

Philippians 3:4-14

By Billy Ingram

Announcer

In services like this, where the guy stands and says, now we don't really need the message. It's all been done. And then we have the message. Of course.

Billy Ingram, International preacher, Biola's all American inducted to our hall of Fame, one of two along with Dr. Cook, our President. But the thing that I remember the most about Billy Ingram was the fact that during his student days, he didn't boast of it. But everyone knew that during his student days, he had memorized at least 1000 verses of scripture only probably his wife and God knows how much of the scripture he now has memorized. And then the other thing that impressed me tremendously was that Billy knew before he got here that God had his hand on him to preach.

You will agree with that. As you hear, Billy, open the Word of God. Billy Ingram, come and preach from the Word, please.

Billy Ingram

How many of you enjoyed the Maranatha choir and band? Biola will never again be the same. This is exciting. It's exciting what God is doing. There are some members of our Church who are students here. Shana, why don't you stand just for a moment? God bless you. Let's see. I don't see the others. Where? Why don't you stand up? Okay, Luke in the back. God bless you. Wave your hand. God bless you. And let's see here. Where's Kevin? He didn't come hear me speak this morning. And he's not here tonight.

Where is he? He's at school. I feel honored as well that there are some members of my congregation who came to support me tonight. I want for them to stand in addition to those who

are part of the choir. God bless you. Let me ask you a question. How many of you are here tonight? Because you want to be. You're not here because it's a requirement. Yeah. Okay. Well, I'm excited about what the Lord has laid in my heart to share tonight. And I believe that you will never again be the same.

Let's have a word of prayer and we'll get into God's Word, our Father and our God. We're thankful to you for all that you're doing in our midst. We thank you for this. The 55th annual Tory Bible Conference. We thank you for the many friends we have here at Biola. Thank you for our President, Dr. Cook, and for all the faculty and staff and all this student body. And thank you for the enthusiasm and the excitement that is in this place. And we welcome the Spirit of God to be our teacher, to lead us and guide us into truth.

And may the truth set us free. And may it radically alter and change our lives. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. In the third chapter of the Book of Philippians is a very profound passage of Scripture. Philippians, the third chapter, and I wish to begin reading at verse number four. Philippians, chapter three, verse number four, and I'll read down through verse number 14, though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any man think he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh. I more circumcise the 8th day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin and Hebrew of the Hebrews as touching the law of Pharisee concerning zeal persecuting the Church. Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless.

But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ, Yea doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them, but done that I may win Christ and be found in Him not having thine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith

of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. That I may know Him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained either were already perfect. But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the Mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. As I was reading, I was somewhat distracted because I saw my three beautiful kids standing at the door.

Come on in. That's Billy in the front and Marian and Karis. Billy's already, he's in the 6th grade and he's already averaging 40 points a game. So how are you guys doing? Finished all your homework, all right. It's encouraging to me that they want to come and hear me preach. I don't have to beg them. I don't have to threaten them, but they want to hear God's word and they want to be with us when we have the chance to Minister. As I begin, I wish to bring you Greetings from the rest of the Marinapha Community Church of West Los Angeles, and I want to bring Greetings from my wife, Marguerite, who could not be with us tonight.

She has been in Africa, specifically Nigeria, for the last two weeks. She is presently today in Akra, Ghana. We're conducting music workshops and pastors conferences for the next three weeks and a big international concert this weekend in Ghana, next weekend in Nigeria and the following weekend in London, England. So we solicit an interest in your prayers regarding that that God would have his way and that he would be glorified through our efforts to reach people for Christ. Amen there's a great challenge that lies before us as students of such a fine institution as Biola.

The challenge is, on the one hand, you can be exposed to so much information so frequently that the information that you are getting never penetrates your life. And there are many people who know about God, but they don't know God. And I think the real quest of the Christian life is discovering a living, vital, active personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I did something some years ago just for the fun of it. I didn't think it would happen, but I called Santa Barbara, and I asked the information director for the Ranch and the personal number for then President Ronald Reagan.

And they said, I'm sorry, the number is unlisted. I said, Well, I'd like the personal private number to his limousine. He said, we don't have the number. Had I had a personal, intimate relationship within the President, I would have had access to his private line anywhere at any time. But I only knew about him. Just as you and I only know about him. And the real danger of being in a Christian school is that you can be here for the wrong reason. You could be here because your parents went to this school or you had friends that went to this school.

And you want to keep the Christian tradition going. Boy, I wish somebody could say Amen. And yet we find this man, the Apostle Paul, determined to know nothing more than Jesus Christ. In fact, you might be interested to know that prior to him being named Paul, his name was Saul.

