

**Class 5**  
**Brief Biography of Evangelist Billy Kelly**  
**(1932-1997)**



Billy Kelly was born in Oliver Springs, TN on April 17, 1932. Most of his formative school years were spent in Knoxville, TN. He played football and baseball at Young High School. Also, Billy was a country musician. While he was still in high school he played fiddle with a country band on a Knoxville radio station and in many local entertainment places.

His grandfather owned some 165 acres of land. There he hunted and fished and loved the outdoors. Kelly developed a love for the outdoors and for outdoor sports.

His dad was the pastor of a First Baptist Church, but he backslid, went to Corbin, Kentucky and bought a bar there.

Kelly was in such a remote area, as a boy, he walked over two miles to catch the school bus. He left before daylight and arrived home after dark. He rode the school bus 25 miles to school.

Dr. Billy Kelly was saved May 16th, 1950 at the University of Tennessee. A well-attended area wide revival meeting was taking place. A few days after his conversion he announced the call of the Lord for him to preach. A church in Knoxville licensed him 10 days after he was saved to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Kelly attended Carson-Newman College in East Tennessee. Early in his ministry he pastored churches in NC and TN. Then, he entered the field of Evangelism. The Lord used him to preach in churches, auditoriums, and tents for many years.

He had a precious wife, know as Dot Kelly. Dot lived several years after Brother Billy, passing away in 2019. She sold the farm and was living with her daughter Kristi.

In addition, he was known for his ability as a Gospel singer, so he preached and sang at many of the camp meetings. He made 5 long play albums of music during his career and was back up on most of them by the Burns Trio of Greenville, SC.

For many years he moderated the Greer Baptist Camp meeting in Greer, SC. Dr. Joe Arthur followed Brother Kelly as moderator.

Due to that fact, he became known as "Mr. Camp meeting". Mr. Kelly received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity from Tabernacle Baptist College, Greenville, SC in 1987. Also, he was granted an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity from Trinity Baptist College in Jacksonville, FL in 1992.

Dr. Kelly was known for his strong preaching, his sanctified humor, his love for people, and his musical and vocal talent.

Billy Kelly entered Heaven's shore on April 1st, 1997 and was buried in Greenville, SC.