

How Do We Know We are His? Part 3

By Billy Ingram

[Worship team sings song]

Announcer:

Thanks, Billy.

Worship leader:

Thank you.

Announcer:

Billy Ingram everybody!

[Audience cheers]

[piano begins playing]

Worship leader:

Isn't the Lord good tonight? Can you think of all the blessings that you've had your entire life or even just today? Just count how many there are, you know? So this next song, lets--what is--the Lord is good, yeah! So let's sing this one all together, okay? Now we want to hear the men against the women here. Let's see who God has blessed more.

[Audience laughs]

Announcer:

Come on, men!

Worship leader:

Here we go.

[Worship team sings song]

Worship leader:

Thank You so much for being so good to us. Thank You for dying on the cross, for Your resurrection, for Your love, for Your grace and Your mercy, Lord, help us to not forget that every day, even when we take our every breath, good Jesus. Thank You so much for tonight, bless each and every one who is here tonight. Help us to just lift our voices to you. It's good to see this policy does well.

[Worship team sings song]

[Piano continues playing]

Announcer:

What a good God we serve, amen? There was-there-as we look back across the pages of history, there are a lot of people who know how good God is, but one of those men by the name of William Cowper um, in fact if you look through your hymnal today, you see one hundred plus songs written by William Cowper, c-o-w-p-e-r. He was a man who knew hardship to, and for literally more than a decade, he's going through intense depression, severe depression. It looked like everything in his life was just collapsing around him. Everything was falling apart. A friend of his came and said, "God commands us to praise Him in all times, we know that God is worthy

of our praise." He said, "Let's just try writing some songs of praise to God." And out of that time came a song that has become a staple in every hymnal. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. And Dorothy is going to give us a beautiful rendition of that. And let me challenge you. I don't know what you're going through. I can imagine that in a room this size, there's a lot of pain. There's a lot of hurt. But we've just sung that the Lord is good and we know that that's true. So let me ask you to trust. Trust God's goodness when you don't understand, when everything is dark around you, remember what is true. Jesus died to save you. That's true. Let's celebrate that.

[Worship team sings song]

Announcer:

I just ask that You bless this time, and I pray for Your presence, Holy Spirit, continue to do Your work. And I pray for a sense of awareness for all of us to know what You're doing at this moment and help us walk alongside of You, Father, participate with You, Lord, to bless us. And I thank You, Father, for being my all. I want-I thank You for being there, Lord, to protect me, to love me, Lord, when-when no one else was there. I thank you. Bless the Lord.

[Worship team sings song]

Ron Hafer:

Let's pray together, so, Father, You have heard us worship, You've heard us sing praises to You. You know the thoughts and intents of our hearts and we come here with open hearts and minds. We want You to speak to us through Your servant Lord, and may we be faithful hearers and doers of Your word. Thank You for Billy and Your hand upon his life. Bless him as he opens his

life and the word to us tonight. In Jesus' name, amen. Please be seated. Welcome for the last time this year at Torrey, Dr. Billy Ingram.

[Audience applauds]

Ron Hafer:

What about that worship team?

[Audience applauds]

Billy Ingram:

They are pretty awesome. The invitation is still open to come and minister at Maranatha. So just let me know when you're available and you arrange the songs as well. That's great. Well, Biola, I have had a wonderful time here with you. I enjoyed the fireside chat this afternoon with some of the students. I would like to make a suggestion, we had the honor of going to dinner with Chaplain Ron and his wife tonight, my wife, and my assistant, we all joined together. And my wife, and my assistant, and myself, we shared off a one plate, and so I want to recommend that you up your budget just a little bit. Just playing.

[Audience laughs]

Billy Ingram:

Just playing. We had a great time and we do love and appreciate the work that Ron Hafer has been doing all these many years faithfully to God.

