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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Billy Graham, America's Pastor

MARCH 03RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Billy Graham, America's Pastor
March 2, 2018

“My home is in heaven, I am just traveling through this world.” On February 21, 2018, Reverend Billy Graham was welcomed to his true home in heaven. This week, we honored his life and legacy with a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol. It was an honor to attend the ceremony and pay my respects to a man who lifted up our entire nation and changed countless lives.

Back in 1934, Billy Graham's father welcomed North Carolina businessmen from Charlotte to their family dairy farm so they could gather for prayer. When they met to pray, they asked God to bring someone up out of Charlotte who would share His message “to the ends of the earth.” Billy Graham was 15 years old when the businessmen sat on his father's farm and prayed that prayer. A few months later, Billy made an incredible and personal decision that would change the whole world... he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. That North Carolina farm boy walked off of the dairy farm and into history, following the Lord each step of the way.

Billy Graham was America's pastor, a true man of faith who was committed to family while having a profound impact on many, many people. He held his last crusade in St.

Louis in 1999. Busloads of believers from all over Missouri and beyond made the trip to hear him preach during a 4-night crusade at the old TWA Dome. Some Missourians made the trip early so they could sing in the crusade choir. Most just came to hear for themselves the preacher they had watched share the Good News on TV for decades.

As the son of a pastor, I remember Billy Graham's sermons well. Like my family, many of Graham's faithful followers have stories of sitting in their living rooms with their parents and grandparents, watching the crusades on television or listening to his sermons on the radio. I still remember the way Reverend Graham made with his messages about faith and Jesus' love so relatable. When you listened to him preach, it was like you were sitting right next to Billy in the kitchen and hearing the best message, "God loves you," from across the table.

America is a nation of prayer. Whether it was our Founding Father George Washington, President Lincoln, President Eisenhower or Dr. King, our nation has been led through many hard times with the power of prayer. After the ceremony honoring Reverend Graham at the U.S. Capitol, I headed back home to visit the folks in Matthews and Malden and surveyed damage from recent severe weather. As I walked through town and saw homes and businesses that were destroyed by high winds, rain and tornadoes, I was reminded of what Reverend Graham once said, "Take one day at a time. Today, after all, is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." While the road to rebuilding will be long, there is nothing material that cannot be replaced. These communities are strong and will come out on the other side of this natural disaster through the help of friends and neighbors.

Billy Graham was an ambassador for Christ who shared the power of prayer and the gift of God's grace with the world. As we give thanks for his extraordinary life on earth, let us pray that the Lord will raise up more men and women like Billy Graham who will continue to share the message of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Reverend Graham left an incredible legacy here on earth, and I know when he saw the face of Jesus, he was welcomed with the words, "Well done my good and faithful servant, well done."

LAST UPDATED ON MARCH 03RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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