



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Common Sense Truth in Today's Culture – Part 2

Guest(s): Pastor Gary Hamrick

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Gary Bauer: Well, hello everyone, and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm also the host of Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom Podcast here at the JDFI. And I'm honored to serve alongside my good friend, longtime friend, Dr. James Dobson.

Now, joining me on the program today is Gary Hamrick. Gary is the senior pastor at Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Virginia, and he also has a radio program that is called The Cornerstone Connection that airs weekdays.

Gary is on the board of directors for the Museum of the Bible. He serves as the chief chaplain for the Loudoun County, Virginia, Sheriff's Office. Gary and his wife, Terry, have three grown children and seven grandchildren.

Gary, welcome back to Family Talk. We spent some time yesterday talking about the great issues facing America, and the church, and the role of Christians in a country built on religious liberty. So, Gary, let's get right at it.

Gary Hamrick: Thank you, Gary. It's good to be with you again.

Gary Bauer: Pastor, there are a lot of pastors around America. They would share our being upset about what was going on in the school system, but that would be as far as it would go. They would say, "Well, I don't like that, but that's not what I'm called. I'm called to preach the gospel. And I don't want to offend anybody in the church that might disagree over who's on the school board and so forth." Did you hesitate, and did you get much blowback when you made this stand within the congregation?

Gary Hamrick: Not within the congregation, no. In fact, I've been so encouraged by how folks in our church have actually... Well, let me illustrate it this way. I got an email from a man who's an executive with a pharmaceutical company, and he's married with four daughters. And he sent me an email. He said, "Pastor Gary, I just want

to thank you because, in part, we come to Cornerstone Chapel so that we can know that we're not going crazy because, in a world that is so full of craziness, I'm finding that people are attracted to our church and other churches like ours... I don't want it all come across like we're exclusive, but "other churches like ours because they find it a place of solace and rest and a place where they can realize, 'Okay, we're not going crazy. This is true, and what the world is teaching and the narrative of the world is false.'"

So I didn't get pushback from anybody in our congregation. Pastors who are reluctant to enter the fray on these cultural issues. I've tried to understand why, and I think there's probably a few reasons. I think some pastors are afraid that if they are too strong on these cultural issues, that they will drive people out their church, and with people also go the tithe and the offerings. So I think some of it is motivated by numbers and dollars, and I just want to encourage any pastor might be listening. The opposite has happened with us. The more that I have just been faithful to tell the truth, people have been drawn to that. Sure, some people have left, but literally, for every person who's left, three more have come. And the offerings that we've received, really because of our media around the world now, our income has doubled in the last three years.

I mean, so it's a lie to think if I stand for the truth, people are going to drive away, and then the money's going to leave. And I think honestly, Gary, another reason why pastors are reluctant is because they've believed the false narrative about the separation of church and state. And I need to stay in my own lane and only preach the gospel. Well, hey, Martin Luther once said, "If I preach the gospel in all aspects without addressing the events of our time, I am not preaching the gospel at all." So there has to be this relevant application of the gospel to address the cultural issues of our time. Yes, the center of the gospel is faith in Jesus Christ for your sins to be forgiven, to have a relationship with Him, but then how does that actually get lived out in day-to-day life? And so that's why it's important, I think, to integrate the gospel message with addressing the cultural aspects in all aspects, not just what's happening in the world, but what's happening politically, what's happening globally, what's happening economically, because we're living in this.

So how does my faith actually play out in a real world? So again, I think either because pastors are afraid, they're going to lose people, or they're afraid of the separation of church and state, and all of that that we know is not in the Declaration of Independence, or the Bill of Rights, or the Constitution. It's a phrase that Jefferson, as you know, Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptist. But the reason Jefferson wrote that was because the Baptists were concerned about the First Amendment protection. And Jefferson addressed the wall of the separation of church and state to comfort the church to know that government can't intrude into the church. But we've misinterpreted it to think that it means the church cannot intrude into government issues. No, the wall is to protect the church from the invasion or the overreach of government, not the other way around.

And so we've kind of put up the four walls of the church, and we think, "Well, we're just going to talk about the gospel, and we're not going to talk about the culture. And we don't want to address these issues." And it's unfortunate because if there's ever a time when people in our world needed to hear truth and needed to understand how it's relevant to address the issues of the times, it's now. And so I just feel this urgency because the closer we get to the return of Christ, the more wicked the world is going to become. And people need to know how to navigate a wicked world while we're still living here.

