

Facing Life Without Fear, Part 4

By Billy Ingram

Announcer:

Leading us in prayer is Dr. Don Douglas who is dean at ICS. We appreciate him, the good school and the ministry and program that's developing there and becoming known throughout the United States and around the world.

It would be enough if he were one of our early All-American basketball players or enough. That he graduated from Biola University. But combine those with the fact that he opens the Word of God and teaches with incredible power and he's just been a great gift. To the body of Christ to us here. And so a deep appreciation and thanks. Billy Ingram We welcome you back for this final round but not your last message here. Let's welcome and and thank you once again please.

Ingram:

I have thoroughly enjoyed these last few days together and I wish to say to you as I said in the elective session just a few moments ago that you have been a greater blessing to me than I have been to you. And I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for you being you in God and in the body of Christ. I think too often we are guilty of making the assumption that those who lead have no need like normal folk. Pastors are people too. And we need to hear that we are effective. We need to hear that we are a blessing. We need to hear the things that normal people do. So I want to encourage you this Lord's day to go to your pastor at the church that you attend.

Put your arms around him and tell him how much you appreciate their work for the Lord and their faithfulness to God. Amen.

Can we stand just for a moment. And would you mind holding hands with your friend next to you. Something that we do in our church. Often we have people to touch each other like you're doing now. What I want for you to touch them in one other way and that is I want you in their behalf to touch the throne of God. Pray God's blessings upon the lives of those persons whose hand you holding now. Only God knows the deep challenge that they're facing only God knows beyond the smile and the grin who's really discouraged and thinking of giving up. As God's blessings upon their lives in particular right now. Go ahead and pray for them right now. [Pause] Jesus' name, Amen. Do you know the chorus. I choose you again and again.

Several persons have asked so I'll say it once the name of my church is married now. Community Church. And it's located in West Los Angeles on King Boulevard not very far from the Coliseum. And you're welcome anytime your schedule permits to come and share with us or even work with us as we minister. To the needs of people in the Los Angeles area. And a number of different people ask do I speak at different places. I speak wherever I'm invited.

Would you open your Bibles if you would to First Peter chapter 2 and we've been talking about the Feast of Trumpets or the Feast of Tabernacles. Feast of Trumpets right. Excuse me?

Speaker 1:

No!

Ingram:

We haven't been talking about the Feast of Trumpets here. What have we been talking about someone tell me. About the Word of God. What in particular?

Speaker 2:

Get in His word!

Ingram:

OK. Getting into the word. Did we give you a few reasons why we should get into God's word. How many that we give you?

Audience:

Six!

Ingram:

OK let's let's list them.

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OK. It sets us free and gets us out of bondage, one. Two. I think I'll acknowledge hands it'll be easier. Two. Yes sir.

[inaudible audience comment]

It's cleansing. All right. Three. Yes ma'am?

[inaudible comment]

It will strengthen us. Good. Four?

[inaudible comment]

It will make us wise. Good. Five? Yes sir. She's pointing at you sir. Yes.

[inaudible comment]

All right. There was one before that wasn't it. Cause joy in our hearts. That's. Five. Okay. And then six? [silence] He just said it. What was it?

[inaudible comment]

Very good. I believe very strongly that God's word is relevant for today. I remember as an eager new Christian and a student on the University of Oregon. It was a thrill to me to enroll in a Bible class there and it was Bible as civilization. The professor had a PhD. He had I think it was an LLD. He was fluent in Greek. He was fluent in Hebrew and Aramaic and I thought to myself my I can sit under the master's feet and really gain some insight into the things of God. The very first class he said who gave the apostle Paul the right to say the Bible was the word of God? And I took a big gulp and I swallowed. And I said Oh Lord. I didn't know a lot about the Bible but I knew that this man was out to lunch. And he went on throughout the whole class to cut up in pieces to dispute to dissect and basically to destroy the integrity of the Word of God. And forgive me for saying this but I always say what's on my mind. I feel the church is wasting its time disputing as to whether this text is relevant or whether this book should be there. Just preach the Word of God!

Audience:

Amen!