[Audience applauds and cheers]

Billy Ingram:

Amen. And so tonight, it is my pleasure to share with you a few moments from the word of God again, and I'm hoping that as we do share, God would crystallize everything that you have heard all week from each of the various speakers. There was a husband and wife team, Morris and his wife Esther, and every year they went to the county fair. And every year, Morris would say to his wife, "Esther, I'd like to ride on that helicopter ride." Esther would always reply, "No Morris, but that helicopter ride is a hundred dollars, and a hundred dollars is a hundred dollars." After a few years later, Esther said to Morris, "I want to ride on that ride, I'm eighty five years old, we've been married sixty five years and I feel like if I don't do it now, it's-it's never I'll never get a chance." And Esther replied, "One more time, Morris, that helicopter is one hundred dollars and you know, one hundred dollars is a hundred dollars."

The pilot overheard the debate going back and forth and he said, "Tell you what, I'll make you a deal. If both of you get on that ride. And if you could stay quiet the entire ride and not say a word, I will charge you a dime." And they said, "Agreed." So they got up into the cabin and the pilot did twist and turns and flips and every possible way to guide that helicopter. When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, "Wow, I did everything I could to get you to yell, but you-you didn't. You really impress me." Morris said, "Well, I guess I was going to say something when Esther fell out, but, you know, one hundred dollars is one hundred dollars."

[Audience laughs]

Billy Ingram:

I don't write them, I just pass them along.

[Audience laughs]

Billy Ingram:

The passage that I've been reflecting on since Monday, in the Book of Romans, as you may recall, Paul said, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Romans, chapter eight. And I want to touch on a few key points again tonight, where he says, "You've not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." We discussed the importance of having a relationship in Christ, which is a life empowered by the Holy Spirit, a life connected to Christ that can never be severed or separated. We are secure in our relationship to Christ because of God's wonderful love. We discussed the life of the believer whose mind has become the mind of Christ, whose desires have merged with the will of God. He is one who is Spirit-filled, Christ-controlled, and God-focused. We discussed the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in-and His influence on the life of the believer.

Paul's assertion is that every true believer is full-in full possession of the Holy Spirit. That is, if one does not have the Holy Spirit, according to Paul, he does not belong to Him. The beautiful thing about you and I is that we are recipients of the presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit. That is something wonderful, and something that we should celebrate together. As a matter of fact, I want you to remember that the Ministry of the Holy Spirit is there to assist us, to aid us and to make intercession for us and-on our behalf. The Holy Spirit, listen, is praying for

you twenty-four seven, three sixty-five. Even during those times when you doubt God, even during those times when you are weary, and worn out, and ragged, and you don't know what to pray for, you don't know how to pray, or you just don't want to pray, the Spirit of God faithfully is making intercession on our behalf.

We discussed what it means to be led by the Spirit of God as is mentioned in verse 14, "As many as are they are the sons of God," that's how we know we are His, because we are being led by the Holy Spirit. We also know that we are His because we have received not a spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption. A spirit that liberates us and frees us so that we can come into the presence not of the creator, not of the man upstairs, not of good buddy ten-four, but of our heavenly Father. We call Him Abba, Father, Papa, Daddy, because of the Holy Spirit. We have a unique intimacy, closeness and connection with our Heavenly Father. Therefore, we know we are His by virtue of that fact. So, matter of fact, we know that we are His because it is the Spirit of God, verse 16, that testifies to our spirit that we, in fact, are children of God. I appreciate that, amen, thank you. Even when you can't fully articulate how you know and why you know you are His, you discover like Peter, you have joy unspeakable and full of glory. You just know in your heart, I am my beloved's, and he is mine. Now, my friends. That should comfort your heart and comfort your mind. That should steady your life so that you are aware you're not in this game alone. You're not going through the rigors of Biola alone.

You're His. You belong to Him, you have been purchased by Him, you are His property, you are His people, you are the sheep of his pasture. And because of that, God has a special place in His heart just for you. Now, as I suggested last night, if you and I are going to be led by the Spirit of

God, listen, we must be willing to be led, and we must be willing to obey, and to consent to God's authority in our lives. That's our problem. Some people don't even want other people to tell them what to do, let alone God. Hello! And if you're having a problem with man telling you what to do, how are you going to consent to God telling you what to do when you can't see Him. Man of God once wrote, "I will seek the will of God through and in connection with the word of God." The Spirit and the word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the word, I lay myself open to great delusions. The Holy Spirit guides us at all, He will do it according to the scriptures and never contrary to them. Listen, the issue of obedience means that it must be instant, and that's the only kind of obedience there is. Delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience withdraws from grace.

