

# Ancient Path

## By Mary-Ann Lind

Announcer:

Let's look to the Lord in prayer. It's nice to have a team - there are just a lot of people who have invested lots of time to make sure that Torrey conference happens and even at the end of Torrey Conference when we try to recognize many we skip over just a whole bunch so we just always appreciate those who work behind the scenes. One of those is Cathy Verhooven, my associate in the chaplains office who has put in many many hours to see that this conference comes about. She also happens to know Dr. Lind and I asked Cathy to come up and just to lead us in prayer just before Mary Ann speaks.

Speaker 2:

Thank you Ron, let's go ahead and bow our heads in prayer. Dear gracious Heavenly Father, Lord of the Universe. Thank you Father that we can see just a glimpse of Your glory through Francis Chan and through the slides he showed. Lord God, You are amazing and You are awesome in this place. Father God, we give You the glory, the honor, to You alone belongs the power, the dominion. You raise up kings and oppose kings. You change the times and You change the seasons. Father God I know that You say that if I regard iniquity in my heart that You will not hear and Lord I would be so sad, we would be so sad if You did not hear our prayers today so right now Lord we just confess our sins. That You would just cleanse us of the lust of

Lind: Ancient Path

the flesh, the lust of the heart, our boastful pride of life and all our sins of unbelief that spring forth from that. By the blood of the Lord Jesus that we just sang about that You would just cleanse us now Lord God. And this is our request before You Lord, that You would anoint Dr. Lind right now, that You would speak forth Your truth through her, that You would bless her for her obedience to follow the call You have put on her life to study Your word and proclaim truth. And now Lord God I know it's Your desire that she be set aside that You could be glorified but we do pray for your anointing on her, Your Holy Spirit to speak to each one of our hearts Lord God. And that You would not just speak to us but that we would act upon Your word in obedience and change our lives for eternity. Thank You Father God, in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Announcer:

And All God's people said [amen]. Let's thank the worship team for their wonderful job this morning. So very nice. Thank you [applause]. 64 years ago in the boonies of West Colorado a little guy was born to not wealthy farmer parents. That was me. A few miles away in Eastern Colorado, NOT that long ago, comes speaker for the day. I don't know, you were probably born in Fort Morgan? You were born in Fort Morgan, the grain fields of eastern Colorado. Mary Ann Lind taught here for a decade and I'll tell you what the word on the street was. That after chapels - she did many chapels - but after chapels in her [inaudible] in the world, the chapel speaker was good but you should've heard Mary Ann Lind in her class after chapel. She absolutely loves the Lord. She has a great passion for Biola student. Um, if I'm a prophet or a son of a prophet then what I say will come true, then my guess is now she's on the speaking circuit that the word is

Lind: Ancient Path

going to get out. But we have her for these three days. Dr. Mary Ann Lind is going to come and open the word and her heart and speak to us. And speaking the truth in love, I have asked her early on if she could just give us a snippet of what she's going to do in her electives so you will be even more frustrated about which of the electives to attend. Let's welcome from Eastern Colorado, Dr. Mary Ann Lind!

[Applause]

Lind:

Thank you SO much! It is so good to be back at Biola. I'm very curious, I want a little show of hands - are there any students left who took classes from me? Wow! I wish I could say hi to each one of you personally but it's just a great joy to be here. There's no question in my life, that wherever life takes me I will carry Biola in my heart. I think 10 of the best years in my life are the 10 years that I spent here at Biola. So I was delighted when Ron invited me to come back. So I'm a little older, a little wiser, a little more battle-weary than I was the last time I was here. But I can tell you unabashedly from the depths of my heart that I love Jesus even more than before.

One of the things that I'm going to talk about this afternoon is a few thoughts on being single because I've been single my whole life and one of the joys of being single is the very thing that Francis Chan was talking about and that is the gift of being able to spend a very good amount of time with the Lord. I am never alone. The Lord is always with me. So I'll be speaking this afternoon on a few thoughts on being single. Tomorrow afternoon I'll be talking about that

subject that we all grapple with that never seems to get any easier. It's just one of those issues in our Christian life and that is hearing the voice of God when we're in a place of decision-making. When we have to come to a cross-roads, to a fork in life when we say God, what do You want me to do? So I'll be sharing tomorrow afternoon some principles and guidelines on hearing the voice of God. So I am very grateful to be hear this week.