And it's interesting that Saul means one who's big in his own eyes. Paul means one who's little in his own eyes. And prior to his conversion, you recall that he believed he was adamant. He was dogmatic about the fact that he was fulfilling the will of God in persecuting the Church, dragging men into prison, having them killed.

In fact, he was at the feet of Stephen when he was stoned and he consented unto his death. When Stephen breathed his last breath, it was as it were. Saul said, Amen. Acts chapter Nine We are told that as he was on his way to Damascus, riding on his high horse, there shone at noontime

alight brighter than the noonday sun. And we know that that was the glory of God. And it blinded him and knocked him off his horse. And the voice of our Lord said, Saul, saul.

Why persecutes thou knee? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. Do you remember the first question that Saul asked? Hello. Now, that's very good. You remembered. All right. What was the first question that's all asked? Who are you, Lord? You know what I've discovered is there are a lot of Christians, a lot of believers who have grown up in the Church and grown up in Christian homes. And they have never asked, who are you, Lord? That one question. Who are you, Lord? Became the supreme passion of Paul's life.

Nothing else mattered. Who are you, Lord? And the second question he asked, what will you have for me to do? Now between me and you those are two very important questions for us to ask ourselves tonight, because there's a lot of people who go through the word in Bible College, but the word never goes through them. There are a lot of people who are under the word, but they're not on top of the word. A lot of people who get into the word, but the word never gets into them.

And I would hope that that is not the case in your life that you're a casual Christian or you're a some tinny Christian, or you're a Christian that's really not concerned about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Until there's a crisis. You find that people that don't even know God and don't even love God believe in God when there's impending doom and danger in their lives, when there's financial crises and divorce and earthquakes, people turn to God. Who are you? Lord help. Paul asked that one question, Lord, who are you?

And then as he goes on in his soliloquy to the Philippian Church, he said, the one thing I've mastered in my life is to forget what's behind me and reach forth to what's before nothing else matters but a knowledge, an intimate knowledge of Jesus. It is interesting that all of the New

Testament writers, in fact, all of the biblical writers, with the exception of possibly Luke, were Jewish, and many of the concepts in the New Testament derive their ideas from the Semitic concept in the Old Testament, for example, in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word Yadda means to know it means to have a knowledge of God.

It also has the idea of being wedded to God. And so the Psalmist said, Kiss the sun lest he be angry. In other words, the highest form of worship to God is to be with God mouth to mouth intimately. That means, you know God when you kiss him when you are intimate with him, so that all other God and all other distractions don't matter anymore. I had the good fortune. My wife and I of spending a week in Monteco Bay, Jamaica, some years ago. What a wonderful time.

We stayed at a place called Sandals, and it was a resort just for couples. I will never forget. One evening, as the sun was setting, they called all the couples together, and they were playing this game just for couples. And so they lined up all the men in a row, about ten men, and they blindfolded all of the spouses. And they said, the object is, you go by touch or smell, and you identify your husband. When you have found your husband, you kiss him. I didn't play.

But as I sat there and observed and took notes, I was very much intrigued by a couple, by a couple who was on their honeymoon. They had just gotten married been married two days. And now they're on their honeymoon. And it just so happened that the lady who was up to identify her husband had a man standing next to her husband, who physically was built almost identical to him. I really felt for this lady. And so she went up to the first man, which was her husband. She touched his chest, touched his stomach, touched his lips, touched his nose, touched his eyes, ran her fingers through his hair, got real close and got a whiff of his Cologne, and then proceeded to the next man. I thought to myself, how tragic. And she went through the same thing with the

second man. And then she went back to her husband. And she went back to the second man. And finally it's as though she said, I have found him on the second man. And boy, she landed a great big kiss into this guy.

And I thought, oh, man, this is the beginning. I'm convinced there are a lot of people today who are kissing the wrong God because they have not spent quality time in God's words so that they can identify what God feels like and identify what God smells like and identify the touch of God and the ways of God and the will of God. They don't know God. They know about God. And so they're identifying the wrong Savior from time to time. And they're identifying the wrong Messiah.

And no wonder that 85% of people who get involved with cults are nominal Christians. Jesus Luke Chapter Ten visited the town of Martha and Mary. You remember, Martha was the type of woman she had to have things right. So one week before Jesus coming to her home, she had the carpet crew to come by and make sure the carpet was clean and she waxed the floor. And she vacuumed and she washed the windows and washed the walls and her home. One week before the coming of Christ was meticulous and spotless.

The morning that Jesus arrived, she was up at 05:00, a.m. vacuuming washing the windows, waxing the floor and mopping. And when Jesus arrived at 09:00 in the morning, she was busy serving again. And the Bible has a very interesting footnote. It says that her sister Mary sat at Jesus feet and heard his word. Finally, Martha looks at Jesus and said, Lord, tell my sister to come and help me. Doesn't it bother you that I'm having to do all of this work alone? And the problem wasn't that what she was doing was wrong.