Ingram:

People need to hear the word. They don't need to hear our debates and our criticism they need to hear what's going to help them and that's been I think the problem with the church. We're so busy disputing and fighting with each other while the world is going to hell. And it's time we wake up to the urgency and the call of God upon our lives to present such a message of simplicity that even the fool won't miss it.

And there's a whole lot of walking around. Young fools. Middle age fools. Sad to say a lot of old fools too. The final thought. I wanted to leave with you as to why we should get in the Word of God I believe is very very important because God's word produces spiritual growth. God's word produces spiritual growth. Notice the words of Peter. First Peter to two: As new born babes desire the sin Sarah milk of the word. That word desire is an important word because there are a lot of people who get into the Word of God but they have no desire for the word. A lot of people get into the Word of God because their professor has assigned them or their pastor has assigned them or their mother or their father wants them in the Word of God but they don't want it themselves. And so they get into it and it's only a crash course in stale Bible knowledge. And getting in the Bible that way won't produce anything no more than throwing seed on this tarp here. It won't produce any growth at all.

You and I must hunger and thirst for truth. We must have a burning desire for the Word of God to the extent that we can't get enough of it. You see when you're in a situation where you don't have it you appreciate it. I remember once I was in Accra Ghana and I was passing out Bibles to a lot of children and they literally fought to get a Bible. Why? Because they don't have one. And the word of God is so real and so powerful and so precious to them. They were not leaving until they had a Bible in their hand. Here we have campuses all over the United States. We have the word of God in various translations. Many know Greek and Hebrew. Many have been under the word of God and around it all of our lives. And yet when it comes to getting into it with a strong desire - Ho hum, another day. Oh my other message [yawn] it's just the word of God.

That's kind of our attitude sometimes. Quite frankly I think that God's displeased with that in the same way if someone was pouring their heart out to you and you're looking all around yawning in their face watching your watch making sure that you don't give them too much time and attention. We do that with God either we oversleep for our devotional time or when it's time for us to go to sleep. We're too tired so we fall asleep during our devotional time. Somebody say Hey man I'm telling you the truth.

But Peter says as newborn babes desire it. Don't just get into it but desire it as you get into it. Be hungry for it. Feast upon it feed upon it. Make it your word from God. And he says that you might grow by it. It's almost identical to the wonderful words of our Lord in Matthew for for you

remember when he said Man shall not live by bread alone but by what? [audience mumbling] I'm sorry but by what?

Audience:

Every word!

Ingram:

But by every word that preceded out of the mouth of God. Job said Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. America is the only place where we have more food than we need. And too many diets to keep us from eating it. A lot of Christians on a crash course course diet from the Word of God. When was the last time you got into God's word not because you were assigned not to prepare for an exam but just because you wanted to hear from God. When was the last time when was the last time you approached the Word of God. Not in a rush but Lord I've got the time. Speak. Your servant heareth.

You see if you're too busy for God you're too busy. Even if you're busy with the right things you're too busy. There comes a point in all of our lives I believe when we have to grow and I'm convinced that if a Christian is not growing if they don't grow they won't Glow. And if there is no glow you won't Go. Did you get that one?

We must grow and glow and go. And there has to be a balance in our lives between the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. If you're only getting the word of God without the influence of the of the Holy Spirit then you're going to dry up with that word and if you're only getting the Holy Spirit without the word of God you're gonna blow up. We need a balance of the Spirit of God and the Word of God so we can grow up. What a perfect place for an Amen.

Paul said when I was a child I spake as a child I understood as a child but when I grew up I became a man I put away child things. Now it is interesting the way the Lord works. God uses people to impact our lives. There is an important passage that seems to bring that to bear in Ephesians Chapter 4. Can you turn there for a moment.

Ephesians the fourth chapter Paul is speaking of unity within the body of Christ and the importance of us maintaining and preserving and keeping it because there is one body and one spirit. Even as we are called in one hope of our calling one Lord one faith one baptism one God one father who's above all through all. And in you all. He says unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Christ ascended and he descended. He let captivity captive. He gave gifts unto men and some of those gifts to men or ministry gifts are listed in verse eleven.