My citizenship is in Heaven. I have temporary citizenship as an American, but my ultimate citizenship is in Heaven. And so that's the ultimate thing I have my eye on, but I still have to live out my life here until such time I'm called home. And that's the responsibility of pastors in the pulpit to help the folks understand, "Here's how you live it out in this fallen world so that your faith is real." And at the same time, we understand how to navigate all the messiness and craziness of our world.

So that's a long-winded answer, Gary. I'm sorry. I get up on my soapbox on these because I'm passionate about it for a couple reasons, because I want people to know the truth. And I'm so disheartened when I hear pastor say, "Well, I don't touch those things." I'm like, "Wow. What? You're doing a horrible disservice to the flock."

Gary Bauer:

There's all this polling data, and usually I don't pay any attention to polls, but this polling data is so consistent. Three quarters of the country, they don't even recognize America anymore. They say, "We're headed in the wrong direction. What is going on? What is happening?" And if you go down the list of problems in America, the things we need to deal with, racial reconciliation, rebuilding the family, ending corruption in government on Wall Street, wherever it is, giving all of our children, regardless of their race or their economic background, a chance to succeed, et cetera, there are no solutions possible for any of those problems without the active involvement of the followers of Jesus Christ in America. So we're cheating our country if we don't get involved.

Gary Hamrick:

Yes, exactly. Every social issue or cultural issue that we are dealing with right now has a biblical response. Even the border issue. When I hear people say, "Well, let's not be too definitive about the southern border." I'm like, "Hey, do you realize that kind of in the Bible when God allotted land to the 12 tribes of Israel, that they had borders and boundaries, and it was..." God's not opposed to borders and boundaries of a nation. I mean, even when it comes to things like that, there are biblical answers to these things. So we have to know our Bibles. And then we have to, in the pulpits, be able to educate our people in enough so that they can understand. Hey, listen, we have to be involved.

America, it really depends upon the remnant of the church doing its part to live out righteousness in a way that honors God and glorifies God because, Gary, listen, I'm reminded of when Sodom and Gomorrah got destroyed, remember how Abraham did that kind of... He went that backwards auction with God. He's

like, "Well, how about if there's 50 righteous people? Well, will you give me 40? Will you give me 20? Will give me 10? And God said, "Even for 10 righteous people, I won't destroy Sodom and Gomorrah," which means by the way, that there weren't even 10 righteous people in all of Sodom and Gomorrah because it got destroyed. But when God says, "Even for the sake of 10, I won't destroy it." The remnant of the church in America is what is keeping America from being destroyed. And if we don't do our part to uphold righteousness, then there's no hope for America. The hope for America depends upon believers doing their part to live out their faith in a way that honors and glorifies God, and then God will have mercy in our nation. That's why I'm convinced of that.

Gary Bauer: So, as you just pointed out, the Bible does address these issues. We often hear people say, "Well, I can't find this issue anywhere in the Bible." Well, you're not looking hard enough because just about everything imaginable, and that's conceivable by man, is addressed in the Bible. But I recall a sermon you did. This must be very encouraging to you that people in your congregation actually remember your sermons. I remember-

Gary Hamrick: Yeah. I may not remember what you're about to say.

Gary Bauer: Oh, I remember one you did where you pointed out that there are many stories in the Bible of the heroes of the Bible attempting to influence the governments of their time. I don't know if you recall some of those or not, but it's easy. Here, we're dealing with what's supposed to be a representative government, but in the Bible, biblical heroes were often dealing with governments that they didn't like what you were saying would actually smash you, or kill you, or whatever.

Gary Hamrick: Yeah, that's right. I mean, you look at all the prophets of the Old Testament, and they confronted the kings. Most of the kings of Israel... Well, all of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel were wicked. And there were only a couple of good kings in the southern kingdom of Judah. But the prophets were the ones who confronted kings and challenged them about their policies and about their own personal morality. And so you see God's people who were raised up for such a time to speak to power, and now somehow, we've lost that.

I mean, there's sometimes a cost to it. John the Baptist, I mean, he confronted Herod about his own sin. And it got under Herod's skin enough that he eventually had John the Baptist beheaded. So sometimes, when you speak truth to power, there are personal costs that you're going to pay. But to remain silent is even a bigger tragedy because if we're not being... Example the Daniels, if we're not speaking to the Nebuchadnezzar's, if we're not helping to bring righteousness to an unrighteous land, who will? I mean, if not the church, who is going to speak truth, and who's going to be the example of righteousness in a lost and wicked world? So it's on us.

