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Rooted in Faith: America's 250-Year Journey

Tuesday, July 7, 2026

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

2 Chronicles 7:14; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 3:19

Welcome to the Mark & Friends Program Resources page. Here you'll find today's broadcast, a printable transcript, Scripture references, key takeaways, memorable quotes, and additional resources to help you grow in your walk with Jesus.

Choose how you'd like to enjoy today's program: listen, read the transcript, download a printable copy, and share today's message with a friend.

Program Summary

This special Tuesday edition of Mark & Friends continues the 250th birthday celebration of the United States by featuring Rooted in Faith: America's 250-Year Journey from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

The program includes a historic message from Billy Graham delivered during America's Bicentennial year in 1976. He reflects on the spiritual influences that shaped America's founding, including the Pilgrims, Puritans, the Great Awakening, and the importance of the Bible in public life, education, and the formation of the nation.

Franklin Graham then brings the message into the present day, calling America to repentance, prayer, and renewed faith in Jesus Christ. The broadcast reminds us that while national freedom is precious, the greatest freedom is found through a personal relationship with Jesus.

Understanding the Context

This broadcast was selected for the days surrounding America's 250th anniversary. It connects a historic Billy Graham message from the 1976 Bicentennial with a contemporary message from Franklin Graham, showing that America's need for spiritual renewal has not changed.

The program is not simply a patriotic reflection. It is a Gospel-centered reminder that nations are strengthened when people turn to God, and that true liberty begins with the freedom Jesus Christ gives from sin.

Key Takeaways

- America's freedoms are precious, but the greatest freedom is found in Jesus Christ.
- The Bible had a significant influence on America's founding, education, and public life.
- The Great Awakening helped strengthen the moral and spiritual fabric of the nation.
- Every generation must decide whether to honor God or drift from Him.
- National renewal begins with personal repentance and faith.
- The Gospel invitation remains urgent: today is the day of salvation.

Scripture References

- **2 Peter 3:9** - God is not willing that any should perish, but calls all to repentance.
- **Isaiah 65:1-2** - God speaks to a rebellious people who follow their own ways.
- **Isaiah 1:18-20** - God invites sinners to be cleansed and made white as snow.

- **James 2:17** - Faith without works is dead.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** - Salvation is by grace through faith, not by works.
- **2 Timothy 3:1-5** - A description of spiritual and moral difficulty in the last days.
- **Acts 3:19** - Repent and turn to God, that times of refreshing may come.
- **2 Chronicles 7:14** - God calls His people to humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from wicked ways.

U.S. Historical Highlights Discussed

- The Mayflower and the Pilgrims' desire for religious freedom.
- The Mayflower Compact and biblical principles of self-government.
- The Puritans and their desire to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- The Great Awakening of the 1740s and its influence before the American Revolution.
- George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards calling people to repentance and faith.
- The Declaration of Independence and the Founders' reliance on divine providence.
- The Bill of Rights and the priority of religious liberty.
- The Bible's role in early American education, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania.
- Billy Graham's Bicentennial message in 1976.
- Franklin Graham's call for repentance and revival during America's 250th anniversary.

Quote of the Day

“The greatest freedom is found through faith in Jesus Christ.”

Scripture Callout

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land.

Broadcast Notes

- Features Rooted in Faith: America's 250-Year Journey, a special program from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.
- Includes Billy Graham's 1976 message from America's Bicentennial year.
- Connects America's founding, spiritual awakenings, and biblical influence with the nation's ongoing need for repentance and revival.
- Includes Franklin Graham's modern call to return to the God of the Bible.
- Closes with a clear invitation to receive Jesus Christ and experience true freedom.

Practical Applications

- Thank God for the freedoms you enjoy, while remembering that your greatest freedom is found in Christ.
- Pray for spiritual renewal in your own heart, your family, your church, and the nation.
- Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and ask God how it should shape your prayers.
- Share the hope of the Gospel with someone who may be searching for peace and freedom.
- Take time this week to reflect on God's faithfulness in both history and your own life.

