

Franklin Graham Tells College Students 'Go Fishing'

As he took the podium at Liberty University Convocation on Monday, **Franklin Graham** urged students to drop their excuses and take up metaphorical nets to become "fishers of men," just as Christ called His disciples to be.

"There are always excuses, there are lots of excuses, but (God) wants obedience," Graham said. "When you obey, and when you follow Him, and when you serve Him, and give Him your life, if you do that you will never, never come to regret it, I promise you that."

Graham, the fourth of five children of evangelist **Billy Graham**, is president and CEO of both Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He preaches all over the world and has authored several books including his autobiography "Rebel with a Cause."

"I have the deepest respect and admiration for Rev. Franklin Graham," Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. said, introducing him to the student body. "Franklin and his extended family have reached, perhaps, more people on the globe with the Gospel of Christ than any other family in history."

Falwell added Graham is "a true patriot" who loves his country and "the Judeo-Christian principles upon which it was founded."

"While other evangelists have chosen a path of political correctness, Franklin has taken a stand," Falwell continued, adding Graham has endured attacks and likened him to his father, Dr. Jerry Falwell, Sr. speaking "the truth in love, regardless of how unpopular that truth might be in today's culture."

In 2010 Falwell, Jr. expressed support for Graham when he was criticized for his beliefs and was disinvited from speaking at a Pentagon prayer service.

Liberty has had many ties to the Graham family and their ministries over the years. Franklin Graham spoke at Falwell, Sr.'s funeral, attended by many Graham family members. Franklin Graham also delivered the Commencement address in 2001 and was the keynote speaker for Liberty's 1996 Baccalaureate service.

Billy Graham spoke at Commencement in 1997.

Five of Billy Graham's grandchildren—including all three of Franklin's sons—and three great-grandchildren have attended Liberty. His grandchild Basyle J. Tchividjian is a professor at Liberty University School of Law. Tullian Tchividjian, another grandson, spoke at Convocation last semester. In the past two years Anne Graham Lotz, Billy Graham's second daughter, has spoken in Convocation and filmed a book series on campus.

As **Franklin Graham** began his sermon on Monday, he shared his personal testimony, how he ran from God, not out of disbelief but because he refused to surrender and allow anyone else to run his life. At age 22 Graham gave his life to Christ and "meant it." He then followed God's leading in his life, taking him all over the world, to the streets and slums and ditches of the world where Graham feels burdened to minister to the lost and hurting.

"You have to be willing to give up everything," Graham said of what it means to follow Christ.

He said there is great cost in doing this and many make excuses because they are not willing to fully commit.

Graham shared the story of Peter from Luke Chapter 5, challenging the students to mirror Peter's willingness to drop

everything and follow Jesus. Even though he was tired and exhausted from fishing all night, Peter took out his boat and cast his nets when Jesus asked him to. And when he was blessed with a catch so massive it caused the boats to sink, Peter abandoned it all to follow Jesus and become a fisher of men.

“(Jesus) is calling us today to be fishers of men. Are you willing to fish?” Graham asked.

He said in order to be fully devoted to Christ, you must have the power of the **gospel**.

“There is Holy Spirit-filled power in the gospel message,” Graham said. “If you want to catch men, if you want to reach people with the truth of the gospel, you want to see people’s lives changed, you want to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ, you have to have the power of the gospel.”