Gary Bauer: Pastor, many people look back now into the 1940s and 1950s, when there was still segregation in the South, or you could go back to the 1850s, when some people unbelievably thought that one man could own another man. And we

look at so often the silence of the church during those eras, and we... Our reaction is, how in the world could they have not gotten involved in that? Well, some of the lack of involvement was for the same reason. I don't want to offend somebody. I just want to stay focused on the gospel. Well, by staying what they thought was focused on the gospel, they let this horrible sin continue. It would be terrible for history to look back on this era when our children were being deceived by all these things, when a corruption was rampant, when families are breaking up and think, "Where was the American church?" It's hard for me to understand why a pastor wouldn't be able to see this.

Gary Hamrick:

Well, and just as you pointed out in the 1940s, for example, there's one German pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who stood up against Nazism and confronted Hitler because it was the prevailing sin of that time. And Bonhoeffer said, "The church is the conscience of the state." So he understood that his calling as a pastor was to equip the people, but also to be a voice of clarity and righteousness in a dark world. And so the church is the conscience of the state. Now, of course, the Nazis executed Bonhoeffer for saying stuff like that. In 1945, he was executed at the age of 39. So again, there's sometimes a price to pay, but yeah, we can't be silent.

Another example that you were referring to with regards to slavery is William Wilberforce, of course. And how he... In fact, he said, "Let it not be said that I was silent when they needed me." And Wilberforce stood up against slavery, and was really because of his faith in Christ that made him realize, "Hey, we're all equal in God's eyes." And Wilberforce is credited really for the elimination of slavery in Great Britain and the colonies because, as a Christian, he took a stand for what was right. Again, got slavery abolished in Great Britain and the colonies. So when we, as the church, look around our culture, well, what is the comparative evil of our day? Well, it's this transgender ideology. It's a same-sex marriage. It's all of this convoluted, sinful stuff. And if we are remaining silent, then how are we really then being salt and light in the world? If we are called to be salt and light in the world, to influence our culture and our world for the glory of God, if we remain silent, we're not being salt and light.

And so I thank God for people like Bonhoeffer and Wilberforce who have gone before us to set the example of it's okay to speak out against the evils of your time. There might be a price to pay, but we cannot remain silent.

Gary Bauer:

Pastor, speaking about the evils of our time, we've been witnesses recently because of events in the Middle East to an evil that was simmering here in the United States, right underneath our noses. There was, of course, this horrible massacre done by the terrorist group Hamas and Israel. This is a radio show that has a family audience. I don't want to describe what happened, but I would urge people to go do a little investigation. It will sicken you what happened on that day. And yet, in reaction to that, within a day or so, there was this massive wave of not disagreement and criticism of the terrorists but of antisemitism. And on university campuses, I saw the other day that city leaders in New York advised one particular day that Jews should probably stay off the streets for the next 24

hours. What? You have spoken to this so boldly that you cannot love Jesus and embrace hatred of the Jews. I'd like you to address that.

But second of all, you have a great love for the nation of Israel. You've gone there many times. You've led people there. So I would just like you to share with us what you think this moment means and why the church certainly must speak up against the antisemitism. And I would argue in favor of Israel, the only free society in the Middle East, really.

Gary Hamrick:

Yeah, I was actually supposed to be in Israel October the eighth. I was leaving to lead another group from our church. And then, of course, everything broke out on October the seventh. And so, thankfully, we weren't there when it broke out. But my heart goes out to all the Israelis and all that they've been through. And now the international world is pointing a finger at them because they're trying to root out the evil of Hamas. War is ugly. There will always be casualties of people who are caught in the crosshairs of war. And so I don't say it without regard to Palestinians who have been killed in the process, but this is a war against evil. And antisemitism raises its ugly head at times like these. When you start to see college campuses with people who are responding by saying from the river to the sea, they're talking about the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

They're talking about Israel, that they just want wiped off the map. And I said to our congregation a week after the October 7th terrorist attacks in Israel that really antisemitism is satanism. I mean, when you boil it down to its root, Revelation 12 talks about how the dragon stood opposite the woman as she was giving birth to her child to devour the child. Well, that's symbolic language. The dragon represents Satan. The woman in the big picture of the story represents Israel. The child that she gave birth to represents the ultimate messiah, Jesus. And Satan has always been trying to do whatever he can to come against God's redemptive plan. Now, God chose His redemptive plan to come through a people group that He raised up from the seat of Abraham. The Jewish people did not exist until God providentially determined that a race of people should come forth from the seat of Abraham.

And so Satan has been constantly opposed to that redemptive plan of Jesus as a savior, for the whole world came through a Jewish race of people, a Jewish nation. And so when we look at what's happening in the world, and a lot of people scratch their heads and like, "Where did all this come from?" Well, the root of it is Satan. I mean, he has incited people in their hatred against Jews because the Jews in the big picture of things represent God's redemptive plan because a Messiah came through the Jewish people. So it really is all just rooted in Satan inspiring and inciting nations, and the vitriol, and the anger, and the hatred. I mean, you have to stop and ask why all of this hatred towards a country that is smaller than the state of New Jersey? Why are all eyes on this group of people, and why all the hatred?