Today's Challenge

Before the day is over, pray for America - but begin by praying for your own heart. Ask God to help you walk in repentance, faith, and obedience to Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the freedoms we enjoy and for the greater freedom found only in Jesus Christ. Turn our hearts back to You. Bring repentance, revival, and renewal to our lives, our churches, and our nation. Help us live as faithful witnesses of Your truth and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Books & Resources Mentioned

- Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
- Rooted in Faith: America's 250-Year Journey
- FindPeaceWithGod.net
- Billy Graham 24/7 Prayer Line: 855-255-PRAY

Complete Transcript

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Keeping our 250th birthday alive and well, it's Tuesday, July 7th, 2026. Welcome to the Tuesday edition of Mark & Friends, where we open up God's Word together and hear from trusted Bible teachers who encourage us with our walk with Christ. Today we're reminded that while America's freedoms are precious, the greatest freedom is found through faith in Jesus Christ.

Here's a special broadcast by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The American journey started as a dream. As settlers came to our eastern shore seeking a new way of life, it was a dream of freedom-minded people to live life with a say in their own destiny.

And while the American journey may have started as a dream, it was fully birthed only through struggle and revolution. And it was all because those first settlers wanted to live free, worship God, and proclaim the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Billy Graham shared the message of Christ's life-changing grace throughout his life, including in this message that he delivered for America's 200th birthday in 1976.

It is the revolution that takes place when Jesus Christ enters the life of a man or a woman and changes that life. That revolution is called in the Bible, conversion, or repentance, or commitment, or the new birth. Give it any title you want.

It could happen to you today. You could become a new person by surrendering your life to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. And when you make that decision, it is America through you making its decision to put God first and Christ first.

It could change your life, your home, and our nation. Americans still face struggles today as a nation and as individuals. Billy Graham's son, Franklin Graham, explains.

Our nation was born in a struggle 250 years ago, and we're still in a struggle today. Our struggle then was to be free from British rule. But our struggle today is to be free from the rule of sins that are weakening the foundations of our great republic.

Welcome to this Billy Graham radio special titled, Rooted in Faith, America's 250-Year Journey. I'm Jim Kirkland. Today we're continuing in a God-given journey of freedom as together we celebrate this monumental anniversary of our United States of America.

In a moment, we'll hear from Billy Graham with a special message he delivered on the Hour of Decision radio program in January 1976, the beginning of America's bicentennial year. What Billy Graham has to share from the Bible is as relevant to life today as it was 50 years ago. And as you listen, if at any point during this program, you'd like to learn more about the freedom that is only found in a life dedicated to Jesus Christ, we're here for you.

Someone would love to speak with you about beginning a relationship with him. Just call 855-255-PRAY. That's 855-255-8829.

Or get information and even chat online at findpeacewithgod.net. That's findpeacewithgod.net. Now let's listen to Billy Graham. Before we take a look at the future, we should look at the past. I do not see how anyone could study the history of America without recognizing religious influences that have helped mold this nation from the very beginning.

In no other nation's founding documents can we find so many declarations of allegiance to God. But where did it come from? Any search for its origin takes us back to our Father's God, author of liberty. It takes us to the creation of man, whom God made in his own likeness, free to roam and replenish the earth, free to decide how or even whether he would serve his creator.

And man, of course, chose rebellion. And today, because of that choice by our first parents, we are alienated from God. And because of this alienation, we are a suffering planet with the ultimate result of death for every generation.

Liberty and freedom. These were the flaming revolutionary words the early followers of Christ cast again and again into the tinderbox of men's hearts and hopes. You see, if you give men the Bible and freedom to proclaim its message, they'll soon be free.

And it was in pursuit of this ideal that those hundred and two brave men and women clamored aboard a tiny vessel called the Mayflower one chill day in 1620. And with prayers on their lips and visions of a new nation under God, they set sail for a far unknown land. The night before the historic dawn, when the pilgrims landed, they'd crowded into her tiny hold to sign their famous Mayflower compact, based on biblical principles as they saw them, later to be called the birth certificate of American democracy.

And the Puritans, who followed during the great migration of 1630 through 1640, also laid it on the line, their reasons for coming to Massachusetts Bay. The opening sentence of their New England Confederation says, we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end, namely, to advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not all, of course, were dedicated Christians.