Oswald Chambers wrote, "One step forward in obedience is worth years of study about it." So here's the bottom line, my friends. We know we are here because of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In fact, you know what God wants from you. I'm sorry, you know what God wants from you? Lean forward, I need to tell you something. And don't tell anybody I told you this. What God wants from you--

[Silence]

Billy Ingram:

Could you hear me?

Audience:

No.

Billy Ingram:

You couldn't hear me? How many of you are lip readers? Alright, here we go.

[Silence]

[Audience applauds]

Billy Ingram:

You got that? What God wants from you, what He wants from me, is you. He wants me. He wants us. We struggle, and we trip, and we think, wow, if I give God everything, then God won't let me do what I want to do. The problem is you don't even know what you want. It's like one guy said, "I don't I don't know what happiness is, but I know I don't have it." You see, Paul said "Walk in the spirit. You won't fulfill the lust of the flesh, for the flesh is against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh." And these are contrary, the one to the other. So that you cannot do the things that you would. The Spirit-filled life, the Christ-centered life, the God-focused life is a life of steady growth and steady progress. We must be willing to follow God's direction. Let me suggest something else to you as a reason why we know we are His. We know we are His because we are His by purchase. We are His by purchase. Flip over just a couple of chapters to chapter 12 of Romans. Romans chapter 12, look at verse one. Paul says, with a sense of urgency, "I beseech you therefore, brother, and by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies." Of what?

[Silence]

Billy Ingram:

I'm sorry, you present your bodies as what?

Audience:

A sacrifice.

Billy Ingram:

A-what kind of sacrifice?

Audience:

Living sacrificce.

Billy Ingram:

"Living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Verse two, "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." See, at some point you need to do more than just go to the Bible, because it's a sign. At some point the Bible needs to go through you and stay, and register, and stick, and begin the transformation process of your life so that you and I can be conformed to the image of His Son. Appreciate those four amens. You're getting there.

[Audience laughs]

Billy Ingram:

So, as you know, in the Old Testament, the sacrificial system required, according to the law, that a priest kill an animal. Cut it in pieces and place it on the altar. It is true that the sacrificial system in the Old Testament was important. But remember, God has always made it clear that obedience from the heart is much more important than sacrifice. Take the case with Saul, First Samuel 15, Saul gave a commandment to Saul to go and wipe out a group of people. And not only wipe them out, but wipe out their sheep and their cattle and everything, they had destroyed them completely. And so what Saul did, he goes in and he sees some very prime rib. He sets aside a little something for himself. And he says, you know, you guys didn't make the cut, so you're out of here.

And he cuts the throat of certain animals, and certain animals he keep for himself, and decides that out of those animals, wow, I'm going to make an offering to God. So Samuel comes and he hears this sound of-of animals. And he says, what is this? And Saul is like, oh, you know, I thought in the process of killing all of these people and all of these animals, I take a few and sacrifice them to the Lord. And he said, God has departed from you. That is not what God told you to do. And you see, we must remember that we are not to serve God on our terms. Even though he was doing what was technically correct, it was incorrect because it wasn't required at the time, what was required at the time was.

[Silence]

Billy Ingram:

I'm sorry did the mic go off? You didn't hear what I said? What was required at the time was--

Audience:

Obedience.

Billy Ingram:

Could you hear me? What was required at the time was obedience. So Samuel said obedience is better than sacrifice, for the sin of rebellion is equivalent to witchcraft. Wow. You could be in rebellion against God and it could be equivalent to working voodoo. If you're making a sacrifice under the wrong terms, he says it's equivalent to witchcraft. God is more interested in obedience than He is in the sacrifices he makes. You see, God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as the living sacrifice that is, listen, daily laying aside our own desires in order that we might follow Him, putting away all energy and resources at His disposal and trusting Him to guide us, we do this out of gratitude because He has forgiven us of our sins. And I want you to listen to this. The expressions alive, holy, and pleasing, point out how exceptional and extraordinary is the sacrifice that believers can make now. For you recall, the Old Testament sacrifices were what? Dead. The problem with living sacrifices is that they keep jumping off the altar. This sacrifice we have the privilege to make, and I really want you to hear this clearly, this is our true spiritual worship. True worship is the offering to God of one's body. And let me ask you a question, can I ask you a personal question? Does God own your body? I'm sorry, does God own your body?