He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and some teachers. You'll notice he did not give all of these five categories. The reason being if he gave all who then would be impacted by their ministry? If all were leaders who would follow? Another reason why he he only gave some is because all aren't mature. All haven't developed even though there are some who for the time ought to be teachers they have needed that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and it becomes such as have need of milk that is chronologically they've been around long enough to be an adult but there's still like a babe because they're unskillful in the work of righteousness.

I want you to notice something here. Verse twelve he says the reason why ministry gifts have been given to the body of Christ is number one for what? The equipping or perfecting or developing of the saints. Now stop there for a moment. If you get this then you understand why you are at Biola. And you'll understand why God has professors and instructors and pastors and teachers in your life. God now is equipping you not to become a scholar though you should be scholarly in your study of the Word of God. Your goal is not to be a scholar. I consider myself to be a scholar and I think scholars are boring without practical communication of the Word of God.

Don't let your goal just be to be a scholar to be heavy to be deep. Be simple. Be practical. Be relevant but here's why I believe God has you here. God is equipping you developing you grooming you preparing you for number two. What is it saying. It's OK to say it. What does it

say. I didn't hear you. What does it say? God is preparing us for the work of the ministry. I guarantee that if you survey one hundred pastors out of 100 pastors you would get the same answer at the top of the list in terms of their perpetual frustrations. And that is they can't get people in the church to work for the church.

Now you have a choice before you become a pastor or an associate or a Christian Ed director or a missionary. You have a choice now to decide I'm going to work for God. And I would pray that you would not be a part of a church and become a sitting saint. Sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit sitting on god's power. God wants us busy about the father's business. They tell us that 20 percent of the people in churches do 80 percent of the work and carry the load for the rest.

We must each carry our own burden. We must each carry our own load. We must be responsible for the call of God upon our own lives and that's why God has ministry gifts in the body of Christ to equip you to prepare you so that you don't get information and keep it or sit on it but that you give it away that you'll work with it. And there's a third reason. He says for the edifying of the body of Christ that is the body is designed to heal itself and to build itself.

Look at verse 13 till we all come where in the unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. [pause]. Now

listen carefully. Your spiritual mentor your spiritual target goal objective - is not a man. Your mentor your target your goal. That by which you compare your life is the Lord Jesus Christ. We have heard in recent days of very key persons in the body of Christ's falling and I want to say a particular word to you Biola, men will always disappoint. Men will always fall short does matter how hard they are how big they are how influential they are the capacity by man to fall is always imminent but Jesus will never fall. Jesus will never fail. Jesus will never come short of that which you have your eyes upon. He is the first and the last. He is the beginning and the end. He is the alpha and the Omega. He is the author and the finisher of your faith. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

That's what the body of Christ needs to do. I tell my church all the time I'm not God. I'm not the Messiah. I think there's a real danger in people putting leaders on a high status or platform and I tell my church all the time I'm a man I'm a human being. I was in a store the other day and this lady saw me walking through the store with a basket like hers she says Oh Pastor Billy I didn't know you shopped. No. God has the last 25 years been feeding me manna from heaven, you're right [audience laughter].

Hey pastors are people too and their kids are people too and there's a real danger in pressuring PK kids. That's right. Say a man for the PK kids. My son didn't have any special powers. He doesn't go around and his friends going "I cast you out in the name of Jesus rise and be healed".

He's a kid like everyone else struggling to make it. Struggling to find himself going through adolescence and thinking he's in charge of his own life.

Two years ago we sent him with his school to Paris for three weeks. He came back. He gave me his itinerary for the weekend. He was 11 years old and he said that this is what I'm doing for the week and I said Excuse me. No you don't tell me what you're going to do. You inquire and you get my authorization. And as far as I'm concerned you tear up that list and you go to your room until I tell you to come out. I'm a no nonsense Dad. I'm a no nonsense pastor and some things you just don't play around with. Once children begin telling you what to do you're in trouble and that's what's happening in our society today. Parents are having to beg their kids. "Oh Johnny please get down please. Johnny please". My children learn at a very early age you act like you're a demon possessed in the mall and I'll act like my belt is demon possessed too.

