

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor Rolly Estabillo

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“What Would Billy Graham Say to Mark Zuckerberg?”

Good Morning! I'm glad you're here this morning. We have some guests this morning and I'd like to welcome you all to Fil-Am Church. Today is special because today is what we call “Bring a Friend Sunday”. We've asked members of the church to bring their friends so that they can experience the kind of warm fellowship we have here, the kind of Fil-Am hospitality that is unique in this world (Amen?), and the kind of food we can offer you afterwards for free (Amen again?). More than that, however, we want you to experience the kind of intimacy and fellowship you can have with God as you worship him with us this morning. In fact, I want to share with you a message this morning that I hope you can apply in your daily lives.

So, if you came this morning because of a friend, thank you for coming. Please consider everyone here as your friend. And if you consider me your friend, I hope I'm still your friend even after I've talked for three hours. Ok? Well, I'm just putting our friendship to the test.

Now, talking of friendship, there's a web site where you can find lots of friends. Since its launch in 2004, it's become a driving force on the Internet. In fact, at a value of \$115 billion, it's the third largest US-based web company behind only Google and Amazon. And it's not just in the U.S. or in Canada;

it's a worldwide phenomenon, currently employing 5,794 people in offices in 12 different countries around the world. What am I talking about? You know it, you love it... it's Facebook.

This past month (October 2013), Facebook reached 1.19 billion users including many of you... perhaps most of you.

Just to put that in perspective, that's more than the entire population of North America, Central America, and South America combined.

In fact, if Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest country in the world behind only China and India.

So what is Facebook? Facebook is a social networking website that allows you to communicate with your friends, display photos, connect with people with common interests, carry on live chats, follow your favorite celebrities and organizations, play games, and add a wide variety of other applications or apps. Some people spend hours on Facebook each and every day, mainly catching up with current friends and reconnecting with old friends.

When Facebook was first on the rise, that's how people tried to sell it to me. They told me I had to sign up in order to reconnect with people that I may have lost touch with. My general response was that there was a reason I lost touch with some people. Of course I was just joking... mostly.

But they were right. When I finally did sign up I immediately began to reconnect with old friends... people I went to high school with... people I knew when I lived in the Philippines... even some of my old friends from elementary school.

Right now I have 383 registered friends on Facebook. Which isn't bad, considering I very rarely actually send out friend requests myself. I don't like to impose myself on others, so I generally wait to receive friend requests. I guess that goes back to some childhood insecurities or something. So I figure I'm doing pretty good to have 383 friends.

My wife... she has 355 friends. I didn't realize I was more sociable than her. I checked out some of your accounts, too...

Tita Annie - 284

Kuya Elvin - 341

Kuya Rey - 365

Christine - 376

Berg - 518

Ate Jeanette - 646

Andrew - 670

Ella - 2,353

Imagine, Ella, if you brought all your friends here this morning, we'd be a megachurch instantly.

Tita Nelly - o. She doesn't have an account. Unless she blocked all of us.

Of course, one of the privacy features on Facebook is that you can block specific people from even seeing that you have an account there. I suppose you might want to do that with an ex or if someone has been stalking you.

But did you know that there's actually one profile on Facebook that you can't block? It's the profile that belongs to Mark Zuckerberg. Trust me...

I tried. Three times. You can't block the creator of Facebook from your Facebook account.

If you know the history of Facebook, you know that it was originally developed and launched by Mark Zuckerberg and a few buddies in a dorm room while they were students at Harvard. That was February 4, 2004.

Within the first month, over half of the Harvard undergraduates had signed up. So in March, 2004, Facebook spread to universities like Yale, Stanford and Columbia, then on to other universities and colleges throughout the United States and Canada. It became open to students at high schools, too, before finally in 2006 becoming available to anyone—whether they are a student or not—as long as they are aged 13 and over.

Of course, with the success of Facebook, Zuckerberg dropped out of Harvard to continue to work on his project. But it doesn't seem to have hurt him any. As of 2008 he was the world's youngest billionaire.

There have been at least three books that have been written with Zuckerberg or Facebook as the subject matter. [*The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That Is Connecting the World*, (2011), *Public Parts*, and *The Accidental Billionaires*]

There has even been a major motion picture made about Zuckerberg and Facebook called *The Social Network*, which was the big winner at the Golden Globes in 2010.

All this and Zuckerberg's only 29 years old! (born May 14, 1984)

Oh, and by the way, have you ever noticed that the dominant colour on Facebook is blue? Yeah, it's kind of hard to miss. Well, Zuckerberg has a red-

green colorblindness, so the color he sees the best is blue. And that's your trivia for the day.

Okay, so why all this about Zuckerberg, Facebook, and social media? Because we're in a series about what Billy Graham would say to some of the famous people in our world. First was Charice, then Tiger Woods. And today we're talking about "What Would Billy Graham Say to Mark Zuckerberg?"

