

Jim Bakker, Kathie Lee Gifford, Steven Furtick Among the Thousands at Billy Graham's Private Funeral

Family, friends, politicians, celebrities and more dressed in black while they gathered under a white tent to honor Rev. Billy Graham, who died last week at 99.

The private funeral, held at the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, North Carolina, was broadcast through social media to millions around the globe.

As his favorite hymn, "Just As I Am," was played on the piano, a somber silence settled over the crowd.

First and foremost, the gospel was presented humbly, just as Graham would have wanted.

"He died in the glorious hope of life eternal in Jesus Christ," one of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association hosts said before the funeral.

Though the service officially began at noon ET, a livestream began at 10 with tributes from several of Graham's counterparts.

Rev. Don Wilton, the pastor of First Baptist Church, who served as Graham's pastor for 10 years and as a friend for 25, spoke at Friday's funeral.

According to Religion News Service:

The friendship, encouragement, counsel and support that Wilton offered as pastor was one of the ways Graham modeled what he believed it meant to live a Christian life.

To Graham, a Christian was not just someone who believes in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection, but also someone who faithfully attends church and submits to the authority of a local pastor.

"Mr. Graham believed strongly that God, through Jesus Christ, instituted the local New Testament church," Wilton told Religion News Service a few days before the funeral.

"He had a deep and profound understanding of that. And he told me many times, 'Don, if I could, I would want every person who ever responded in every crusade to become a functional integral part of a local New Testament church under the authority of that pastor and that body of Christ.'"

Each of Graham's children spoke briefly about their father, his faith and legacy. Anne Graham Lotz discussed the prophetic significance of Graham's death date, and Franklin Graham led the audience in the sinner's prayer.

The service ended with the crowd singing "To God Be The Glory."

Bishop George E. Battle Jr. of St. James African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Charlotte delivered the benediction, and a man played the bagpipes while pallbearers removed Graham's casket.

Jim Bakker, Kathie Lee Gifford, Steven Furtick, President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and more were among the prominent attendees.

.@realDonaldTrump and @VP arriving for #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Tim Boyum (@TimBoyumTV) March 2, 2018

Its cold and a bit windy under the tent for Billy Graham's funeral. 2300 guests under a tent – a who's who of

evangelical preachers. 1/2

– Laurie Goodstein (@lauriegypt) March 2, 2018

This guy is not fond of flying so I rarely get to be on his arm for an occasion this far from home. So happy to have Keith with me in Charlotte to attend Billy Graham's funeral. We are tremendously blessed to be here.

– Beth Moore (@BethMooreLPM) March 2, 2018

"Who told you this is a sad day? This is a celebration." - @KathieLGifford #BillyGraham #BillyGrahamFuneral@wcnc

– Ariel Plasencia (@ariel_plasencia) March 2, 2018

The program for #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Tim Pulliam (@TimABC11) March 2, 2018

Elevation Church pastor Steven Furtick and wife Holly at Billy Graham funeral Furtick lauded Graham for his integrity and for "finishing well." #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Tim Funk (@timfunk) March 2, 2018

Former PTL pastor Jim Bakker and wife Lori at Billy Graham funeral. He waved at Charlotte Observer reporter but wouldn't answer questions. #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Tim Funk (@timfunk) March 2, 2018

"Just as I am" playing at #BillyGrahamFuneral @WBTBTV_News

– Sarah Blake Morgan (@SarahBlakeWBTV) March 2, 2018

HUD Sec Ben Carson and Candy Carson arrive at the #BillyGrahamFuneral – along with NC Congressman @RepPittenger

– Lauren Blanchard (@LaurenBlanch12) March 2, 2018

Members of Billy Graham's family served as pallbearers. All are either grandsons or husbands of Graham's granddaughters.@WFMY #billygraham #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Julie Luck WFMY (@julie_luck) March 2, 2018

Pastor Donald J. Wilton: "Mr. Graham had a profound and deeply spiritual conviction concerning the word of God, the Bible. He loved the Bible. It governed how he lived and it governed how he died." #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Fox News (@FoxNews) March 2, 2018

The body of Rev. #BillyGraham arrives at the "canvas cathedral" to the Hymn "There's Room At the Cross For You." #BillyGrahamFuneral

– Greg Adaline (@GregWISTV) March 2, 2018

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