Audience:

Yes.

Billy Ingram:

All of you?

Audience:

Yes.

Billy Ingram:

Do you have compartments that are under construction and Lord, you can't come here right now?

You see, real worship is not the offering, the God of a set of rights and rituals, rules, and regulations, how noble and magnificent they might be. Real worship is the offering of everyday life to Him. You know, some of the things I do each day, sometimes people have a confused notion about pastors and what their daily lives are like. I pray every day, I get into the word of God every day. But one of the most spiritual things as a part of my worship that I do each day, is take out the trash. Make up my bed. Drive my kids to school. Why wouldn't that be worship? That I'm doing from my heart as a devotion to God, having been charged with the responsibility to be a steward over their lives. That's a part of my worship. That is, everything we do should be a part of the worship of God. We have been confused into thinking worship is going to a drive through A.T.M service. It better not be longer than 45 minutes or I'm out of here. And that is worship. You can't rush God. Worship is not focused on a day because every day belongs to God. And every day God gives to us should be a part of our worship, every day God gives to us, we should praise His holy name.

In fact, does not the Bible say, "From the rising of the sun until the going down to the same," what? "The name of the Lord should be praised." Do you know what that means? If we are

praising the Lord every day from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, you know what that means? Would you like to know what that means? It means that you have no time to complain, to whine, to bicker, to sing Woe is Me. Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, nobody knows my sorrows. God sees all and the Bible says, let everything that hath breath what? Praise the Lord. Wow, what a wasted day there is if we go through the whole day without glorifying God. That's why we are here. That's a part of our worship, that's a part of the sacrifice we are to give to Him. Why? Because He purchased us. Paul says what? No, you're not--that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have of God in you, not your own, for you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His. First Corinthians 6:19 and 20.

So I've been telling our congregation, Maranatha Community Church in Los Angeles, for some time now, because we are in a redevelopment zone and they are planning it's about a 20 acre area with a lot of different tenants, we happen to be the largest one, that Maranatha is not Maranatha. That is Maranatha, the body of Christ, is not Maranatha the building. So if we happen to move and go somewhere else, Maranatha is fine, the building will just be razed. And by the way, you don't have to have a building to worship God. William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, proposes this masterful definition of worship, he writes, "For worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness, the nourishment of the mind with His truth, the purifying of imagination by His beauty, the opening of the heart to His love, the surrender of will to His purpose, and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable. And therefore the chief remedy for that self-centered centeredness, which is our original sin and the source of all our actual sin."

You see our church right now, you could say is in a crisis mode. We're dealing with a development situation with a developer that when he came to our board meeting, I looked at him and I told him to his face, I don't like you. I don't trust you. And you are a snake. I'm trying--I'm tired of people thinking that just because you're a church, that you're stupid. That you can just be walked over, that you're passive, that people can just come and take from you what you have worked twenty-six years to build, not going to happen. And I told him that. He said, okay, let's make a deal, I'll pay you one hundred thousand dollars to have exclusive rights just to talk to you. So he gave us a check for one hundred thousand dollars and the check bounced. And this is his introduction to impress us, to do business with us, and he has a series of bounced checks that he has rendered to us. One day we arrived at the church after having been offered to him something ridiculous as an offer to purchase our property and to relocate us and to help us find a new facility. We said flat out, no way, it's not going to happen. We arrive at church and there's a mountain of dirt in our parking lot blocking our access to parking. I was so angry, I told the church this dude hasn't read his Bible lately, David has always kicked Goliath's butt. And forgive me for saying butt, his-his bottom, whatever.