So, I'm going to give you five things that Billy Graham might have to say to Mark Zuckerberg. Let's get **going**, and you can use your notes to follow along and fill in the blanks.

What Would Billy Graham Say to Mark Zuckerberg?

1. You're right; connecting with others is vital in life.

Facebook describes itself with these words...

"Facebook is a social utility that connects you with the people around you."

If you go to the Facebook page on Facebook—yes, there really is a Facebook page on Facebook—then you'll find this description of what Facebook is all about:

"Give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."

~ Mission of Facebook

This idea of being connected is powerful. It's one of our basic needs... to be connected to others. Some people may seek out those connections more than others, but even the most introverted of us have an innate need to know and be known... to love and be loved.

Ephesians 2:21 (NLT) says, “We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.”

Especially within the Church, we are meant to be connected. We are meant to experience life together and be there for each other. Take a look at these other verses...

Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

Romans 12:15 (NLT)

Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

We are to live in community... connected to each other.

Another thing that Billy Graham would say to Mark Zuckerberg is

2. I like your focus on openness.

On Mark Zuckerberg’s Facebook profile under the “About Mark” heading this is what he says...

“I’m trying to make the world a more open place.”

~ Mark Zuckerberg

And that really echoes what he told *Wired* magazine way back in 2010...

“The thing I really care about is the mission, making the world open.”

~ Mark Zuckerberg

Openness is a big deal for Mark Zuckerberg; it’s also a big deal for God. God wants us to learn to be open and authentic with each other.

He doesn’t want us to pretend to be someone we’re not. He certainly doesn’t want us to conceal our weaknesses and struggles in order to put forward some polished image that tries to tell people we have it all together when that’s simply not the case.

In the ancient Greek theatre, actors would often portray different characters. And the way they would let the audience know which character they were would be by holding giant masks in front of their faces. This kind of play-acting was known as hypocrisis, from which we get our word hypocrisy... pretending to be one thing while in reality you're something else. But while this kind of "hypocrisis" is fine for the theatre, Jesus does not want us to be hypocrites in real life.

In Luke 12:1-2 (NLT) it says, "Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, 'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy. The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all.'"

The third thing that Billy Graham would say to Mark is

3. Avoid the very appearance of evil.

I don't know how much is true, but I do know that Zuckerberg has been accused of some rather unscrupulous activities. For example, before launching Facebook in 2004, he developed another site in 2003 called Facemash. And basically, this was a "Hot or Not" kind of website. Two images of fellow students were placed side-by-side, and people were supposed to judge which one was hotter.

That is a questionable project. Zuckerberg didn't even get permission from the students to use their images like that. How would you feel if you discovered your picture on a site like that?

Making the problem even worse was the way Zuckerberg got the images in the first place. He hacked into restricted areas on the Harvard servers, which almost resulted in him being expelled. Plus, lawsuits that have

been brought against him. There are old classmates as well as former employers who claim that Zuckerberg stole their ideas.

Again, I don't know what's true and what's not. And the fact is, anyone who experiences Zuckerberg's level of success can expect people to start throwing accusations. Sometimes there's some truth to them and other times they're completely bogus. And you can't completely eliminate them.

But what you can do is minimize the opportunities for people to make those accusations. You can make sure everything you do is above board, that you don't get involved in any questionable activities, that you take precautions, and that even if something might be legal by the letter of the law you choose to do what is legal *and* ethical. You don't even open the door for people to jump to conclusions or throw accusations at you.

The apostle Paul wrote about avoiding the very appearance of evil in 1 Thessalonians 5:22 (KJV), "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" and instead living honestly and above reproach, "*Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.*" (Rom. 12:17 NIV). This means living in such a way that you don't even give people a basis to make an accusation against you.

Billy Graham would also say to Mark

4. Remember to always treat others with respect and dignity.

A big complaint that a lot of users of Facebook express deals with the privacy issue. How safe are people when they begin to post personal information? How secure are they from unauthorized people getting hold of it? How vulnerable are young teenagers who don't understand the dangers? How does Facebook use your private personal information?

This is about respect. It's about respecting people's privacy. It's about treating people with dignity. And how did Jesus say we should treat others? He says in Matthew 7:12 (NLT), "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."

This applies even when people mistreat you. You treat people as you would like them to treat you... with dignity and respect... regardless of how they have actually treated you.

I have not yet seen that movie... *The Social Network*... but from what I understand, it doesn't portray Zuckerberg in the most positive light. Critics have been quick to point out many of the inaccuracies in the story... things that were changed or added for dramatic effect. Aaron Sorkin, who wrote the screenplay, responded to the critics by saying...

"I don't want my fidelity to be to the truth; I want it to be to storytelling. What is the big deal about accuracy purely for accuracy's sake...?"