Well, there's a lot more behind all that. And that's because, really, it's a demonic. It's satanic behind all this inciting people with this kind of hatred and vitriol towards the people who represent God's ultimate plan of redemption. Now, at the same time, Gary, I should add that we're praying for Jews and Muslims who don't know Jesus to come to faith in Jesus. It's not like when I say that we should be pro-Israel and we should recognize that antisemitism is satanism, I'm not saying that everything the Israelis have ever done is correct and right. And as a nation, the majority of them do not accept Jesus as savior Messiah. And so we should still be praying that they will come to faith in Jesus as Messiah.

But we can't stand idly by either and say, "Well, what happened on October 7th? Oh, somehow they deserved it. Somehow the Israelis are the occupiers. They're the colonialists." They don't know their history. The Jewish people were given the land by covenant of God in Genesis 15, 4,000 years ago. They didn't come into the nation in 1948 and then just start living there. They have been dispersed over the years. They've been oppressed over the years, attacked, and especially through the Holocaust, tried to be annihilated, and God has providentially preserved them. But all of this hatred, animosity is really inspired by Satan. And it's tragic to see a lot of our college campuses just allowing this hatred and this antisemitism to flourish the way it has.

Gary Bauer: Young Americans are particularly confused about this, and I include some young Christians. And it's really important, and you've touched on this many times, that there's an effort to erase the history of the Jewish people in their homeland. Now again, I think some young Christians are confused about this. We need to understand that if the Jews were not in the Holy Land, then our Bible is a lie because our whole Bible is the story of the Jews in their homeland.

Gary Hamrick: Exactly.

Gary Bauer: Jerusalem was the capital of Israel when Washington, D.C., was still a swamp.

Gary Hamrick: Exactly.

Gary Bauer: So I just hope that all Americans are discerning about this, because there's a lot out there that's false. My goodness, pastor. I could spend a week of Sundays with you talking about these issues. This has been fantastic. I want to encourage you. You really have become an example to many pastors around America about how to be committed and loyal to the cross of Christ while at the same time being a citizen in the place God has put us.

Gary Hamrick: Thank you.

Gary Bauer: And by bringing to a hurting country the answers to so many of the problems that are literally big deviling us because so many of these problems come straight out of the pit of hell. Well, Pastor Hamrick, this has been a great time

with you, and prayer is so important for whether America's going to make it or not. And of course, all of us who follow Jesus are called to regularly pray. And I would really appreciate it if you would close our time together by praying about our work, and Family Talk, and the days ahead.

Gary Hamrick: Sure, I'd be happy to. Well, Father, I just thank You for this opportunity we've had to share together. Just pray, God, Your blessing on Family Talk. And thank You, Lord, for James Dobson's ministry over the years. I thank You for Gary Bauer and the team here. And Lord, we just lift up America. We continue to pray for You to have mercy upon us and for the church to rise up, to be salt and light in our world, to advance the good news of Jesus, and to live out our faith in a culture that makes a difference. And we just thank You that we get to serve You in the kingdom. Pray, Father, for You just to continue to use us for Your glory, and we give You all the praise in Jesus' name.

Gary Bauer: Amen.

Roger Marsh: What a great conversation today featuring Gary Bauer and his special guest, Pastor Gary Hamrick, here on Family Talk. We hope this program will encourage you and strengthen your faith so that you may have the courage to speak out and to stand up against the evil that's in our culture today.

Now, remember, if you missed any part of this two-day conversation, you can visit us online at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk and hear the program again in its entirety. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Also, keep in mind, our 2023 broadcast collection is available now for everyone who supports the ministry of Family Talk today. This five-disc CD sets is also available as a digital download, and it makes a great addition to your home library. It's also a great resource for you and your family. Now, you can get your own copy by going to drjamesdobson.org/2023. All the information you need is there on that page. That's drjamesdobson.org/2023. And thank you for your prayers and faithful financial support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for making Family Talk a part of your day. May God richly bless you and your family as you continue to grow deeper in your relationship with Him.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Hello, everyone. This is James Dobson inviting you to join us for our next edition of Family Talk. Every day we come to these microphones with someone in mind, whether it's a busy mom looking for tips on discipline or a husband who wants to learn more about connecting with his wife. We want to put an arm around your family in any way that we can. So join us next time for Family Talk, won't you?