[Audience laughs]

Billy Ingram:

I said, I'm ready for a fight, I could use a good fight, and if this guy's going to defy and disrespect the church, bring it. We're not going to bow. We're not going to be intimidated, and we had a wonderful worship service that day, we were temporarily inconvenienced by this ugly mountain of dirt. But what's the big deal? People in Africa walk five miles one way to get to one

service. All we have to do is walk an extra twenty-five yards around the dirt. That is not going to stop us from coming in contact with the true and the living God whom we worship in spirit and in truth. So at this point, our church, I told them just recently, we're in a good place. We're in a good place, nothing is going down with this development without our consent, and we are not budging, not one inch. And unless he's prepared to do right with us and by us, we're just going to have to shut this thing down. We want to be supportive. We want the area to be redeveloped because they've allowed it to be blighted. But I'm not worried in the least, you know why? Because the Bible says. Be still and know that I am God. And if God is capable of reaching back into nowhere, taking a hand of nothing and throwing it out and making everything, then certainly He can resolve this problem for our congregation.

If He could take the children of Israel, trapped and pursued by Moses at the by Pharaoh at the Red Sea with nowhere to go and the people panic and say, Moses, you brought us out here that we might die. Moses cries out to God, Lord and God said, don't talk to Me. Raise your rod. If God threw the raising of the rod, could part the Red Sea so that the children of Israel could go across on dry land, then certainly God can take care of our situation. And you and I have a God of history who has always taken care of His own. Some of you were wondering if you're studying the right thing. Welcome to the club. I was three years at the University of Oregon and every year they said, well, what's your major? I don't know. And as a junior, you're in trouble if you don't know. But I went through my whole junior year and I didn't know. And it wasn't until I came to Biola that it was clear to me what I was supposed to do, and that was to teach and to preach the word of God. But even if you don't know, listen, if you don't know the secret, lean forward. Even if you don't know, here's the secret. God does. God knows why He brought you

here to Biola. God knows what He wants to do with your life. God knows what direction He's going to take with you. And God is well able to aid you as you study, as you do your due diligence to aid you to graduate. Well able to provide all the financial needs and everything else that goes along with it.

So if God said be still and know, then I'm going to be still. And the Hebrew carries the idea of kicking it, just chill out, let God do His thing. If He's God then let Him handle it, because someone said that He's God all by Himself, and He doesn't need your help, and He doesn't need mine. In fact, it's during those times that we try to help God that we actually mess it up. You remember when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, for example, at the top of the list were these words, Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Exodus 20, verse three. And the context of such a statement deserves being brought to the forefront of this discussion. As you may recall, the children of Israel were in slavery in the land of Egypt, about four hundred and something years. God miraculously delivered them and brought them out of the house of bondage. Imagine having just come out of Egypt, a land of many, many gods and idols. The Israelites had to be greatly influenced by and deeply entrenched in some of the customs and culture of the Egyptians.

We know that each god in Egypt symbolizes a different aspect of life. And it was a widespread and very common thing to worship many gods in order to seek maximum benefit and blessing from them. So listen, when God gave the instructions to worship Him and believe in Him, that wasn't so complicated for them because technically God would have been just one more little god added to the master list of gods. However, when God said thou shalt have no other gods

before me, that was a problem. Now, the most essential lesson to be learned was that the same God who let them out of Egypt was the only true God. And if they didn't grasp that, they could not be His people no matter how painstakingly or meticulously they kept the other nine commandments. Now listen. Consequently, God made this, simply stated, the issue and essence of worship. The issue and essence of worship is His first commandment, and emphasizes it more than any other. In other words, listen, worship is not about the end of this. Worship is not about the worship team. It's not about the music. It's not about the preaching. It's not about the size of the congregation. Listen, worship is about God.

And your life had better be about God every day of it. Or you've missed worship. You could say that the central theme and main attraction of worship is God, as I said. And you remember when the devil presented the trio of temptations to Jesus in the desert. He finally said all these things will I give Thee if Thee will fall down and worship me, Matthew, four verse nine. Then Jesus said to him, get thee hands-get behind me, Satan. It is written down show worship to the Lord thy God, and Him only now serve. Now, listen, Jesus' temptation was to seize the world as a powerful ruler right then and there without executing His strategy to save the world from sin. Satan was trying to shift Jesus' outlook by making Him focus on worldly power and not on God's eternal plans. The proposition of the devil has always fascinated me because Jesus came into the world as the designated and appointed heir of all things, and by Him all things were made. And yet, if Jesus would do just one thing for the devil, just one thing, the one thing that God required of Israel, that is bow down and worship him, game over.

