



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Pray Fervently in Righteousness and Avail Much – Part 1

Guest(s): Kathy Branzell and Pastor Sammy Rodriguez

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hello friends and welcome in to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here at Family Talk. I also serve as president of the American Association of Christian Counselors. Thank you for joining us.

I'm humbled to be here with you on this National Day of Prayer and it all began during the early formation of our nation. The colonies asked God for wisdom in forming their new government. Then in 1952, Billy Graham called on President Harry Truman and the Congress to establish a nationally observed day of prayer. Within weeks, there was a unanimous vote for a resolution to establish the National Day of Prayer, and then President Truman signed it into law, which is observed on the first Thursday in May every year. This is now our 72nd observance of having a National Day of Prayer. With that, we have Kathy Branzell and Samuel Rodriguez on the program today. Both have been on the broadcast before several times. They're great friends of Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley.

If you're a new listener, let me share a little bit more about their esteemed backgrounds. Kathy Branzell is the president and board member of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, a position that she has held since 2019. She has served on the NDP alongside Shirley Dobson, Vonette Bright, Anne Graham Lotz and Dr. Ronnie Floyd. You may know that Shirley Dobson held the position of chairwoman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force for 25 years until she stepped down from her post in 2016. Kathy is the founder and former president of Fellowship and Christian Encouragement for Educators. She held that position for 17 years. Kathy's a national representative for the Table Coalition too. She's the author, a co-author of five books, including *Invitation to Prayer: Developing a Lifestyle of Intimacy with God* and *31 Decrees of Blessing for Your Work Life*. Kathy has a master's degree in biblical studies from Liberty Theological Seminary. Kathy and her husband Russ raised a son and have a daughter and they make their home in Atlanta, Georgia.

Our other wonderful guest today is Samuel Rodriguez. He's a senior pastor along with his wife, Eva, at New Season Church in Sacramento, California. He's also president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, which serves and represents the Hispanic Evangelical community uniting over 42,000 churches. You may have seen Pastor Sam featured on CNN, Fox News, Telemundo, PBS, or publications such as *Christianity Today*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*. In 2013, *Time* Magazine nominated him as one of the 100 most influential people in the world and in 2018, Newsmax named Sam among the top 100 Christian leaders in America. He's advised former Presidents Bush, Obama and Trump. Pastor Sam is executive producer of two films, *Breakthrough* and the soon to be released *Flamin' Hot* coming out this summer. He's also a bestselling author and some of his books are *You Are Next*, *Shake Free*, *From Survive to Thrive*, and his latest, *Your Mess, God's Miracle: The Process Is Temporary, the Promise Is Permanent* and it was just released on April 4th, 2023.

Pastor Sam earned a master's degree from Lehigh University and he received honorary doctorates from Northwest and William Jessup Universities and Baptist University of the Americas. Sam and his wife, Eva, have three children and together, they make their home in Sacramento, California.

With that, welcome back to Family Talk. Kathy, Sam, such a delight to have you both. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley, send their regards to both of you.

Kathy Branzell: Oh, it's a pleasure to be with you. We love them so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As we get started, Kathy, I know you're very close with Shirley. You guys have done a lot together through the years, especially when it comes to the National Day of Prayer. Can you share just a little bit about your heart and connection with her?

Kathy Branzell: Wow. I could write books about my affection for Shirley Dobson. I have learned so much from her. They say that prayer is caught not taught, and I learned a lot about love. I learned a lot about being a wife and a mom. I learned a lot about leadership and I learned a lot about having an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ by being a friend and prayer partner with Shirley Dobson. I am so grateful for her life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, I know you journeyed with her. I know when she fell and fractured her hip, that was a journey, but she's doing very well and it's great to see her back in full swing of things and well, she has a lot of vinegar in her. I know that.

Kathy Branzell: She's amazing. We are grateful that she is doing so much better.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And Sam, such a delight to have you back. I know Dr. Dobson and Shirley have such high regard and affection for you and the voice that God's given to you for such a time as this.

Sammy Rodriguez: The affection is mutual. I was just thinking about the fact that I raised my kids inspired of course by the word of God, but by the teachings of the Dobsons. And think about it, Tim, and the time that we are living in more than ever, the way we raise our kids with the values, with the framework and the worldview, boy, they are living legends. But more than ever, the lessons that were all biblically substantiated and scientifically backed up with Dr. Dobson, of course, we need these lessons now in America more than ever before.