As I was sitting here waiting and listening to Francis's wonderful message this morning, very challenging, it took me back to 1994, I believe it was November of 1994, when I was speaking to a church here in Los Angeles. And on my way to the church I know that the Lord spoke to me very clearly in that car. It wasn't a booming voice and it wasn't coming from the boombox in the car beside me. It came from that still small voice of the Lord within me. He said, "Tell them Jesus is coming soon. And from now on, wherever you speak tell them Jesus is coming soon." Now this is 2002. And that was 1994. But I know that I heard that message as clearly as I am hearing my own voice right now. Jesus is coming soon.

Now if in fact Jesus is coming soon, maybe within your lifetime. Or even within mine. Then what manner of persons are ought we to be? How should we be living our lives? The theme of this conference is Speaking the Truth in Love. How should we be living our lives. This morning I'm going to take you to a passage in the Old Testament that speaks about an ancient path. Would you turn please to Jeremiah chapter 6. I must say it's a great joy to hear the rustle of Bible pages. One of the things I've really missed, and I have to tell you that I am as Ron said, living at present time in a very small community, it's very obscure. I'm teaching at a small community college, and God is teaching me a lot in that. There is purpose in every place that He has us. It's not

Lind: Ancient Path

exactly upward mobility in the eyes of the world but God is teaching a great deal and I'm grateful for where I am. But one of the things I've missed is being able to say to students: Would you take out your bibles.

During those ten years when I taught here I suppose there came a point when I took that for granted. Please, please, dear students, don't take Biola University for granted. It is a privilege that God has put you here for 4 years or 5 years or however long you're here as part of your training. And so we take out our Bibles as the guidebook for our lives. Before we read the passage that God has placed on my heart, I would like for you to join me in prayer:

Heavenly Father as we open your word may it be with a sense of awe at what we have in our hands; the precious and eternal word of God which will never change, and which is our guide for all eternity. We have need for nothing more than this book that tells us how to live our lives. And so Father I ask this morning in the name of Jesus, that name above all names, that as we read this passage it would be life to us. That it would become a guiding light for our lives. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Ron invited me to speak at this conference almost a year ago. And during that ensuing year I've been thinking a lot about it because I love Biola so much. I've been doing a lot of speaking but Biola University will always be very special to me. And so for months and months I've been asking God: What is Your message for me to bring to Biola on this November 16th 2002? And for months and months God has been saying to me three words: Follow the Ancient Path. Let's

turn to Jeremiah chapter 6 verse 16. In this passage the prophet is speaking the word of the Lord and it goes like this:

This is what the Lord says: Stand at the cross-roads and look. Ask for the ancient paths. Ask where the good way is and walk in it. And you will find rest for your souls. But you said "we will not walk in it."

Now, let's take a look at the setting in which this passage is found. You might have one of those Bibles that has a title at the top of each chapter. The title in your Bible might be "Jerusalem under Siege". now if you know something about church history, or if you've already taken your course in Old Testament history you know that the children of Israel were split into two kingdoms; the kingdom of Israel in the North, taken over by the Assyrians, and the kingdom of Judah in the South, which at this point was being besieged by the Babylonians. The city of Jerusalem was surrounded. The people were desperate. They didn't know what was going to happen to them. And the prophet Jeremiah speaks these words: Stand still. In other words God is saying in the midst of this chaos, Stop. Just stand still. And look. You're at a cross-roads.

Now since I have seen you last America has had a terrible terrorist attack. For the first time since Pearl Harbor we have realized that we are extremely vulnerable. We have realized that we can be attacked by an enemy in a form that we never dreamed possible. And so you and I live today under the cloud of something we never talked about before. Its called terrorism. I lived most of my life in what was called the Cold War. The Cold War had a very clear set of enemies. There was Them and Us. There were the communists and the non-communists. Back in the 1950's there

were actually drills in school where children were taught to hide under the desk in case there were an atomic bomb. As if that little desk was going to protect them from an atomic bomb [audience laughter]. Well we soon got over that. And now we're concerned that a man named Saddam Hussein might get his hands on nuclear power. The world is a very uncertain place.

