

**Franklin Graham:**

**CHRISTIANS WILL LOSE THE POWER TO PRAY  
OUTSIDE THE CHURCH WALLS  
'MAYBE IN MY LIFETIME.'**

(CNSNews.com)

May 5/10. Two top evangelical leaders sounded a defiant tone on the eve of National Day of Prayer -- warning that the American right to freedom of religion "is being eroded every day" and may be lost in an onslaught of secularism unless Americans "have the guts to stand up."

The Rev. Franklin Graham, who last month was officially "dis-invited" by the Army to speak at a National Day of Prayer ceremony at the Pentagon for statements he made about Islam, said he will not back down in preaching the Gospel as he sees it.

"We're living in a time where we cannot compromise, we cannot back up, we cannot retreat," Graham said during a live Webcast from the Washington, D.C. offices of the Family Research Council.

"The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be preached to the ends of the Earth -- that's what He's called us to do," he said.

Graham, the honorary chairman of this year's National Day of Prayer, made his comments in a sermon to an audience of leaders making final preparations for Thursday's National Day of Prayer.

He alluded to Eastern Europe under communism, where Christians and others were allowed to pray only within their homes or inside the officially sanctioned churches that were allowed by the state.

"I think its coming to this country where we (will) have the freedom to preach inside a church wall, but we will lose the freedom to do it outside. That day will probably come -- maybe in my lifetime," Graham said.

Ironically, it was Graham's famous father, the Rev. Billy Graham, who, in the 1980s became the first Western preacher allowed by the Soviet government to preach at a Russian church -- helping to open the door to greater religious freedom after 70 years of repression.

"(In the United States) we see everyday our rights being eroded. Just a little at a time, but its happening. Everyday. So let's preach while we can. Let's stand up and holler 'Jesus Christ! King of Kings, Lord of Lords!' to the top of our voice," the younger Graham said.

"The secularists are going to get ticked off, the news media's going to hate it. I don't know, maybe the people in the White House are going to be mad. But you know what, I don't care. Because God has called us to take the Gospel -- His Gospel, the power of God and His Salvation -- unto the ends of the Earth."

Graham was joined by James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, and Bishop Harry Jackson, Jr., who is leading efforts to stop and force a referendum on recent action by the Washington, D.C., city council creating homosexual marriage in the nation's capital.

Dobson, who praised Graham as a "model" for the restrained way he responded to a recent ruling by a federal judge in Madison, Wis., outlawing the statute creating the National Day of Prayer, said the right to publicly proclaim the Christian Gospel was one of the chief freedoms enshrined in the Constitution by the Founding Fathers.

"I am convinced that there are people in high places, people with a great deal of authority and influence, who want to eliminate every vestige of religion -- especially Christian religion, or evangelical religion -- from the public square. They want to expunge it. They want to get rid of it. They want to take away our right to worship and to have a prayer service in a government building. That's not unconstitutional!" Dobson said.

Dobson, whose wife Shirley serves as chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, recounted a case in Santa Rosa County, Fla. -- near Pensacola -- involving a high school principal and athletic director at an off-campus event who prayed at an off-campus meeting.

“Prior to the meeting, one of them said to the other, ‘Why don’t you say a word of prayer from wisdom and what we’re about to do?’ And he said a 16-second prayer. It was a prayer for their food! Sixteen seconds! It was reported and a judge in Northern Florida hauled them into court, harangued them for eight hours in one day, and threatened to put them in prison for six months,” Dobson said.

Dobson said the judge did not back off until members of the Congressional Prayer Caucus took up the cause.

Last September, after a day-long court hearing, U.S. District Judge M. Case Rodgers in Pensacola ruled that Pace High School Principal Frank Lay and Athletic Director Robert Freeman had not violated a 2008 court order banning school employees from praying publicly "at any time or at any place" in the Florida school district.

Lay had asked Freeman to pray at the dedication of a field house held during school hours, but conducted on the property of a nearby church.

The men had faced up to six months in jail and \$5,000 in fines each for violating the order, which the same judge had issued as a result of a 2008 lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of two anonymous students at the high school. The judge held that the violation of the order had been "spontaneous" -- and not voluntary

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