After the Puritans, there crowded a diverse lot of adventurers, slave traders, ex-prisoners, and unbelievers. But it is a mark of the Puritans' vitality that their ideals largely prevailed in those early days of America. Americans who scoff at their straight-lacedness and earlier intolerance should never forget that it was the Puritans' religious faith and his passion for self-rule that gave us much of our political and social democracy that has lasted these 200 years.

Many times during American history, there have been great spiritual awakenings that have affected the nation and strengthened its moral and spiritual fabric. One of those was called the Great Awakening of the 1740s. It strengthened the nation for the bitter days of the revolution that was yet to come.

Great evangelists like George Whitefield from England and Jonathan Edwards proclaimed judgment and grace, calling on the people to turn to God. This Great Awakening, say historians, cradled and paved the way for the revolution. And from under such preaching came men like John Adams, who wrote, Statesmen may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is religion and morality alone upon which freedom can securely stand.

And John Adams continued, A patriot must be a religious man. You know, the Declaration of Independence reflects the feelings of men to whom religious faith was all-important. There was not an atheist or an agnostic among the 56 who signed that declaration.

Some of them were deist. Some of them believed only in a Supreme Being. They did not believe in Jesus Christ.

But before they strode forward to append their signatures, each bowed his head in prayer. The Declaration's giant step was being taken, they affirmed, with a firm reliance upon the protection of divine providence. In declaring themselves free, they said, they were assuming the separate and equal station to which the laws of God entitled them.

The self-evident truth they voiced was that men were endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights, and before the world they appealed to the Supreme Judge of the world for the source of their intentions. Such expressions were no mere polite gestures to God. They were a firm commitment to the principle that God must be central to any form of government.

And because they signed that document, some of those men were captured and hanged. Some were stripped of their possessions. Some were jailed.

And I have to ask myself tonight, do we have that kind of courage? Would you be willing to sign? Would I be willing to sign? Eleven years later, after the Revolution was won, there assembled in Philadelphia men from thirteen colonies charged with creating one of the most revolutionary political documents of all time. Yet, there were flaws. They were men who had never known the concept of democratic liberty and freedom.

For example, slavery was a part of the social structure both North and South. Catholics could vote in only three of the thirteen states. Jews were not permitted to vote in New Jersey or in New Hampshire.

Women could not vote anywhere in America. In the hindsight of two hundred years, they made many mistakes. But what they produced was nothing short of a miracle of God.

When the Constitution was submitted for ratification, the people demanded a Bill of Rights that would settle certain fundamental freedoms once and for all. They were implied in the Constitution, but the people wanted them in black and white. And in the amendments making up the Bill of Rights, where was religion? It was first.

In every area of American life, the faith of our fathers has left its indelible imprint, and nowhere more than in our educational system. When our forefathers stepped ashore in the New World, their first act was to establish a home. Next, they erected a church.

Then they started a school. The Puritans and the Pilgrims came to the New World determined to provide education for their young. In the lands they'd left, education was the privilege of the few.

Therefore, those early Americans flung up their rude schoolhouses all across the advancing frontier. Do you know what their first textbook was? It was the Bible. Their first task to teach children to read came from the Bible.

Founded also by the churches were America's first institutions of higher learning. A few years after the Pilgrims landed, Harvard College came into being. Its motto, For Christ in the Church.

Its main purpose, a training center for clergy. In 1701, Yale College was founded by a group of evangelical clergymen for the same purpose. Princeton was brought into being by the Presbyterian Revivalistic Party.

The University of Pennsylvania stemmed directly from George Whitefield's electrifying preaching during the Great Awakening. It was in the American churches, too, that women first came into their own. The Pilgrim woman was a new breed.

She stepped onto these free shores with freedom shining in her eyes. At home, in her community, and in her church, she began her God-given fulfillment as a woman derived from the teachings of the Bible. We're a vastly different people today.

Our society is far more complex, more pluralistic. But of this one thing we can be sure, God has not changed. His laws have not changed.

He is still a God of love and mercy. But he is also a God of righteousness and judgment. And any individual or nation which ignores his moral and spiritual laws will ultimately face God's judgment.

I believe that every problem facing us tonight as Americans is basically a spiritual problem. Crime is a spiritual problem. Corruption is a spiritual problem.