It was inappropriate to do at that time. And it's so easy to be so busy going from class to class, fulfilling assignment after assignment, going from Church to Church because you have to serve

God. That in the process you find that you really don't know God. Lord O'Hara sings the song I miss my time with you. I keep waiting at the place where you met me for prayer but more and more, you make excuses as to how you're too busy serving me in Jesus. Ask, how can you serve me when your spirit is empty?

I miss my time with you. So Jesus says to Martha, Martha, hey, listen, Martha, you're troubled and distracted. Literally. You're going around in circles over too many things, and one thing is needful, and Mary have chosen that good part. Jesus says, Martha, the problem with your life is that you're too busy. You know, you can be right in the midst of the power of God and men of God and the Word of God on a Christian campus and hear messages about praying. And you can be one who never prays.

You see, listen, if you're too busy to pray, it's because you're too busy. If you're too busy to get into God's Word because you want to get into God's Word. Not because Dr. Mitchell has assigned you so many hours of reading and so many pages to read. But you want to know your God. I've got to get into God's Word because I want Him. By the way, what the champion this school is losing. What a great warrior of the faith who's retiring from Biola, Dr. Mitchell.

A man who in the two years I was here had a significant impact on my life. In fact, I remember I wanted to know God so bad. I was in his class early because this man had something to say and I'll never forget. I just knew I'd make straight A's in Biola because I wanted to know God. In my first test with Dr. Mitchell, I got a D, and I was so discouraged, I just thought I was out of the will of God. God had made a mistake and sending me to Biola.

But what a great man of God who has served here over two decades, faithfully year after year, teaching thousands of students like me. I just hope that you are one of those students who takes advantage of what's available to you while it's available to you in this school. Because once you

get on with your life and get on with the world, the Devil's going to see to it that once you're out of the incubator as it were, there's enough side issues and sideshows and distractions and problems and vicissitudes and cares of this world that you'll never on your own get into God's word.

I know countless numbers of Christians who have gone to Christian schools and raised in Christian homes who today are shipwrecked spiritually because they didn't want it themselves. Paul said, Lord, who are you? I want to know you. There's nothing more important in my life than knowing you. He said. The things that I have achieved in my life, all of the status that I have as a Jew, as a Hebrew, as a Pharisee. They don't mean nothing in comparison to knowing you. It goes on so far to say, I want to know Him, the power of His resurrection.

In other words, in this life, I want to experience the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. There's a whole lot of talk about the power of God today, but, you know, you haven't really experienced the power of God if you're on a Christian campus in a Christian school and I'm taking a risk and saying this, but I always say, what's on my mind. Do you have an experience of power of God if you're in this environment in this context and you're one who's abusing drugs? Well, how could he mention such thing as that about Biola?

Why? Because people are at Biola just like there people in my Church, and they get sidetracked and snared by the enemy for cheap thrill. That's why people are people everywhere. And there's this myth that we need to destroy, that some people only have those kinds of problems in their area because they're poor and impoverished. Everybody has the same kinds of problems, and we're fooling ourselves if we deny that in that there are other people who say they have the power of God in their lives and they can't give up smoking.

As Christians in Christian schools. And there are even some folk in Christian schools who claim they know God have the power of God in their lives. And they sneak around from dorm to dorm with women. You know what I'm saying? The Bible says that if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. The old things are passed away and behold, all things have become new, David said as the deer packed it after the broke soul, my soul panted after thee. In other words, we find people in Scripture that were consumed with a desire, a sole desire to know God.

Could it be that the one thing that's missing in your life is a living knowledge of God? Could it be that you have everything else together in terms of being busy in terms of studying you're making all A's but you see, making A's doesn't make you know God. And I'm not saying that you shouldn't do your best. I'm saying that in your quests for knowledge and academic achievement, you must also strive to know God. No wonder the Shamas says here, O Israel, the Lord, our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength.

In other words, if you're loving God with all your passion, you don't have time for anything else because you recognize that nothing else really matters when it boils down to it. Let me tell you a secret between me and you. You show me a person that really has a desire like Paul to know God and pursues that as a way of life. I'll show you a person that God will use to touch the lives of other people. You're listening to one of those persons. God keeps opening doors of opportunity to touch people's lives.

And he opens doors in ways that I've never dreamed of. I've had the opportunity of speaking in synagogues and in temples to Jewish people because of my knowledge of Hebrew. I've spoken in Hispanic churches and Oriental churches, in black churches and white churches in mixed churches. Why? Because God is calling a people out of every kindred, every tongue, every

people and every nation. You know what? It's going to be just people in heaven, just people, people that love God, people that want to worship God, people that desire to serve God.

