

Billy Graham Honored in US Capitol as Our Nation Remembers 'America's Pastor'



Billy Graham, the man lovingly known as "America's Pastor," is in Washington, DC one last time, where his body lies in honor in the US Capitol Rotunda.

House Speaker Paul Ryan summed up what so many of us would agree with: "If there is any American whose life, and life's work, deserves to be honored by laying in honor in the US Capitol, it's Billy Graham."

Thirty family members accompanied Rev. Graham's casket to the city where he befriended and counseled presidents of both Republican and Democratic parties. He prayed with every US President from Harry Truman to Barack Obama and counseled many through the years. Leaders and Cabinet Members on both sides of the aisle showed respect and reverence during the ceremony. Billy Graham was a pastor that broke through the differences that have often kept many separated in our world. He was able to effectively and clearly communicate God's message of hope and truth across barriers and dividing lines.

"The testimony is endless," President Donald Trump said. "Today we give thanks for this extraordinary life. And it's very fitting that we do so right here in the rotunda of the United States Capitol, where the memory of the American people is enshrined. Here in this room we remember America is a nation sustained by prayer."

"Billy Graham carried his message around the world, but his heart -- as Franklin will tell you -- was always in America," Trump shared during the ceremony. "He took his message to the poorest places, to the downtrodden and to the broken-hearted, to inmates in prison and to the overlooked and neglected. He felt a great passion to those that were neglected." Trump honored Rev. Graham with these words, "God loves you -- that was his message -- God loves you."

The President shared a childhood memory of his dad taking him to hear Graham preach at Yankee stadium when he was just a boy.

"My father said, 'Come on son.' And he said, 'Come on mom,' let's go see Billy Graham at Yankee Stadium," Trump recalled. "Fred Trump was a big fan."

Trump paid great respect and honor to Graham's impact on our country and world, noting that hundreds of millions came to see Graham speak across the globe and countless others were moved by his preaching through television and radio.

Rev. Graham is only the fourth person to lie in honor at the US Capitol Rotunda, in addition to Rosa Parks in 2005 and two slain Capitol Police officers in 1998. The practice is similar to government or military officials lying in state but is used for private citizens.

Speaker Paul Ryan stated that the decision to extend this honor to the late Billy Graham was an easy one, after Graham's congressman, Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-NC, called him and suggested it.

"We got together and decided this is obviously something we should do," said Ryan. "Between Mitch, the president, myself, and Patrick McHenry we made that decision very quickly."

"The man had such a gift with connecting with people," Ryan said in his remarks honoring the late pastor. "When listening to Reverend Graham, it was like he was right there next to you."

Ryan said Graham had an "infectious" love for people, calling them to reflect and repent.

"When our country was on its knees he reminded us, he convinced us, that is exactly when we find our grace and our strength."

"Few loved others as Billy Graham did, and few were as beloved as he was," Ryan said. "Here lies America's pastor, a man made great not by who he was, but by who he served, with all of his heart and all of his soul, and all of his mind."

There will be no votes or official House business while he lays in honor. Starting at 1 pm on Wednesday, February 28th, the public will be invited to come to the Capitol and pay their respects.

Source: Christian Headlines