Just a few days ago some Americans in an Australian soccer team and others were at a night club in Bali in Indonesia and their lives were suddenly snatched away by a terrorist bomb. Right now in the Washington DC area people are terrorized by a single person. A single man. We assume it's a man. A single person who is terrorizing millions of people with only one thing: He has access to a gun. And people are living in terror. They're afraid to fill gas in their car. They're afraid to go to the shopping center. They're afraid to send their children to school. We live in a time of extreme uncertainty. A time like no other before.

And at a time like this God says stand still. Stand at the cross-roads. As I look at you dear Christian students, I was saying to my friend it is so good to be back with Christian students again. Although I'm surprised quite frankly at how many Christian students I have even at a community college. But as I look at you, you are a generation that is the best educated, the best fed, the healthiest, the longest living. The generation with the best opportunities in the history of mankind. And yet your generation is also at a cross-roads. I have never seen a time in the history of mankind when we've been bombarded with so many choices. You are at a cross-roads. You are not the Jerusalem in this chapter that's being besieged. You are a Christian young people besieged by a culture that is distinctively anti-Christian.

We are told as Christians that we are living in a post-Christian world. We are living in a postmodern world. We are living in a world where all the basic presuppositions seem to have been ripped away from us. We are in a culture in which we are at war as Christians with the prevailing culture around us. What should we as Christians do? How should we live our lives? This passage says Stop. Stand still. Stand at the cross-roads. And then it goes on to tell us what to do. Follow the ancient path.

Let me tell you dear young people, you do not have to look for the current trend in Christianity. You do not have to look for something new and enticing and tantalizing. There is an ancient path that God is saying this morning is the path that I want my children to follow. I don't care what generation, I don't care what year it is, this is the ancient path that is tried and true and tested, and it is the path that my children are to follow. In the midst of a changing world of uncertainty follow the ancient path. What is the ancient path?

Well this conference is named after someone named R.A.Torrey. Some of you are members of the Torrey honor program here at Biola, it's a wonderful program. Who was R.A. Torrey? He was part of the ancient path. R.A. Torrey was a graduate of Yale University. He became the pastor of Moody Bible Church in Chicago. And he had a dream, he had a vision that some day in Los Angeles there would be a Bible Institute just like there was in Chicago. As there was a Moody Institute in Chicago so also there would be a Bible institute in Los Angeles. And so he joined with others such as Lyman Stewart - the man who had the same vision and they set up the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. And in 1910 R.A. Torrey came out here to be the Dean of students and we honor him. He had a vision for the world. He was part of the ancient path.

I could take you back a step further. I could take you back to the turn of the century. Some of you are interested in missions. The great champion of missions was a man named Hudson Taylor. A young man in England in his early 20's who felt the call to China and so he went to China. And he was amazed when he got there because all the missionaries just stayed along the coast. And he said to them "What about the rest of the Chinese? What about all these millions and millions of people who are inland?" and they said, "Oh, no Hudson you don't wanna venture out there, it's too dangerous." And he said "I'll go" and they said, "If you go out there we'll take no responsibility for what happens to you." And so Hudson Taylor learned to speak Chinese. He let his hair grow long. He dyed it with shoe polish, made a braid in the back. He had poor eyesight so he wore very thick glasses. He wore the robe of a Chinese scholar and he began to blend into the Chinese population. He went far inland into China to carry the gospel to that darkened land. When Hudson Taylor died he left behind a mission known as the China Inland Mission. He left behind three thousand mission stations, each one with a clinic, a church, a hospital, and a school. Three thousand of them! Scattered all over China. Because Hudson Taylor was part of the ancient path.

I could take you farther back. I could take you to Martin Luther. It's because of Martin Luther - this is Biola University and not Loyola University. When I first came I was told there used to be sweatshirts that said Loyola University across the top and the Loyola had a big X through it and then Biola underneath [audience laughter]. Did people ever think that you're going to Loyola University?

Lind: Ancient Path

Audience:

Yes

Lind:

Still happens doesn't it? I said to somebody in Colorado, I said I'm going to California to speak at Biola University and they said, "Oh yeah! Big basketball school." They thought I was talking about Loyola, and I said "Yes, it IS a big basketball school." [audience cheering]. But it's because of Martin Luther that we are a Protestant university. It was Martin Luther who began to question things that were happening in the church. And the other Augustinian monks said to Martin Luther "Don't ask any questions!" And he said "I cannot keep still." And finally when they took him before the holy Roman Emperor and they had all these books piled on the table and the holy Roman Emperor said to him "Do you acknowledge that these are your writings? That you've questioned the church?" And he said "Unless I am convicted by God here I stand." That's part of that ancient path that God is asking you and me to follow.