I think that's what was so significant about Enoch. It says he walked with God. He had an intimate relationship with God. That's what was so significant about Noah. He walked with God in his generation. When all of his generation walked away from God, he dared to stand up for God. Now, friend of mine, that's going to be the real test in your life. The real test of your knowledge of God and relationship with God is not here at Biola. Why? Because everybody believes the same thing that you do.

Everybody's supporting everybody's praying. Everybody's rooting for you. But it's when you get out among the ugly Wolves and thieves and Con artists and the sinners in society who could care less about your Jesus and who tell you to go you know where with your Jesus. That's when your stand for Christ and your knowledge of Christ says I will not be moved. That's when it counts, the Church needs to rise up and begin to make a stand for what's right and a stand for a right relationship to God because our nation is sinking.

What a great nation we live in. And I've been all over the world. But there's no place I'd rather live than in America. And especially in Los Angeles. However, we can no longer say one nation under God. One nation without God is one nation under. That's exactly what's happening to our country today. Slowly but surely the erosion is creeping in and the decay is setting in. And all of the so called traditional standards that we have embraced for years and years and years of being torn down right before our very eyes.

Because people who have said they know God and claim to know God have never shown us God in their lives. Jesus said he who has seen me hath seen the Father. The reason why the early Church impacted their world was because it was perceived about them. They were ignorant and

unlearn men. But they had been with Jesus. Now you should know you spend time in the sun you'll get a Tan, you spend time, Amen. You spend time with Jesus Christ, you get a spiritual Tan. There's something that will happen to your life.

You'll be transformed from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of God. Friend of mine. You dedicate your life to this book, not because you're going to be rewarded with a grade or eventually a degree. But because you want to know the God of this book, who's alive, who is the Alpha and the Omega? Who's the beginning and the ending, who's the first and the last, who's the same yesterday today and forever. You want to know Him because he's real. You dedicate your life to this book.

God will transform your life into His image so that when people see you, they'll take note that person has been with Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Father. We thank you for this moment that you've allowed us to share between two eternities.

And I ask that before it passes permanently into the tomb of time, that you would impact us, that you would challenge us, that you would comfort us, that you would convict us, that you would stir and motivate our lives. So, Father, that if we're not seeking your faith and seeking you, may we begin even this moment to seek the true and the living God. And would you permit me to pray a simple prayer with you?

You're here. And you say, Pastor Billy, your message has hit home with me. That's me. I've been going through the motions. I haven't been seeking God. I've been seeking a grade. I've been seeking approval. I wanted to fulfill my projects and my deadlines. But I've realized tonight without a real pursuit of God through His Word, because I want to know Him. I'll never get to know God personally and intimately. Can I pray with you? Just between you and the Lord? You'd say that's where I want to be.

I want to know God for myself. Can I pray with you? If so, just you have the courage to stand. That will be the indication. God bless you. It's always a risk praying for people at a Christian school because the implication is that people have it all together, not in any Christian school, not in my Church, not in my life, not in anyone's life. We're not close. And we can always take one more step. We can always resolve. I'm going further. I'm going all the way.

And if that's what the Lord has spoken to your heart tonight, I'd be privileged to pray with you. I'll wait just a moment for you to stand. God bless you now, Heavenly Father, I pray with and I pray for these who are standing. And I pray that you, as you have promised John 14:21 that you would manifest yourself unto them that you would create in them a deeper and an abiding love and appreciation for the truth. God's word that you would reveal your faith unto them as you did to Moses, that you'd cause your glory to shine upon them, that they'd never get enough.

May they hunger and thirst after righteousness and only be filled to hunger more and to be filled to hunger more and more and more for life. And may their lives touch the lives of their fellow students and their families who perhaps are unsaved and their friends out in the world that don't know you. May they like Paul, be motivated to touch someone's life for the glory of God. I thank you, Father, for what you have begun. That you will perform and complete in each life that stands.

Now we give you all glory, all praise and all honor in Jesus name. You may be seated. One final word, and then I'll be seated. I wanted for you to know any of you and all of you that on any occasion, you have a personal invitation from me to come and visit my Church. You're always welcome. It's safe. I've been there all my life. In fact, November the fourth, Dr. Mitchell will be filling the pool pit for me while I am abroad. But I'd like for you to come when I'm there. Thanks for listening. And God's best for you, Lord Willing. We'll see you in the morning.

Announcer

Ten minutes. Ten minutes from right now, we will begin our concert. That will give you time to stand and stretch those that are leaving. Feel free. If you want to stay, though, you better just stand and stretch around your chairs. Lots of room in front. Folks, please feel free to come.

Thank you, Billy Ingram. Thank you for Maranatha choir. That was wonderful.