to do in the Great Commission, and that’s evangelism. Dad, when we look at Israel and what’s happening there—a lot of people don’t know that you’ve been going there since you were a young boy.—Mm-hmm. [**Franklin:** affirmative]—Speaking of trips, you and I have gone there a couple of times together, that was another trip that changed my life. You’ve surrendered your life to Christ and gave your life to Christ there, on top of the Mount of Olives. How is Samaritan’s Purse responding and BGEA responding?

Franklin:

00:15:10 Well we have a team in Israel right now working with local Christians. We’re providing food boxes for displaced people. There are tens of thousands of Israelis that have had to leave *their* homes because of the fighting, you know, the rockets landing in their villages, so, they’ve had to move and they’re living in hotels and different places. So, we’re helping those families with food boxes and hygiene items for the children, that sort of thing. We also have coupons that they can use in stores, grocery stores, and so forth, so they go buy stuff themselves—food vouchers. So, we’ve been doing those kinds of things. There’s a war going on. So, we *are* working with churches on the West Bank. These would be Palestinian churches. They are needing help and there’s a lot of fear.

And then Lebanon; we’ve got churches in Lebanon that we’ve been friends with for many years, and the whole world could implode. The political alliances are changing in the world today, and we need to be mindful there’s a spirit of antichrist in the world. So, the spirit of antichrist is here. One day the Antichrist will be revealed, and I believe that person may be alive today. I don’t know, but it feels that way.

Cissie:

00:16:26 Yeah. Well, Dad, thank you. I know a lot of people are encouraged when they hear from you. Thank you for being a dad that is faithful in serving unwaveringly in their faith and keeping your eyes laser focused on the cross and what God has called you to do—on days like this, I’m very thankful for that.

Franklin:

00:16:45 And, the most important thing is for everyone to understand and to know that God *does* love us, but our sins separate us from Him. And you can’t have a relationship—your prayers can’t be answered; you can pray all day long, but it’s like praying to the wall. It’s because of sin and God is a holy God and we cannot be approach Him in sin. But if we’re willing to receive His Son by faith, Jesus Christ—Jesus took our sins and He died. He shed His blood for our sins. He died in our place.

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If you're willing to receive Christ by faith, then God will forgive you. He'll cleanse you, He'll hear your prayers, and heal your heart, but you have to turn from your sins. Tell God, "I'm sorry," and believe on the Name of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved. If you've never done that, do that today. Do it right now. Just say, "God, I'm a sinner. I'm sorry. Forgive me. I believe Jesus is Your Son. I want to trust Him as my Savior. And I'm willing to follow Him as my Lord from this day forward." So, if you prayed that prayer right now, you're safe, you're secure, your soul is in the hands of God.

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie:

00:17:56 Thank you, Dad.

MUSIC FADES

Cissie:

00:18:00 Thank you for joining us on an episode of *Fearless*. And if you prayed that prayer or you're looking for more resources, I encourage you to reach out to us on BillyGraham.org for more resources. Thank you.

CLOSING MUSIC

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