See God listen God is the only one that should be on the pedestal of your life. We can admire men and women that God is using but always keep in mind that all of us are just one step away from falling. Just one step away. I don't care how spiritual you are at the moment. I don't care how much God has used in the past. You gotta Keep at it. You got to stay with it. You can't coast on past experience. Wherefore let the one who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. You understand that? Now then there's something else that's very important verse 14 about the stability that comes by having key people in your life. He says that we henceforth be what. Hello. Can you read? What does it say.

That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness about they lie in wait to deceive. The idea slight of men is from a Greek word which means loaded dice. You will never break Atlantic City you'll never break Vegas. The odds are against you now of course I know what I'm about to say doesn't apply to any Bible a student so you tell some of those heathens out there OK.

But every Wednesday and every Saturday there's thousands of people who line up to buy a lotto ticket because they want to win the big one. I told you it wouldn't apply to you to tell somebody about that all right. You tell them that they have a greater chance of being struck by lightning four times in their lifetime than ever winning once at the lottery. You tell them OK! The odds are against you. And when there's new doctrines and false doctrines that sweep through the church you can't get sucked up into it. Quite frankly I am sick and tired of the junk peddlers and those who are just basically fleecing the people for their money. I'm tired of people giving so much attention to an approval of TV evangelists who claim to have the power of God just to wave the anointing upon people and people fall down. Oh just take the anointing [blowing noise] Maybe at your breath and count the anointing. My question is where does it say that in the word of God?

Audience:

Amen!

Ingram:

I don't care if people fall down. We've been reduced to a people who fall down and claim to have the power of God or we have so much faith because we don't sneeze. There's one more thing I want to say about that [mouth noise]. Then there's this other group of folk who go around saying all you gotta do is just name and then claim it grab it and blab it. God is your servant at your disposal whatever you want just keep confessing it and confessing it and you'll get it.

That is blasphemous. It is alien to scripture and it totally obliterates the sovereignty of God. My Bible says Thy will be done. These preachers have rewritten the Bible in fact as one guy in the northern part of the United States North Pacific Northwest who said if you don't like the will of God you change it! So they have rewritten the Bible to say our Father which art in heaven hallowed be Thy name My will be done thy kingdom come. And this whole concept is appealing to greed. You can have what you want when you want it because it is the will of God and I tell you folks it ain't. Any parent who is constantly giving its child what it wants when it wants it is a bad parent and the parent needs to be spanked. That child will be in serious trouble.

Not too long ago I took my youngest daughter Charisse thinks she was 5 at the time for a ride in the car. So as we were riding I let her sit right in my lap. I had my hand on the steering wheel but I pushed the seat up close enough so her hands could grab it as well. I said go ahead cars you can drive and we're driving maybe about 50 yards not very far. Very very very slow. My foot mostly

on the brake cruising and coasting she says Daddy get in the passenger seat I can take it from here [audience laughter]. Yeah right.

Now if I grab that request I'm in serious trouble. It's not that I don't want her to drive in as much as it is not her time to drive. Sometimes God says not now. Not now doesn't mean never. God wants a stable people who are willing to endure sound doctrine who will stay with the word of God who will take the admonition of our Lord when He said to those disciples if you continue in my word and just stay with it. Don't get caught up in this new doctrine and that wind of doctrine because it's going to come and go.

Dr. Mitchell when he taught here. He used to always say it's new it's not true and if it's true it's not new. The only way you and I will be stable is by being students of the word so that God gives us discernment too. Stable people are bold and steadfast. They're unmovable they always are in the work of the Lord Biola. Hang in there. Stick with it. Don't back up don't give up. Don't shut up until he takes us up

[Applause]

Announcer:

God has been so good to us he's given us so much. I constantly pray in my own life that during the conference message after message and seminar after seminar that I'll my mind will be fresh and I'll have taken good enough notes that I can go back I can chew on this stuff and I hope you'll do the same. I hope that we'll just incorporate this into our lives so that our campus and our lives and our whole families will be different as well as our world. We will be dismissed in just a moment. May I simply remind those of you who really love God and want to incorporate the word you'll stay and help us with the pickup. And then we can leave. God bless you. You are dismissed. Have a great weekend.