Kathy Branzell: Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, this is the National Day of Prayer and time for believers to be mobilized to come together in faith to cry out to the Lord. Kathy, Sam, you're co-hosting the event in Washington D.C. Tell us a little bit about tonight's event. Who's going to be on the program and where's it going to? What are you asking God to do?

Kathy Branzell: Our theme this year, as I hope you've seen, is to pray fervently in righteousness and avail much, and so that is our heart. Our heart is to gather the world. This is going to be broadcasted on television in over 220 countries. Okay. That's just mind boggling to me to start with. Of course, it's going to be streamed everywhere around the world, but to have it on television and to have so many partners streaming it. So we get to, together, we get to gather the world together, we get to invite them into the throne room of Heaven and help facilitate these prayers that are going to go up and avail much. And I want Sammy to share too, but some of our really good friends on this broadcast, of course, having Sammy there is a lot more than just ... He has taught me so much. I'm so excited about his new book coming out. I already got to read it and already starting to put things into practice. But we have our friend Jentezen Franklin with us, Robert Morris, both chaplains of the House of Representative and the Senate. We are just incredibly grateful.

Sammy, you know a few more that we've got coming in, but had a great time getting ready for this broadcast and to call the world into prayer.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sam, what brought the two of you together for this year's National Day of Prayer?

Sammy Rodriguez: I've had the privilege of participating in previous years on NDP and the timing of it was just, it's going to sound a bit overly the top, it was God's timing. It really was God's timing. We're in the midst of a number of projects personally, but not only the persuasive nature of Kathy, but her commitment to prayer and she is the walking, living, breathing byproduct of a prayer that availed much. And wow, she really carries a legitimate no-joke anointing and when she made the invite, I just felt impressive in my spirit to say, "I'm in." Definitely I'm in.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, before we go any further, I want to make sure our listeners know where they can watch or how they can participate in tonight's event. Kathy, is there a

website that people can go to immediately so they can get registered or somehow they can get dialed-in for this evening's National Day of Prayer event?

Kathy Branzell: Absolutely. Well, you can just go to our website, nationaldayofprayer.org, nationaldayofprayer.org, and at eight o'clock Eastern Time the broadcast will launch and you can also find it on many of your favorite Christian television networks as well, eight o'clock Eastern Time. I know that one of our favorite networks has decided to broadcast it at 8:30, so don't give up. But if you just go to our website, you can find them all.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And for our listeners, I want to make sure you know that we're going to be live streaming the event on our website at drjamesdobson.org. That's Dr. James dobson.org right there on the homepage. You can also watch it on our Facebook page. That page is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. It'll be right there on our feed 8:00 PM Eastern, as Kathy was talking about, tonight, May 4th live. And Facebook Live is a great platform for this sense of community too. You can comment right there, interact with us as we quote join together and pray.

Let me come back to the theme again, Kathy and Sam. Pray fervently in righteousness and avail much. Now that theme is taken, I think from James chapter five, verse 16, the second part of that verse, I mean, how did it come together for the theme for this year?

Kathy Branzell: Well, and Shirley would tell you our themes every year aren't just a one and done. They build on each other. So Dr Tim, I got to tell you, over the last several years, and Sammy and I talked about this, I feel like the church has an identity crisis. I mean, everybody else is talking about their identity. We've had an identity crisis. We have forgotten how great our God is, who our God is, how almighty sovereign supreme our God is. We've forgotten that, and you can tell that by just listening to the church, by just watching our fear, our worry, our stress, our anger, our quarrelsomeness. And so last year's theme was about praising God, exalt the Lord who has established us. It was our prayer that as people praised God, they would remember. Faith comes by hearing. So if we would praise Him, if we would talk about Him, if we would read His Word, believe His Word, talk about His Word and praise Him, that would help remind us. And this year, we came in with, pray fervently and righteousness and avail much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that. It's been a tough go for the last couple of years. People are afraid. They're worried about the future and you are right in the midst of it. They've lost sight of who God is and coming back to getting on our knees and crying out to a holy God, who by the way, the king's heart, Sammy, you know this, is in the Lord's hand and He'll turn it whether soever He wills.

Sammy Rodriguez: I know he will. I am not convinced that God is done with America or that America is done with God. I truly believe we're about to see America's mess become God's miracle.