I could take you back to the Roman Empire, to an 86 year old man named Paul Ecarte being tied to the stake. And they're putting wood around his feet and they come with the torch and they say to this dear 86 year old man "Paul Ecarte! You're a citizen of Rome. You're respected. We've always admired you. We can't save your life." And this is what Paul Ecarte said even as they were putting the torch to the wood. He said "86 years have I served Him and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" That is part of the ancient path that

Lind: Ancient Path

God is saying to us today in 2002, "I want you to follow that path. I want you to be so courageous you'd be willing to lay down your life for the gospel of Jesus Christ." Just like those Christians in Pakistan several weeks ago that were lined up, tied up, blindfolded and executed. A bullet to the head. For no other reason other than the fact that they were Christians. Are you willing to follow the ancient path that says "I will die for the sake of Jesus Christ if necessary." It's easy for us to say in the comfortableness and the heat of this gymnasium that we are willing to do that but are we really?

I'd like to take you All the way back to the Old Testament. To Joseph. Joseph is one of my favorite people in the Bible. A type of Christ in the Old Testament. In the life of Joseph we see no evidence of bitterness or anger towards God. What I'd like to suggest to you this morning as part of this ancient path that God is asking us to walk - that there were four areas in particular in Joseph's life where he was tested and I believe it's four areas in particular that you as Biola students - that you will be tested in your life if you haven't already.

Number One.

You know the story of Joseph. I don't have to repeat his life story to you. But number one is a sense of helplessness. A sense of helplessness. I want to suggest to you this morning that there is a divine incarceration that God allows in our lives. It's a place of being so constrained, feeling so helpless that we can't do anything. We can't move. Nothing seems to be happening. We feel like God has forgotten us. We look at other people. Things are happening to them. God seems to be answering their prayers and yet we can't move. It's like we're imprisoned. In fact I think there

needs to be in everyone's theology, what we might call "prison theology". By prison theology I mean that portion of Christian life where we accept: This is where God has me right now. In my own life right now I feel that way. I can't move. I can't go. God has me where He has me. There's no way that I can move other than to be disobedient to God in my life right now and I don't want to do that. And so if you are feeling hemmed in - it might be financial constraints, it might be that you can't afford a car. Has it occurred to you that maybe one of the reasons that God doesn't want you to have a car right now is because He wants you to do the very thing that Francis Chan was talking about: Spend time with Jesus. You might be constrained financially in terms of tuition, and you see others who sail through. I will never forget one of the first students I met here at Biola - she still corresponds with me. So that would've been 12 years ago/13 years ago. When she came to Biola as a freshman I had her in my "West and the World" class - Do you still have West and the world? [audience laughter] Okay just checking. She was in my West and the world class and we took a trip to the museum - to the Getty - and she sat next to me on the bus. She said "Dr. Lind, I don't have any money at all. If I wanted to go to the gift shop today I don't have any money. I don't even have 5 cents." When she graduated four years later she said "You know what Dr. Lind, I don't have any money. I don't even have 5 cents. But I don't owe a penny on my education." Darlene was her name. Darlene used to go to her mailbox and there would be times when there was a check there. Anonymously. It was so exciting to see how God was caring for her needs.

You see, sometimes God has us in a situation coz He wants to show us His miraculous delivering power. How else can He do that other than to have us in a situation of utter helplessness? It's in our weakness that He is made strong. What is your weakest place right now/ Maybe it's socially.

Lind: Ancient Path

Maybe you haven't had a date since you came to Biola. Listen. I taught here long enough to know that it is possible to go through four years of Biola and never have a date [audience laughter]. That's alright. It's not the end of the world. In fact it's entirely possible that God wants you for Himself right now. It's entirely possible that when everybody else is out having a good time, you can have an even better time alone with Jesus. Think of it. You might be feeling socially deprived but you cannot be socially deprived if you have a living viable exciting relationship with Jesus Christ because it gives you an opportunity to spend [time] with the most exciting being in the universe.

