

Ford Field, Detroit, Michigan
70,000 people in attendance, June 5, 2005

**Reverend Billy Graham, Preaching a Sermon titled “Now Explain
That to Jesus.”**

Brothers and sisters, today we are living through the worst moral crisis that's ever threatened our Christian nation. Tonight I want to be like Jesus and get right to the heart of the matter. We need to stop blaming the victims. That's right. We need to look at ourselves first, at where we're at today morally.

I know many of you are unaccustomed to hearing such language from your leaders, and in particular from me. Yes, Brothers and sisters, I come to you tonight as a sinner. I have been silent about the sin of racism. I have supported immoral wars; these wars I supported were wars of aggression against innocent people, against poor people fighting for independence and a way out of poverty. I supported the war in Vietnam and I was wrong. I supported the war against Nicaragua and I was wrong. I supported South Africa when they practiced apartheid and I was wrong. I supported the first Gulf War and I was wrong. I supported the current war in Iraq and I was wrong (stunned silence).

I have given my consent to an endless war on terror that is a sham and a waste of lives, that is weakening every day the foundation of our Christian democracy and is embarrassing us around the world as a Christian nation. Urinating on a Holy Book! We have become a nation of heathens and the whole world is watching! And God is watching the whole world! Tonight, brothers and sisters, I want to talk in plain terms about our democracy and who is threatening our democracy.

Brothers and sisters, WE are threatening our democracy! It's just us!

Nobody else. The black comedian Richard Pryor used to have a joke about the American criminal justice system (a few gasps from the audience). He said, "I went to the courthouse to get some justice and all I saw there was just us" (confusion is breaking out).

Brothers and sisters, do you understand? Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Woe unto you that are rich! Ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that laugh now! For ye shall mourn and weep." This was Jesus Christ's most important sermon and I have ignored it for forty years. But this morning I came out of the wilderness and into the light! Praise God! Jesus was never wrong and if he was then I don't want to be right! (a few amens, the crowd is beginning to warm up).

I have been preaching Born Again Christianity for fifty years now and you know what? I was not the first. I have been reading the sermons of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King and he was calling on the people to be born again before I knew what it really meant. What did Dr. King mean? (murmurs from the audience: he called him Dr. King?) He meant a moral transformation, brothers and sisters, from a state of sinfulness to a state of grace. And how did that happen? By being right by God. By being right by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What would Jesus think of you if he came back tonight? That's the question Dr. King was always asking his congregations and they responded to it. Yes, brothers and sisters, they responded by taking to the streets, by marching for their God-given rights to live as decent human beings on this earth, protected by the Christian laws of the land, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. But first they chastised their own sinners and made them get right by God.

Brothers and sisters, I've been studying closely the situation of our Christian nation. Every day I read the news on the Internet and every day I become more revolted by what I see. Tonight we're going to talk

about ourselves. Tonight we're not going to talk about Muslims, teenage mothers, atheistic liberals, environmentalists, abortion doctors, gays, or the feminists.

Tonight we're going to talk about our own sin (you could hear a pin drop). Tonight we're going to come out into the light of self-criticism. Tonight we're going to name names and come clean with ourselves. Tonight we're going to question ourselves, as Jesus did himself on the Cross of Calvary.

I read yesterday in the Detroit Free Press that the white people of a suburb called Grosse Pointe are expelling the black students from their school district because they say black parents are falsely claiming residence there. Brothers and sisters, I ask you: is this what Jesus would do? These parents are trying to get their children the best possible education and the white people there are opposing the education of children. That's immoral and we need to call out those white people for being un-Christian and anti-American (a heavy silence).

Have you seen the facts, brothers and sisters? Our schools are being resegregated. Today 80 percent of white students go to all-white schools. Wealthy white schools get the most money and they hire the best teachers and have the best facilities, computers for every student, send them to the best colleges so they get the best jobs.

Yet in black and Hispanic schools, the average career-span of a teacher is less than three years. Brothers and sisters, why is that? Is it because the children don't want to learn? Is that how you would answer Jesus? Or is it because the pay is so low, the funds have been cut off, and the facilities are built like prisons not educational institutions? What would you tell Jesus?

Let's talk about prisons, brothers and sisters. We need to speak

honestly now about one the greatest dangers facing our Christian nation—crime. In states like Illinois, Michigan, New York, and California, nearly 90 percent of the inmates are black and Hispanic. Is it because blacks and Hispanics commit more crimes than whites? Is that how you would answer Jesus? Would you lie to your own Maker and the Savior of your own filthy soul?

I was studying the state of Illinois. Last year, the state of Illinois graduated less than 900 African American students from its public colleges and universities yet released from prison 8,000 on drug-selling offenses. Are African Americans the only people who sell drugs? Not according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They calculate drug use trends from data gathered through the federal National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA).

Stay with me now, people, I know you're not used to facts, listening to Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter all the time. But listen to the facts. In a report based on NHSDA data, SAMHSA estimates 3,727,680 whites use cocaine compared to 720,130 blacks.

Why, then, are the prisons filled with black people instead of white people? If Jesus asked you, what would you tell him?

Let me tell you how I would answer Jesus. I would site for him a vital statistic. Thirty-seven percent of all people arrested on drug charges are black yet black people use drugs five times less than whites do. I would tell Jesus, it's an example of white skin privilege – of “black robes and white justice,” as the honorable African American judge Bruce Wright has said (whispering is heard).