Jesus' words in response represent this temptation, the powerful shot to the skull. Thou shall worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shall thou serve. Now, there's a very important term that hardly ever gets mentioned anymore these days in our churches. And yet it is the word that best describes God's greatest competition in our lives and one of our most difficult struggles. And it is the word idolatry. Augustine said idolatry is worshipping anything that ought to be used, or using anything that ought to be worshipped. On one occasion, you remember, Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John chapter four regarding the question of worship and defined worship this way, God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. This statement to the woman is both liberating and all-encompassing because with it, Jesus directed the woman's attention to a much larger principle than the place of worship. Namely, the location of worship is not nearly as important as the attitude of the worshipper.

How you worship God is far more important than in whose church you worship. That would have been a good place for any man right there. When you consider Jesus' words, it's quite obvious that God is not a physical being constrained in it--confined to one place or even limited to time and matter, He is everywhere present and He can be worshipped anywhere at any time, on any given day. And at the end of the day, the important issue is not where we worship, but how we worship. Sadly, today we've lost sight of what it means to worship and we come into our grand edifices all swollen up and spiritually dim, and dull, and dizzy to unknowingly worshipping the preacher sometimes, or the mega million dollar buildings many times, or the worship leaders of the choir, or the size of the congregation. And we even have the audacity to worship our worship, rather than worshipping God who deserves all the glory, and all the praise, and all the splendor, and all the power, and all the honor forever and ever.

You see the church that we have, we didn't spend sixty-five million to get. We didn't spend one hundred million to get. We have a building that's 60 thousand square feet. And we paid eight hundred thousand dollars for it. It didn't take a whole lot of money to worship God, and especially in areas where people around the church are sleeping close to the church, hoping someone from the church will throw some crumbs so they can eat, or throw a blanket so they're not cold at night. Why spend millions on a building when people need help? They need hope, they need healing, they need someone to lift them up. And the irony is, if you came to the area where our church is, it looks like a war zone, the buildings next to us are torn down. There's a mountain of dirt in the back and a lot of the buildings are deserted. Dilapidated windows are busted out. Our church, I told them, keep the lights on at night. We haven't gone anywhere. We've not jumped ship. We've not deserted. So we've hosted town hall meetings with Stevie Wonder, and a lot of civic leaders in the community right there in that building that we didn't pay mega million dollars for.

Earlier this year, friends of ours, Earth, Wind, and Fire came and gave a benefit in my honor for thirty-four years of ministry, first time ever, they came to a church and they sang songs that lifted up and glorified God. And people were in shock. In two weeks, on October 20th, Bill Cosby, who is traveling around the country with an African-American agenda to help bridge the educational gap, will be coming to our church. We will be the host of this agenda right in this war zone. In an area where people have counted us out, no, we might get bumped around, beaten down, bruised, but God always causes us to bounce back. What am I saying to you? I'm saying to you that when we stay focused on what God has called for us to do, God will fight your battles.

A.W. Tozer wrote, "Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner, humbling but delightful sense of admiring or--and astonish, wonder, and overpowering love in the presence of the most ancient mystery, the majesty which philosophers call the first cause, but which we call our Father, which is in heaven."

I remember the story of a young boy whose dad was a carpenter and each day before school he would study with his dad the intricate details and craftsmanship of his dad's work. One occasion, he requested of his dad that he teach him how to make something he wanted to make, a toy boat. So each day he would look forward to the fulfillment of this project. Finally, after a month, they completed the creation of this small wooden boat. He said to his dad, "Let's go down to the river and let's see if it will float." So with a small sail attached and a string tied to the end of it, the youngster set sail and much to his delight, the boat not only floated, but glided across the river with the greatest of ease. But in his excitement, the rope slipped out of his hand and the boat was carried away with the force of the water. The boy said, "Dad, my boat, my boat!" And ran down the embankment, hoping to get a close enough glimpse that he could grab the rope, only to watch with tears as a boat floated slowly out of his sight. Two weeks later, his family was in town, and as they were walking, the boy noticed in the window of a pawn shop what looked like a toy boat.