You might have a sense of being cut off even from God. It's interesting with Joseph's life because consider, here is a young man who only spent 16 years at home, in a very dysfunctional family. With a father who was a deceiver. With brothers who hated him. But somehow in the midst of those 17 years Joseph got enough of a sense of who God is that it was enough to carry him through life without wavering. Now you may say - and I know I met students when I taught here whose parents were not Christians. You might say "Dr. Lind, you don't know what kind of family I come from. I didn't come from a Christian family. I didn't have that kind of upbringing. I didn't have that kind of support. I'm weak." I tell you that God can make it up to you. There was something about this young man Joseph and God's hand on his life, that God put steel down his spine that this is a young man who could stand in the face of the power of Egypt and say "I will not sin."

That sense of helplessness in our life is exactly where God wants us. So I challenge you this morning to ask yourself: Where is the place in my life where I feel the most helpless. Is it in my

prayer life? Is it in my bible study? Is it in my relationships? Is it financial? If you are part of the faculty or staff, is it in your professional life? Is it among your colleagues? Where is your weakest point? That is the place where you feel most helpless. That is the place where God can be strongest. We are not bound oftentimes because we're doing something wrong. We're bound because we're doing something right. If you are in a place where you just can't move. If you're a senior you may be thinking, "What am I going to do when I graduate? I just don't know. People ask me" - as I asked a student this morning and I realized as soon as it came out of my mouth - Mary-Ann this is NOT the question to ask a senior. I said "What are you going to do after you graduate?" Many of you perhaps don't know. Or you feel pressure to give some kind of answer but deep down inside you think "I don't know. I feel so helpless. There are all these options." Please remember that if you feel helpless it's not because you're doing something wrong. It's because God's hand is on your life and He wants to take that weak and helpless area of your life and use it for His glory.

There came a point in Joseph's life where he was able to say to his brothers "You guys meant it for evil but God meant it for good." Imagine how helpless Joseph felt when his brothers ceased him, tore off that coat of many colors, and put him in a pit. And when they went over and had a picnic. From the depths of that pit Joseph could hear his brothers laughing and eating. And then finally one of them said, "Well, maybe we shouldn't leave him down there. Here come some merchants. Let's sell him off as a slave." Imagine how helpless Joseph felt as his own brothers - his flesh and blood - were selling him as a slave. Imagine how helpless he felt when he was in prison, how helpless he felt when he had asked those two servants of the Pharaoh when they finally got out of prison, he said "Don't forget me!" and for two years they forgot him. Imagine

his sense of helplessness of being forgotten. But remember what God starts, He also finishes. God's eye was on him all the time just as his eye is on you this morning.

Number Two.

The second area where Joseph was tested - and I guarantee you this is one of the great tests of your life - it is the area of sexual purity. I know of no time in recent history, meaning the 20th Century - when we have had a culture that is so saturated by sex. Consider for example the commercials on TV. It might be a commercial for an automobile but basically it's purveying sex; this is a sexy automobile. I always ask myself, how can an automobile - which has no gender - how can it be sexy? [audience laughter]. But apparently that appeals to the public. We are bombarded by billboards. We are bombarded by images on television and in the movies. We are a culture that is absolutely saturated and satiated with sex.

The other night I saw Madonna being interviewed by Larry King. I thought to myself "I'm gonna watch this - because I don't have a particularly pleasant view of Madonna and her contribution to our culture - I'm gonna see what she says." It was quite interesting, because she's a married woman with two children and Larry King asked her, "Do you allow your two children to watch television?" And she said "No. There's too much trash on TV." [audience laughter]. At any rate we are a culture that is virtually surrounded by sexual temptation. And I guarantee you it is one of the great temptations of your life here at Biola University. The fact that you are at a Christian university does not protect you from that great and powerful temptation.

Now we see Joseph, this young, handsome man - there aren't many people in the Bible who are described as handsome - in form and figure. Absalom was one of them. David was one of them. Joseph is one of them. We get the picture. If Joseph was here today, he would be admired on this campus for his physical appearance not just his spiritual well-being. He had everything going for him, and here he had found favor in the eyes of Potiphar - a high official under Pharaoh - and his very seductive wife. And Joseph's path often brought him across the path of Potiphar's wife. Repeatedly she tried to seduce him and repeatedly he resisted until he got to point where he said to her "How can I do this great sin and sin against God?" This young man had something in his life that I wonder where it is today in the body of Christ. It's called the Fear of the Lord. Where is the fear of the Lord in the body of Christ? What does it mean to have the fear of the Lord on your life? It means exactly what it says. It means to be scared of God.

