

An Amazing Answer to Prayer

I recently had the privilege of attending the 2022 Legacy Grandparenting Summit, which our church helped sponsor in St. Louis. This two-day event challenged each grandparent attending to be more intentional about passing their faith on to their grandchildren.

One of the featured speakers shared a story about her grandfather, William, who had been a dairy farmer in North Carolina. He was part of a group of business men from his hometown who helped start the *Charlotte Rescue Mission* in 1938. The ministry served the homeless as the Great Depression dragged on and it still serves the destitute of Charlotte today.

However, William and his associates did more. They began praying God would raise up an evangelist who could touch the hearts and souls of Americans. None of those leaders had any idea of how dramatically God would answer their prayers.

However, God has promised when committed Christians pray he will hear and answer, even if it is not exactly the way they imagine. The Apostle James recorded this remarkable promise, "...*The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*" (James 5:16, NLT)

Little did the business leaders know when they began praying for a gifted preacher to share the good news about Jesus, that God would answer their prayers in a way far greater than any of them could have imagined; or that he would come from the very community in which they lived.

The featured speaker of whom I spoke at the beginning of today's column was, Anne Graham Lotz. Her grandfather was, William Franklin Graham Sr. Mr. Graham had no idea the reply to his prayer for a great preacher would be answered with his oldest son, Billy.

Billy Graham was born in 1918 and at the age of 29 preached at his first crusade in 1947, only nine years after the Charlotte Rescue Mission first opened its doors. His ministry of preaching crusades would last six decades. His final crusade was in 2005.

During 58 years of ministry, it is estimated Graham preached to live audiences of 210 million people in more than 185 countries and territories. At a revival meeting in Seoul, South Korea, Graham preached to more than one million people in a single service. According to detailed records kept by the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, 3.2 million people responded to the famous evangelist's message inviting them to accept Christ as their personal Savior.

Billy Graham was not the expected answer to their prayers but considering the incredible ways God used him he is the obvious answer.