

Rescued NASA Astronaut 'Butch' Wilmore Shares Test of Faith: 'Vital to My Existence'

For NASA Astronaut Barry "Butch" Wilmore, it was a homecoming nine months in the making.

"I dream of this day, being back with family," he said. "My God given family and my church family."

Wilmore returned home after what was supposed to be an eight-day mission turned into a 286-day stay aboard the International Space Station due to technical complications—a true test of endurance and faith.

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Wilmore, a devout Christian, leaned on his faith throughout the extended mission. He described his spiritual connection as "vital to existence," emphasizing that God's sovereignty sustained him during the unexpected journey.

During his time in orbit, Wilmore led church devotionals and even joined fellow astronauts in singing "Amazing Grace" with members of his home congregation, Providence Baptist Church in Pasadena, Texas.

"The chance to share the gospel and proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord is the driver," he said.

Wilmore opened the hatch when SpaceX docked with the space station. Until that moment, he remained cautiously optimistic that everything would go as planned.

“I told my wife, Deanna, several times, ‘I’m not getting excited until it happens,’” he recalled.

After a 17-hour journey back to Earth, Wilmore and fellow astronaut Suni Williams splashed down safely.

“I was ready to get out and get moving,” he said.

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NASA is compensating Wilmore and Williams for their extended mission—at a rate of five dollars a day. When asked about potential additional compensation promised by President Donald Trump, Wilmore responded with his signature humor.

“Praise the Lord! I like a little extra cash!” he joked.

Now back on Earth, Wilmore is undergoing 45 days of rehabilitation to readjust to gravity.