Now I am the first to acknowledge the enormous power and comfort to me of a loving and personal God as we heard so eloquently and beautifully from Francis Chan. God is a God of love. He is our Heavenly Father. That has comforted me enormously over the years. He is our Abba, our Papa. But please dear students, do not forget the Holiness of God. The Awesomeness of God that we sang about this morning. That we need to have a healthy fear of God. And that when we sin we are sinning against God. Sexual sin isn't just a sin against your own body. It's not just a sin against the body of another person. It is first and foremost sin against God. A holy, and righteous God.

On two occasions in the word we have an account of people who came face to face with the exalted Lord. In Isaiah chapter 6 the prophet says "I saw the Lord. He was high and lifted up and

His train filled the temple." And Isaiah fell before Him as one who were dead because of the sense of God's awesome holiness. And in Revelation chapter 1 this disciple who had been loved by Jesus, His closest companion for three years, he now sees the exalted Jesus, and he falls at His feet as if he were dead.

Joseph in the Old Testament had that sense of the fear of the Lord and His awesome Holiness. Now Joseph could have said - as many young people do today, "Oh well, nobody sees me. Besides that, she's seducing me. It's her fault". How many times have we heard "It's her fault. It's he's fault. I was seduced. It wasn't my fault. I was the innocent party." Just last Sunday I went to a birthday party for my 3 year old great niece. I love her dearly. I have a special place in my heart for that little girl, because when she was conceived out of wedlock, her father said to my great niece, "Well, good luck." He has never seen this beautiful child. Now I do not for a moment condone the sin that my great niece committed, but I commend her that she chose to keep that child and not have an abortion. And as I spent time with that beautiful little girl on Sunday, I thought "I pray for the awareness in her life that she has a Heavenly Father, and I am grateful for her little life, whatever God has planned for her." But what happened in that situation on both ends - my great niece as well as the father of this child - is to blame the other one.

Joseph could have said "She seduced me. It was her fault. Or he could have said another one that you could say here at Biola. You could say "Oh well, I'm in a foreign land. I'm far away from home. Nobody sees me. I'm in Los Angeles." When I taught here I was aware of the fact that there were things that took place particularly on weekends because of the anonymity of Los Angeles, that students would never have done if they were home, or if they were close to people

Lind: Ancient Path

to whom they were accountable. I challenge you this morning, do you have the fear of the lord on your life. That no matter where you are you are aware of the fact "I cannot commit this sin because God is with me. God sees me. God knows me. I am not anonymous. I am accountable to God."

One of the most powerful and addictive and seductive temptations in our world today is internet pornography. It is insidious. If you are addicted to internet pornography I implore you to get help. Because you are not only sinning against yourself. You are sinning against God in heaven. And you are ruining whatever chances you might have down the road for a happy and healthy marriage. And so Joseph fled this woman, even leaving his cloak behind. Thus leaving behind a tool that she could use to accuse him that would then put him in prison. But he said "How can I commit this sin and sin against God?"

Number Three.

The third area that you will be tested in here at Biola is the area of pride. I can remember students coming into my office and asking me to pray with them because they were struggling with pride. Spiritual pride. I remember one young man who was a student body officer coming into my office and saying "I know that God has given me gifts. I know that God has given me leadership ability. I know that I have talents. But I struggle with an awareness of my own pride and I can't seem to shake it." Now God has gifted many of you - in fact all of you. You all have gifts. But some of you have particular leadership gifts. Joseph certainly did. The question then becomes: How are you going to handle it? How are you going to handle it as God opens doors

for you. As you find yourself in positions of responsibility. How are you going to handle it? Are you going to walk over the people below you? Are you going to clamor over people to get to the top? I tell you dear students, it happens in the body of Christ. It happens in the church structure. It happens in denominational hierarchies. It happens in our world because there's so much of our flesh.

Joseph struggled with the issue of pride. How gifted are you? How able to handle the gifts are you - that God has given to you. And so that is an area of being tested. As nearly as we can see in the life of Joseph he handled it very well. And he was the second in command in the whole country of Egypt he still maintained the strong commitment to God. He still followed that ancient path.

Number four.