~ Aaron Sorkin

***The Social Network's* screenwriter Aaron Sorkin to New York magazine**

Zuckerberg, who was not consulted in the making of the movie, has actually responded quite well. He's set the record straight on a few things, and credited the film with the things it got right. He has kind of shrugged off some of the negative aspects of the story and has chosen to treat it lightly. You may remember the words of Jesus in **Matthew 5:39 (NLT)** ***"If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also."***

You may also remember these words from the Old Testament book of Proverbs. **Proverbs 25:21-22 (NLT)**

“If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them water to drink. You will heap burning coals of shame on their heads, and the LORD will reward you.”

Now, before we come to our last point, I think Billy Graham would also say something not only to Mark but also to all of us who have become enamored with Mark’s creation. He will say

“Evaluate and monitor how you are affected personally”.

You see, I’ve seen people do things and say things on Facebook or any social media that they would never do or say in person. I’ve seen people hide behind the anonymity they can find online while lashing out at others. I’ve seen people ruin their lives and destroy their relationships because of their online practices.

How is Facebook, Twitter, and social media, in general, affecting you? Especially in areas like violence, and sexuality, and profanity... how have you been affected? How have your relationships been affected... positively or negatively? How about your thoughts and what you dwell on? Do some changes need to be made? Jesus says in Matthew 18:9 (NLT), *“And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away.”*

What is Jesus saying? He’s not advocating for self-mutilation. He’s saying, “Cut off the sources that tempt you to sin.” And parents, let me add this... you should monitor how your children are using and acting with social media. Obviously, the amount of monitoring required should be regulated according to their age, their maturity, and their track record. But check in

once in a while to make sure that they are safe, that their privacy settings are set pretty high, and that they are not using social media in self-destructive ways.

What can you do if you've detected some negative effects on you or your children from the use of social media?

Establish social media-free times.

Maybe one night a week, one week a month, or one month a year. Establish a time when you're going to take a break. You can even call it fasting. Just turn it off for a while and see what happens.

You may find out how much you are controlled by social media. You may find out that you are overly dependent on Facebook, to an unhealthy level. I know of people who have given up Facebook as a way to restore balance in their lives.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NLT) says, "You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'—but not everything is good for you. And even though 'I am allowed to do anything,' I must not become a slave to anything."

Are you becoming a slave to social media? There are lots of benefits that it offers and I want to encourage you to take full advantage of that. But I also want to advise caution, wisdom, and balance.

Finally, we come to our last point. This is what I believe Billy Graham would say to Mark Zuckerberg.

5. I like your slogan. Reminds me of Jesus'.

Facebook actually seems to have a few different slogans or mottos, but there's one in particular that every new member will see as they are signing up...

“It’s free and anyone can join.”

And isn’t that really what the message of the Church is? Isn’t that the message God has given us to proclaim? Isn’t that the message of hope that we have to share with the world? “It’s free and anyone can join.”

God’s grace, God’s forgiveness, God’s salvation... it’s free and available to everyone.

Jesus and the faith founded on His message have been accused of being exclusive and intolerant, but the truth is that there is no one more inclusive than Jesus. Because while He proclaims that there is a right way and a wrong way... that salvation can only be found in Him... He also invites every person on the face of the planet to come to Him. He invites you to come to Him. He says...

John 10:9 (NIV)

“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.”

Saved from what? Saved from sin and death! The Bible tells us that all of us are sinners. All of us were born on earth carrying the sin that we inherited from Adam. Because of sin we’re all condemned to die. The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a). That’s the reason why since the beginning of time, mankind’s mortality rate has been 100%. All men die because of sin.

Sin is what separates us from a holy God, the God who says his eyes are too pure to look on evil. We have fallen short of the glory of God, the Bible says. And no other human being can rescue us because we are all sinners. But God loves us so much, too. He doesn’t want anyone of us to perish. He doesn’t want anyone of us to go to hell.

And so, he sent his only Son Jesus to earth to become one of us. Jesus is God in the flesh who became one of us to save us. The Bible says, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16)

“Whoever.” What does that mean? It means “whoever.” He came to rescue whoever would receive Him, regardless of race, background, education, ethnicity, or economics. He rescued us when he died on the cross for our sins. Instead of us dying and being condemned for all eternity to hell, Jesus took our sins upon him and nailed them on the cross. Colossians 2:14 (NLT) says, *“He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.”*

He dealt with our sins once and for all on the cross. The cross where he sacrificed his own life.

Because of his sacrifice, our sins are forgiven. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. And you can be forgiven just by acknowledging that Jesus died for you. And it gets better, because not only your sins are forgiven, you can have eternal life. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day to declare that he has conquered sin and death forever. If you believe this, you will be saved and have eternal life. The Bible says, *“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* (Romans 10:9 NKJV)

Friend, why don't you open your heart and let Jesus come in today? He would like to be your best friend forever. Jesus will never unfriend you.

Why not make the decision to live for Him and follow Him from this moment on? You can make that decision even right now.