



THE CORRIDOR OF SHAME

KEY SCRIPTURES: John 15:18-16:1, James 1:2-4

I got a letter this weekend from the Billy Graham Evangelical Association. Their letters usually include ministry updates and crusade information, and are written by Billy Graham's son, Franklin.

This letter was no different. Franklin Graham wrote about his recent experience in Europe, where he preached in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Warsaw, Poland.

Yes, I had to look them up on a map. No, I don't remember my high school geography. At all.

He spoke of the opposition they faced while they were in Europe. Their original venue at Tbilisi, Georgia had a fire, so they had to search high and low for a replacement. Finally, two days before their scheduled meetings, a church came forward to offer a new location.

The letter also included pictures of the people. Crowds of people. They were packed so tightly at the replacement Tbilisi location that there couldn't be an actual altar call. It had to be more of a "stand where you are and raise your hand" call. Pictures from the Poland location showed folks on their knees, praying. Young and old, men and women and children, were hearing the message of Christ and receiving it with joy.

What touched my heart in the words of this letter was when I read about the opposition that was occurring, but not necessarily the opposition facing the outreach organizers. It was about what some of the attendees had to go through just to get inside a meeting.

The letter mentioned groups that had come together outside the event in Georgia to taunt the attendees in an attempt to change their minds about going through with their plans. They formed "the corridor of shame" that the folks had to walk through before entering the venue, and even though the letter didn't say so, I would suspect that this same "corridor of shame" might have still been there for the people to walk through when they were leaving.

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"...so we can know our value, live with purpose, and make a difference...**In that order.**"



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A corridor of shame. There's no doubt that persecution takes many forms. That devil is a crafty one, and he will use whatever he can to keep people from the truth, even if it means making it a struggle just to get to the Word.

My question to myself as I read the letter was this: What would I do if I woke up this Sunday morning, and the news reached my ears that people had formed a corridor of shame that I would be forced to walk through in order to get to my usual church service? Would I make the decision to go anyway, but only after I had determined exactly how bad that corridor of shame appeared to be? Would it make a difference if there would just be signs and hollering people? What if those people would be hurling eggs with their insults?

Would I still go?

Folks can fight a fight and be dead wrong, but that doesn't make them fight any less passionately. And the fight can come from any direction: family members who don't understand why this Jesus person is important to you every day now, rather than just on Christmas and Easter like He used to be; bosses who don't understand why you don't want to work on this "day of rest," as you call it; co-workers who think you're stupid and weak, just because you choose kindness.

The corridor of shame. Jesus walked one. And He reminded us not to be surprised if we are ever called to walk our own. *"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also"* (John 15:20b). But, if we are honest, I'm sure we would say that we would like for the corridor of shame we have to walk through to be as benign as possible.

So, the question stands: When a corridor of shame stands between you and Jesus, will you walk it?

My prayer is that we will always, and with great courage, say "Yes."

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*Graham, Franklin. Ministry Letter. 24 June 2014. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Pages 1-4. Print.

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