

# Billy Graham Laid to Rest 5 Years Ago

Billy Graham is known around the world for his humble, inviting demeanor while sharing the simple message of the gospel. His body was laid to rest five years ago today and a heartwarming video of prisoners carefully building his casket shows he left this world in a way that echoed the message he preached for six decades.

“Billy Graham has always preached on the humility of man, to grow in Christ likeliness, you know we must humble ourselves. I think this is his final statement to that effect. He will be buried in a coffin that’s made by the poor or the prisoner,” an inmate at Angola State Penitentiary says.

In the video shared by his son Franklin Graham, prisoners in the carpenter shop carefully saw, measure and map out the perfect casket for Graham to be laid to rest in.

*My father @BillyGraham’s pine casket—as well as my mother’s—were built by murderers who were serving their sentences at Angola prison in Louisiana. Take a quick minute to watch this & hear directly from the prisoners who built it & what it meant to them. His body was laid to rest...*

– Franklin Graham (@Franklin\_Graham) March 2, 2023

“My grandfather had seen these caskets being made. He came back and told my grandmother he had bought her a gift. He bought her a casket built by prisoners and my grandmother thought it was outstanding,” Roy Graham, the grandson of Billy Graham says.

The handiwork of Richard “Grasshopper” Liggett has been admired by the world since the passing of Billy Graham five

years ago. At the time he built the casket he had been in Angola's prison for 35 years. "I've built every casket just like I would have mine built," he says in the video.

✘ "Grasshopper" started hand crafting the caskets after the warden at the time realized the inmates who had nothing were being buried in cardboard boxes.

"In addition to making the caskets, the prisoners—many of them former hardened criminals who are now committed Christians—also pray over them," the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association wrote.

The Graham family requested the names of the prisoners be wood-burned onto the casket. The casket was built with pine plywood and crafted in 2006. On the top rests a simple wooden cross nailed into place. "I want to tell you what Grasshopper said when he made Billy Graham's casket. He said, 'Billy Graham is a simple man who preached a simple message. He must be buried in a simple casket,'" Prison chaplain Jim Rentz shared during Graham's funeral service.

"The prisoners are people who need forgiveness too. That's what my grandmother loved about it, we all need forgiveness," Roy Graham says.

Billy Graham has, and is, continuing to have a profound impact on the world. Although pastors always tried to get him to preach a "deeper" message he never drifted from the simple truths of the gospel. He would say, "The cross and the resurrection of Christ offers forgiveness of sin, offers a whole new life and offers eternal life if you come to the cross by repentance and faith."

Despite the fame, Graham remained humble and devoted to the call of God on his life. He was never tied to a scandal or caught up in church politics. He embodied Colossians 3:12-14 which says, "So embrace, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, a spirit of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind,

meekness and longsuffering. Bear with one another and forgive one another. If anyone has a quarrel against anyone, even as Christ forgave you, so you must do. And above all these things, embrace love, which is the bond of perfection.”

His casket remains in Charlotte, North Carolina in the Prayer Garden of the Billy Graham Library. {eoa}



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