Social injustice is a spiritual problem. The lack of a will even to defend our freedoms is a spiritual problem. The Lord speaking through his servant the prophet Isaiah said, quote, I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me.

I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, here am I to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands to all the rebellious people, but they followed their own devices.

A people who provoke me to my face continually. When I spoke, you did not listen, but you did that which was evil in my eyes. And judgment came.

The great question before us tonight is, will this nation survive this century as a free society? This is how crucial and how critical the problems of the present hour seem to me. Unless a dramatic change takes place within the hearts of the people of this nation. It was James Russell Lowell, American poet of the last century, who put the challenge to us.

When asked by a French historian, how long do you think the American Republic will endure? Lowell replied, so long as the ideas of its founding fathers continue to be dominant. One of those ideas was that the Bible was true. And that our entire social and political structure was to be built upon its laws and its teachings.

Another idea that our founding fathers had was that God was supreme. That is why they put on our coins, in God we trust. Another early idea, certainly not shared by everybody, was that every person needed Jesus Christ in his heart.

America is troubled. Our people are filled with frustration, fear, and confusion. Is God going to allow a cataclysmic judgment to fall upon this nation, as has fallen upon nations of the past who have turned from God and forgotten him? Or will God send to us another great spiritual awakening that has saved us in the past? In a similar time to ours, when only a minority were true believers, Isaiah the great Hebrew prophet said, except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been like Sodom, and we should have been like under Gomorrah.

But God is warning us tonight that judgment is going to fall upon us in a very short time, unless we as a nation repent of our sins and turn to God. In pleading with ancient Israel, God said, Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Will America turn to God at this late hour? Or will America continue on the broad road that leads to destruction? It will soon be too late to decide. Already the storm clouds are gathering. There is no possible solution to the problems we face apart from a change in the spiritual atmosphere.

The heart of the message of Whitefield, Edwards, Wesley, Tennant, and hundreds of other clergy along the frontier was basically the same message I offer to you tonight. First, recognize that God loves you. The Bible says that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Secondly, be honest before God. Admit that you've broken his laws and chosen to go your own way instead of his way. Be willing to let him change your life.

Third, receive Jesus Christ into your heart as Savior and Lord. Fourth, be a living example by your good works. The Apostle James said, faith without works is dead.

This proves that you mean business with God. Pray for those in authority. Be a good citizen.

Help the poor. Help the oppressed. Help the distressed of the world.

Fifth, get involved in the political process, no matter which political party you belong to. We need men and women of moral and spiritual integrity in offices this coming year. Tonight, you can come to that cross and find forgiveness, peace, joy, and eternal life.

Life will take on a new meaning, a new hope, and a new song. This could be your commitment tonight. Jesus Christ is the one who can give your life new meaning, and he can do it right now.

It's all about having a relationship with him, talking with him through prayer, learning about him through his word, the Bible, and making your life a reflection of his as his Holy Spirit leads you on the journey that is your life. That's the commitment that Billy Graham just talked about. If you'd like to know more about beginning a relationship with God through his son, Jesus Christ, give us a call or visit us online.

The phone number is 855-255-PRAY. That's 855-255-7729. The web address, findpeacewithgod.net. That's findpeacewithgod.net. We are so glad that you joined us for this Billy Graham radio special, Rooted in Faith, America's 250-Year Journey.

Let's continue now with another message, one recorded recently from Billy Graham's son, Franklin Graham. Our nation was born in a struggle 250 years ago, and we're still in a struggle today. Our struggle then was to be free from British rule, but our struggle today is to be free from the rule of sins that are weakening the foundations of our great republic.

The Bible warns us about this. 2 Timothy says, but understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving, good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness but denying his power.

It seems this could have been written to describe America today. The spiritual climate of 2026 is vastly different than the country that our founding fathers established in 1776. The vast majority of Americans then had at least a basic understanding of the Bible.

Today, the vast majority have little to no understanding of biblical truth. 250 years ago, the Bible was taught in schools. For many, it was their sole textbook.

That doesn't mean everybody had faith, but they had a basic understanding and respect and knowledge of God's word. Today, the Bible has been removed from our schools, and for the most part, the public square. But there is a downward moral decline spiraling ever deeper into the mire.