Tim, it can't be a coincidence. Let's put things in perspective. The year kicked off with an NFL football player who dies on national television. Two teams that did what? They prayed, they gathered around him and prayed. With medical intervention and prayer, Damar Hamlin came back to light. The very next day on ESPN, a broadcaster interrupts for the first time ever on national television, to do what? To pray. He prayed immediately thereafter in a place called Asbury, Kentucky, the same identical demographic deemed as the most non-Christian by Pew, Barna and Gallup. It seems that God never got the memo because God said, "Really, that's the most non-Christian demographic? I'm going to visit that demographic." How about that? Immediately thereafter, a movie called The Jesus Revolution projected to have made five to \$7 million, over \$50 million in box office receipts.

Dr. Tim Clinton, God is up to something and it began with what? With prayer. It is sustained with prayer. That's why today's National Day of Prayer is not just another National Day of Prayer. Our nation has never been more divided, more confused, more in embracing moral relativism, idolatry, hedonism, perversion, pedophilia, violence. For such a time as this, God's children rises up, pray in Jesus' name. Four words, watch God show up.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sam, I love what you're saying because I believe with you, God is up to something. These are unprecedented times, but God is at work. We ought not fear. Now, it's human to worry, to have concern. We worry about a lot of things in our life and it's natural to have some fear, but overcome fear with faith.

Kathy, you want to come back for a moment? Some people would say this, "Well, separation of church and state. Why are we praying as a nation?" Help us understand that, just the simple facts around church and state and why prayer matters and why we have a National Day of Prayer, praying for our nation.

Kathy Branzell: That's right. I always laugh when I hear the word "separation of church and state" because so many people think that's in the Constitution, and I'm like, "No, go read it." It is not in the Constitution anywhere. It was in a letter. And that our nation couldn't establish, coming out from under a king, wouldn't establish a church. And so with that, the church has to pray for its government.

If you've got time to complain about it, friends, you've got time to pray about it. Complaining about it, Satan's like, "Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you for praising me." But when we get on our knees, when we just use our voice to take something that isn't right and hand it to the righteous one, when we pray about it, God starts doing something about it. And across our nation in the seven centers of influence that we're known for praying for, not just our government but also business and military and families and church, arts, entertainment, media, education, all those things, we must be praying first and foremost because we're commanded to, because we're invited to because Jesus tore the veil top to bottom.

Secondly, just so people understand, this is a law. No separation of church and state. I love the history of the National Day of Prayer. 1952, Billy Graham stands on the steps of the Capitol and he challenges Congress and then President Truman to call for a national day of prayer. They take him seriously, no problem, and unanimously vote this in, and the President signs it into law in 1952. And then it could just be any old day. It was hard to mobilize, strategize, and organize the tens of thousands of prayer gatherings back then that we have today. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you to our almost 18,000 prayer coordinator missionaries across the US.

And so the tenacious and wonderful Miss Vonette Bright who was the president, the chairman before our beloved Shirley Dobson, she goes after Congress in the early '80s and starts working on them and her friends, like Tony Hall, to put their name and their necks on the line in an amendment to the law, so that we would have a specific day. And they did it. No problem. Reagan signed it into law for the first Thursday of May. We're celebrating 35 years of that this year. And then President Clinton in 1988, he, in law, sets into place that the president not only has to call for the day but has to proclaim a proclamation every year to call the nation to prayer for the nation. And so here we sit with a law celebrating over 70 years of being called as a nation to pray for our nation because it avails much, and I want to make sure we talk about that at some point in this conversation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're going to do it. This year, you're back in the Cannon House office building right up there on Capitol Hill. How does it feel to return there and what's the significance to both of you?

Kathy Branzell: I have so many beautiful memories and so many prayers prayed there throughout the years with Shirley and Doc. I've been with National Day of Prayer for 23 years and there is a holy ground to there. I'm grateful, grateful, grateful for our years that we also were in Statuary Hall. Those were beautiful evenings. But the significance of coming back this year to the Cannon and being on Capitol Hill after all these years of first having to be virtual in 2020 and then smaller gatherings, but really bringing in hundreds of friends again to pray this year, what's beautiful about that is we will have congressional members joining us.

The Senate is in session that week and staff and senators will be joining us, as many of our friends, representatives will be at home praying with their constituents right there. We have heard from lots of them saying, "I will be at the National Day of Prayer event in my county, at my courthouse, in a park, in a ballroom." We're grateful for that, but it's great to have it back in the morning there in the daytime, so that we have actual members of our government there joining us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sam, we're fighting time here on the first part of our broadcast. We're doing a two-part, so we're so looking forward to having both of you back for tomorrow. But I wanted to ask you, Sam, in the midst of this, some people think, "I don't

really know how to pray." Well, maybe their life has a lot of brokenness or there's frustration or anger. Maybe there's some other issues in their life. They think, "Well, others will pray. I don't necessarily need to participate." I remember the disciples looking at Jesus and saying to him, "Teach us to pray." Sam, what does it mean to have a good prayer? What's it look like?