No, we cannot lie to our Maker and the Savior of our filthy souls, especially here tonight where we have gathered together to come clean

in His presence. You see, brothers and sisters, we have been protecting drug addicts and drug sellers in our own communities merely because they're white. We have allowed our Christian communities to become dens of sin, where people traffic in drugs and prostitution openly and freely because they have white skin.

Our obsession with skin is the sin! We must drive out these white criminals! How can you allow this to happen in your own neighborhoods? Now how would you explain that to Jesus?

In my reading over the past year, I have made other discoveries that revolt me. Unemployment among blacks is more than double that for whites, 10.8 percent versus 5.2 percent in 2003 – a wider gap than in 1972. Black infant mortality is also greater today than in 1970. In 2001, the black infant mortality rate was 14 deaths per 1,000 live births, 146 percent higher than the white rate. The gap in infant mortality rates was 37 percent less in 1970. Now how would you explain that to Jesus?

I would tell Jesus that it's because for every dollar of white income, African Americans have 57 cents. At the rate we're going, it'll take 581 years to achieve income equality between God's people here in America. Do you think Jesus is going to wait 581 more years for you all to stop this immorality?

I would tell Jesus that the average black college graduate will earn \$500,000 less in his or her lifetime than an average white college graduate, for doing the same work. Is this how YOU would explain to Jesus that his black babies die 146 percent times more often than his white babies die? You better be right by Him when he asks you these questions on Judgment Day. You have to be right by God! What did you do to stop this genocide? You better have a good answer, brothers and sisters.

Now we need to talk about sex. Yes, brothers and sisters, we have to

Speak openly about sex, as Jesus did himself. We cast stones at others for sexual immorality but how would you explain to Jesus the fact that pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry? Ninety-five percent of Americans call themselves Christian and pornography expands every day. Who here does not look at pornography (a flurry of hands are raised in the air)? Who here has never purchased pornography (the same hands in the air)? Then how would you explain to Jesus the thousands of Internet porno sites that exploit young women? Have you ever imagined your own daughters in those same positions?

These are crimes against God, and so we need to return to our discussion of crime. Ken Lay says that by stealing hundreds of millions of dollars from working people's pension funds he was doing the work of God. That's right, he said that. How would you explain to Jesus that this criminal has been allowed to go unpunished for blaspheming the name of the Lord? Why haven't you organized a citizens council to judge him and sentence him to Christian justice the same way you've always carried out vigilante justice against innocent blacks? How would you explain to Jesus that, instead of sentencing Lay, you elected a close friend of his to the presidency of the United States of America?!

Yes, brothers and sisters, now we need to talk about our Christian president George W. Bush, one of Ken Lay's best friends. He calls him Kenny Boy. Thou shalt not lie. It's time we admit publicly, together tonight, that George W. Bush lied again and again to the Christian people of our nation. He lied by saying Saddam Hussein was behind 9/11. Then he lied even worse by saying Saddam Hussein was plotting to destroy America with weapons of mass destruction. But these were weapons of mass deception! And you re-elected him! Now how would you explain that to Jesus?

These are President Bush's worst lies but there are many others, saying that Social Security is bankrupt. Why, the U.S. government's own Congressional Budget Office says that Social Security has the funds to

pay every benefit owed through 2048. Why is he lying like this, brothers and sisters? What is his purpose? Could it be to enrich the tiny minority of multi-millionaires who got him into office?

I've been reading the facts, brothers and sisters. I've come out of the wilderness and into the light, the light of self-criticism. I told you I was wrong. Now here tonight I want you to confess your own wrongs. How many of you have witnessed racism and did nothing about it? How many of you ignore your children and watch television instead of helping them with their homework?

How many of you worship sports stars? How many of you spend money on a new car instead of books for you and your children? When was the last time you took your grandmother out to lunch and talked with her? How many of you know a language other than English? Jesus loved all the children of the world and you don't even love your own children! You send them to daycare and hire nannies to raise them so you can play golf and drink martinis!

How would you explain to Jesus that you allow a ruling class to govern you that spends more money on weapons than it does to fight poverty? Now how would you explain to Jesus, right here tonight, that you do nothing about the fact that 3,000 African children died today of hunger?

How would you explain to Jesus that you have allowed the rich, who according to Jesus will have a very hard time entering the gates of heaven, a harder time than a camel has passing through the eye of a needle, to enrich themselves even more than they already are? You have the power! You are the majority! Everything you do affects the whole nation and the world! You could end all this disgusting immorality tomorrow!

Brothers and sisters, you need to march! What do you think Jesus

would tell you to do? Did he not march against the Romans? Are you Romans pretending to be Christians or are you Christians trying to be like the Romans?

I fear, brothers and sisters, I fear every day, that if Jesus came back tonight he'd strike us all down. He'd destroy me and you gathered here together tonight. His wrath would be furious. All this slovenliness, this obesity, this collaboration with oppression and narrow-minded racism, this over-consumption, this gluttony, this lazy lethargy, this willful ignorance, this smug self-satisfaction.

Do you think Jesus doesn't know we consume 25 percent of all the earth's resources yet we are only 5 percent of the world's population? Jesus is watching you, brothers and sisters. The whole world is watching and God is watching the whole world. Now is the time to come clean before the Lord!