And as he got closer, he noticed, he said, "Dad, this is my boat. Let's go in there. That's the boat I made." So they go into the shop, they ask the proprietor if he could take a look and sure enough, it was his boat. "I found it!" But the owner said, "But that's mine now, I purchased it last week, I'll sell it to you for twenty-five bucks." Kid said, "But I don't have twenty-five bucks." The owner said, "Well, I'm sorry then I can't help you." And his family departed. The boy was greatly

disappointed. He decided he would find things to do to earn enough money to buy back his boat, took him six weeks to earn twenty-five bucks. On the day, he requested that his dad take him back to the pawn shop that he might purchase his boat. When they arrived, he spotted with pride and joy right there for all to see in the front window this boat that he had made. He walked in to the owner and said, "I'm here with the twenty-five boat--bucks to buy back my boat." And he placed the money on the counter and waited for the owner to fetch the boat from the window. And it became his possession again. Upon receiving the boat, he said, "You are mine again. In fact, you are mine twice. I created you and now I have bought you back, and you'll never get away from me again."

You see? That's why and how we know we're God's. He made us, He created us in His likeness and in His image, and then when we became slaves to sin, He bought us back once and for all with the precious blood of his son, Jesus Christ. And He has promised, "I will never leave the nor forsake the soul, that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." At the end of the day, the world needs to see students coming out of Biola who can't be bought. Students whose word is their bond, students who put character above wealth. Students who possess opinions and will. Students who are larger than their vocations, who don't hesitate to take chances, who will not lose their individuality in the crowd, who will be as honest in small things as in great things, who will make no compromise with wrong. The world needs to see students coming out of Biola whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires, who would not say they will do it because everybody else is doing it. The world needs to see students from Biola who are true to their friends through good report and evil report, and adversity as well as prosperity, who do not believe that fruitiness, cunning, and headiness are the

best qualities for winning and success, who are not ashamed or afraid to stand for the truth when it's unpopular, who can say no with emphasis when all the rest of the world says yes.

And I want to know, Biola, are you ready for that? Are you ready for that? Are you ready to stand tall? Never back down, back up, shut up until He takes us up. That choice is in your hands. You can demonstrate you are His by living in the fullness of His spirit, allowing Him to direct and guide your life each and every day. By the joint witness of the Holy Spirit, and the choice can be made now that will affect the rest of your life. And I want to know, are you prepared to make that type of deep, lasting commitment to God?

[Audience cheers]

Billy Ingram:

Yeah, wow! Alright! You know, the interesting thing, I remember when I was a student at Oregon, a preacher preached on this text, Romans 12:1 and 2. And I remember him issuing a challenge and I remember saying "I'm prepared to do that." I didn't have any idea what I was getting myself into. But I just knew in my heart I couldn't shake it and fake it with God. I knew I couldn't pretend, I knew I had to come correct. And when I said, "Lord, I'm prepared to lay my life on the altar for You, that You might--" who senses all this week, God has just been speaking to you, speaking to you in ways there's no way I would know, or any of the other speakers would know, you know, that it would have to be God addressing where you are. I say to you, just let God love you, give Him a chance to really prove Himself true and faithful, that the commitment that you make to Him, God is able to do exceeding abundantly. Above all we ask or think. If

you're one of those persons who wants to connect with this program with me right now, could I just ask that you stand with me, please?

And I'm standing because I'm standing with you. Now, Lord, in the name of Jesus. We want to get busy, so we're asking God that You would take us deep. That our roots would be deep in God, that our foundation would be settled in strong and secure. That Lord, this wouldn't be an emotional moment, that we would have thought it through, and this is the right thing to do because of all You've done for us. Your mercies are far greater than we could ever conceive. And You have had mercy on us. Oh, Lord, You have not done to us what we deserved, but instead Your Son received our penalty, He that knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. So now we are saying by standing, we are Yours, we are on the altar of God and we are at Your disposal. Oh, God, for whatever. For whatever that You have for us. We want to be Your servants. We want to be Your stewards. We want to be used as God. We want our lives to count for eternity. And at the end of the day, Lord, we want to hear You say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." So, God, we commit. We're sorry, Lord, for taking so long, for being so nonchalant, so indifferent, so take it or leave it. We draw close to you and we mean it, we're Yours. We thank You, in Jesus's name.