Sammy Rodriguez: A good prayer, Dr. Clinton, the metaphor that I can apply would be activating your spiritual Wi-Fi. And in Matthew 6:9, the Lord lays out the beautiful digital rubric of that prayer life. It's calling upon His name, "Our Father who art in Heaven," acknowledging a sovereign mighty creator of the universe and exalting his name, coming to the further realization that we have to surrender at all. It's not my will, it's not Tim's will or Kathy's will. It is God's will. It's asking Him to forgive us for our sins.

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray." There is nothing more genuine, more real, more authentic than prayer, than praying in the name of Jesus. It literally exposes you to the finished work of Christ. It changes not something, it changes everything.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sam, I learned when I was a kid that prayer is conversation with God and that it opens Heaven's doors and that God wants us to come to Him, literally with a spirit of expectation. We can't close though without going back to you, Kathy, and having you comment on a prayer that availeth much. What does that mean as we wrap up today's broadcast?

Kathy Branzell: Yeah, so I want to encourage you today here on the National Day of Prayer and every day to pray history-changing, life-changing prayers, because that word "much" in this New Testament verse in James 5:16 is the exact same word that God uses in Scripture to describe His glory, His mercy, and our reward in Heaven. And so as you pray, that's the much that is happening. And so when you think about things that need to change, strongholds that need to be torn down, the trajectory of this nation that needs to shift, the number of people who need Jesus, who need to come into a saving, following, loving relationship with Him, those are the fervent prayers we want prayed here on this National Day of Prayer and every day because it's going to change the world and the kingdom.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know this, that there are many out there even right now, who are crying out for our nation. They're crying out for their personal lives, what they're going through, asking God to do something miraculous. And here's what we know, He's a loving God who hears the prayers, the cries of His people. And I'm sitting here thinking about our friend Mac Powell and his song, "Cry Out to Jesus." Cry out to Jesus. Hey, even more importantly, would you join us this evening for the National Day of Prayer? Again, Kathy, if they want to get dialed-in and make sure they're tuned into what's happening this evening, where can they go?

Kathy Branzell: They can go right here. Friends, you have a friend in the Dr. James Dobson Family Talk website, and so you could go there and you can certainly check us out at nationaldayofprayer.org.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I don't think we can leave without asking you to lead us in prayer. Sam, would you do that?

Sammy Rodriguez: Thank you Lord that perfect love continues to expel all fear. Your grace is still sufficient and your mercy endureth forever. Thank you, Lord. Lord of the harvest, send more laborers for the harvest is great. Do it now, Lord. Do it now. In Jesus name.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a delight to have you both here on Family Talk. I am moved in my heart and I am earnestly praying that God would do something that only He could get the glory for. Kathy Branzell, Sammy Rodriguez, again, what a delight. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, our entire team at Family Talk, we salute you. Pray that God would continue to speak into and through you, for such a time as this. Thank you for joining us.

Roger Marsh: Amen. Pray fervently in righteousness and see how the fervent prayer of righteous people avails much. How powerful that verse from James truly is.

Friend, you're listening to Family Talk. Thank you so much for joining us today here on this special National Day of Prayer edition of the program. And just a reminder, if you'd like to watch the livestream of the National Day of Prayer event, it's happening tonight at 8:00 PM Eastern Time and you can find it by visiting our Facebook page at facebook.com/drjamesdobsonfamilytalk. And be sure to tune it again tomorrow as Kathy Branzell and Pastor Sammy Rodriguez will once again share more with us about why prayer is so important for such a time as this.

Now, before we leave the airport today, I have a special need to share with you. The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has been experiencing a serious shortfall on contributions this spring. We realize that the economics are tough for many families, and with inflation running high and the job market running a bit stagnant, it's very, very difficult for people to find discretionary funds that they can use to support a ministry like ours. Well, first and foremost, please keep us in your prayers. We truly covet your prayer support. And also if you're in a position where you can stand with us financially, we truly appreciate whatever financial contribution you can make.

There are many people who listen to Family Talk each and every day who already stand with us financially, and if you can give a gift above and beyond, maybe a one-time contribution to help us stop this shortfall, we would be truly indebted to you. You can give a gift online at drjamesdobson.org, that's drjamesdobson.org, or you can reach us by phone at 877-732-6825. That's 877 732-6825.

I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.