Things that never would have been talked about publicly just 30 years ago, sinful behavior that should make us blush, is now celebrated and flaunted on Main Street America. America has become morally rotten, completely sick with sin, transgenderism, same-sex marriage, opening women's locker rooms to men are just the tip of the iceberg. Why do we need to rededicate ourselves? When God sent the flood and destroyed the earth, it was because man's heart had become so evil and violent.

In the news, we see unimaginable violence, rapes, murders, mass shootings. On YouTube, there is so much violence. Movies, video games are full of violence.

We have an insatiable appetite for violence, and I believe this grieves the heart of God and will bring His judgment if we don't repent as a nation. I'm asked all the time if I believe there will be revival in America. I would love to see that.

But there can be no revival without prayer and repentance. In Acts 3, it says, We need to return to the God of the Bible. My father, Billy Graham, called the nation to repentance during the presidential inauguration in 1969.

It's a prayer that is needed just as much today as it was then. We thank Thee for this torch of faith handed to us by our forefathers. May we never let it be extinguished.

Thou alone has given us our prosperity, our freedom, and our power. This faith in God is our heritage and our foundation. Thou hast warned us in the scriptures, If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? As George Washington reminded us, Morality and faith are the pillars of our society.

We confess that these pillars are being eroded. Too long we have neglected by word and ignored by laws. Too long we have tried to solve our problems without reference to Thee.

We've sewn to the wind and are now reaping a whirlwind of crime, division, and rebellion. And now with the wages of our sins staring us in the face, we remember Thy words. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.

Help us this day to turn from our sins and to turn by simple faith to the one who said ye must be born again. My prayer for America on her 250th birthday is the same as my father's prayer over 57 years ago. I pray that we as individuals and as a nation will humble ourselves before God, confess our sins to him, and turn back to the God of our fathers in repentance.

The Bible says today is the day of salvation, not tomorrow, not someday. Today, as we prepare to observe this important milestone in our nation's history, there is no better moment than right now for each of us to look deep into our own hearts and quietly repent of our

sins and call upon the name of Almighty God. There's only one who can save America.

There's only one who can save you, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, for by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.

If you've never invited Christ into your heart, there's no better moment than right now to put your faith and trust in God's son, Jesus Christ, who can give you true freedom and forgiveness of sins. He came to earth on a salvation mission to save you, and right now, if you'll confess your sins and believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, your soul will be secure for eternity in the hands of a loving God. Put your trust in him today.

God bless you. That invitation is extended to you right now. If you need freedom from the sin in your life, if you're searching for hope and peace, please call us.

Our Billy Graham 24-7 prayer line is open now at 855-255-PRAY. That's 855-255-7729, or if you prefer online, head to findpeacewithgod.net. This is the most important decision you can make. Call 855-255-PRAY or visit findpeacewithgod.net. I'm Jim Kirkland.

Happy Independence Day. May God bless America. And thank you for listening to Rooted in Faith, America's 250-Year Journey, a production of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Always good news. Keeping our 250th birthday celebration alive. Wow, a great message by Billy Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Thank you for joining us for today's edition of Mark & Friends. If the program encouraged you, we invite you to continue studying by visiting the Mark & Friends page at greatnewsradio.org or wluj.org. There you'll find today's broadcast, a transcript, printable PDF, program summary, key takeaways, scripture references, quote of the day, Broadcast Notes, practical applications, today's challenge, a closing prayer, and our growing Program Resource Library. It's a wonderful way to revisit today's message or share it with family and friends.

Thanks for listening. Thanks for being a part of our radio listening family. This is Mark Burns with the Ministry of Great News Media.

God bless you and have a great day and night.

About Mark & Friends

Mark & Friends is a weekday broadcast featuring biblical teaching, interviews, testimonies, and encouraging conversations designed to help listeners grow in their walk with Jesus.

About Great News Radio & WLUJ Family of Stations

Great News Radio & WLUJ Family of Stations is a ministry of Great News Media dedicated to educating, edifying, and evangelizing through Christ-centered broadcasting, biblical teaching, and encouraging conversations.

Did this program encourage you? Feel free to share it with a friend who might also benefit from today's message.

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