There is finally, the fourth area where Joseph was tested and the area where I believe each of us is tested again and again in our lives and that is the area of forgiveness. I daresay that each one of us as we go through life again and again and again has need to give out, give out, give out forgiveness. If you do not forgive you cripple yourself. Imagine how much Joseph had to hold against his brothers that sold him into slavery. It was because of those brothers that he had been in that prison, that he had gone through all those difficult years. And yet we have that absolutely fantastic story at the end of Genesis in those four chapters - where Joseph sees his brothers for the first time in years and there's this great sense of forgiveness that wells up in him. So much so that he has to leave the room because he can't control his tears.

How do we know when forgiveness has taken place? I once heard it said that you know you've forgiven someone when you no longer have the desire to talk about how they hurt you. With that in mind I'm somewhat hesitant to share with you what I'm about to share. Except that it's so fresh in my mind and I share it with you because I feel it's a victory in my own life.

Two weeks ago I went to a conference in Denver. Very large women's conference. And as we were walking out of the conference during the lunch hour as I came up out of the seating area where I was and came up of, through the hallway out into the open area where people were milling around. I suddenly saw a woman who I would say is the one person in my life who had hurt me more than any other human being in all of my life through the power of words. In fact, had I been a non-Christian I would have had grounds to have taken her to court and sued her for defamation of character. That's how powerful and how strong words can be to hurt. I had not seen her for years. And as I walked out of where I was sitting and I was reflecting on what I had just heard in the conference, here was this person! And her back was to me. And momentarily I had to make a choice. Am I going to turn around and go back so she'll never know I was here. Am I going to go the other way and hope she doesn't see me. And I don't know how to explain it to you except that I know it was the Lord. All of a sudden in an instant something came up to me that I can only say was the love of the Lord. And I walked over and tapped her on the shoulder. And she turned around and we embraced each other with a hug that I rarely hug people with. It was so intense and emotional. And I felt literally as if there was forgiveness coming from my body into hers. And I tell you that I know that was a divinely ordained appointment. There were 15,000 women there and I ran into her. But I thank God for the release that took place. Later that

day - I had her email address - I sent her an email to tell her how wonderful it was to see her. It feels SO GOOD to know you have forgiven someone.

Can you imagine how Joseph would've felt if when he saw his brothers, he would've been filled with anger and resentment and unforgiveness, and in his mind he would've thought "Man, I'm gonna nail these guys! I'm gonna get back at them for what they did to me." Is there someone in your life that you need to forgive? Is it your roommate? Is it a friend who has spoken unkindly? Is it a member of your church? Is it someone in the body of Christ with whom you have had contact and there is that sense of uneasiness every time you see them? If you see them you go out of your way not to see them. You avoid them because you know there's just that little thing. That little thing. I tell you the way to walk in freedom is to give out forgiveness.

And so Joseph passed the test. Where did he get his strength? It came from the God of Abraham. The God of Isaac. The God of Jacob. It is that ancient path that God is challenging us to walk on today. You and I must draw our strength from the faith of our fathers. Biola University has a sacred trust to keep. And the very fact that this conference is called the Torrey Conference is an indication of respect to one of the founding fathers of this university. But I can also tell you that it only takes one generation for that heritage to be broken. It's been said God has no grandchildren. You, as the current student body of Biola University, have the solemn obligation to follow the ancient path. The faith of the fathers of this University. To take what was taught from generation to generation to generation in this sacred place and pass it on to the next generation. If you don't, that line will be broken. And future generations will only pick it up with great difficulty.

What God has entrusted to you is a torch to carry on and to pass on to subsequent generations. Harvard University was started in much the same way Biola University was. It was started as a place to train pastors. But if you were to go to Harvard University today you would find a distinctive anti-Christianism. And so the choice is your generation. Are you going to pick up that same torch and carry it on to the next generation? Are you going to follow the ancient path? You have a responsibility to carry on what our fathers have given to us. God produces a powerful generation through the fathers.

This morning as we close the session I have asked very specifically for us to sing a very certain song because as we sing, I would like for each one of us to re-confirm in our own lives: Yes. I want to be one of the carriers of that strong, sure foundation that is ours in Jesus Christ. I don't need some new trend. I don't need something new. I will follow the path of our fore-fathers. Going all the way back to Abraham. I will follow the ancient path. "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." Would you stand please.

[End of Recording]