



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Call to Reopen America's Churches – Part 1

Guest(s): Brian Gibson

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Dr. Clinton: Hi everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the James Dobson Family Institute and President of the American Association of Christian Counselors. What unique and unprecedented times these are. The simplicity and hope of the gospel seem a little sweeter, certainly a little more precious during these times of uncertainty. Our hope remains secure in Jesus Christ, and that brings me comfort. Great comfort. I wanted to take a moment to let you know that we here at the James Dobson Family Institute love you and we're praying for you. If you're struggling and need some encouragement, we'd be honored to pray with you.

You can call us toll free at (877) 732-6825. That number again, (877) 732-6825, or simply go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Thanks for inviting us to be a part of your day. We're going to get through this challenging time together. Let's go now to today's presentation.

Dr. Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and this is Family Talk. I pray that you're well and are continuing to manage your life in the midst of the worldwide pandemic that we're all experiencing. I know that the first half of this year has been terribly difficult for families, and our prayers go out to those of you who are struggling. It does look like we're starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel, but who knows? I'm glad to see more and more states have begun to open up businesses and other enterprises so that folks can get back to work. While liquor stores, abortion clinics, Walmart, and other businesses are operating, most houses of worship are not. That's discriminatory and it is outrageous.

It has resulted in some courageous pastors refusing to be denied their First Amendment rights to worship freely, and they have paid a price for their stand. I want to introduce you today to one of those pastors whom I met by phone a couple of weeks ago, and believers who are looking for a champion are going to love Brian Gibson. Before I put him on the phone, I want to read a portion of his bio so you know who he is. After graduating from Oral Roberts University, Brian felt called to move to Owensboro, Kentucky, to plant a church there that would teach the truth of God in a relevant way. So, by faith, Brian and Jessi moved there, to Owensboro, and began organizing River City Church in August of 2004.

It launched there, and on the first Sunday morning in January, 2005, they had 25 in attendance. Now the Owensboro location has outgrown the last eight buildings, and I believe he has more than 2,000 members there now. The Gibsons have three children. There're four campuses, they call them HIS church, H-I-S. You can figure that out. Two of them are in Texas, Amarillo and Dumas, and two are in Kentucky, Henderson and Owensboro. There's also an online church presence as well. Their mission is to plant 100 campuses before turning it over to the next generation. The pastor is on the line with me now. Brian, are you there?

Brian Gibson: Yes, sir. Dr. Dobson, it's an honor to be here with you and an honor just to spend a few minutes with a man like you. You've taught us all how to train children. My wife is your biggest fan and has read everything you've written. And I think she's using your principles training me as well. So I don't know if that's working against me or not, or for me, but we love you, Dr. Dobson, and appreciate you.

Dr. Dobson: I said I liked you, but I love your wife. She sounds like a great lady.

Brian Gibson: Everybody likes her more than me, and that's the way it should be.

Dr. Dobson: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I managed to get your cell number and reach, what sounded like you were in a restaurant. Is that where you and Jessi were when I called?

Brian Gibson: We were, we were eating dinner in Oklahoma City. So I was sure surprised to get a call from you at that time.

Dr. Dobson: In fact, you sounded a little suspicious when you answered the phone, you said, "Hello? Who is this?" And then you warmed up a little bit when I told you who I was.

Brian Gibson: Yes, sir. Since things have taken off and you get just a little bit of public spotlight, you got to watch who you're talking to because at this hour, everybody is not friendly. There are a lot of foes out there that are against people that simply want to worship and simply want to open up the church. And so you see the things written about you and the things said about you and the traps that the media tries to lay to get you in. And so I'm sorry if I came off suspicious, maybe I am.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, I'm teasing you. So you have been brow beaten for your determination to hold services.

Brian Gibson: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. And that's okay. I signed up for it and those people are entitled to their opinion. That's America. And I'm thankful that they can have that dissenting opinion. I think it smells like liberty and I celebrate it, but I also want to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: Oh my. Well, have you been threatened? What kind of harassment have you had?

Brian Gibson: Well, I think I just, this typifies some of it, some people were saying when I was asking, and we're not asking for a mad crazy dash back into the church. We've asked pastors, rabbis, religious leaders, I'm a Christian, I'm a follower of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, but this is bigger than a Christian issue. This is an American issue.

Dr. Dobson: By the way, Brian, you told me before we began recording that you're in LAX. So you're in an airport right now, aren't you?

Brian Gibson: Yes, sir. I'm in an airport right now. I have to travel because as the world knows, we have a lot of issues right now in different cities with rioting and looting. And so I'm going to try to bring peace. We have a prayer vigil scheduled in Louisville, Kentucky that I have to get to where the mayor will be there praying with us, people from every race praying there with us. The name of my organization is peaceablygather.com. So we are for peaceful protest. We're definitely against rioting, looting, murder, just the kind of things we've been seeing. And what we've seen in Louisville, which has been so terrible, is there were a group of African Americans that were wonderful people that were protesting against racial injustice and for equality, and they were doing everything right in Louisville, Kentucky.

And then another group of people were bussed in to Louisville, Kentucky, who are not from Louisville, who came and began destroying that great city. Now they're not tearing up their own city, they're being bust in and paid to tear up your city. And so I think there has to be some strong action to stop that violence.

Dr. Dobson: Doesn't it break your heart what's happening to our country? There's just hate and violence. I just can't believe it, and yet I can because I lived through the Watts riots back many years ago, but this looks in some ways worse.

Brian Gibson: Well, it's so widespread. Think about this, Dr. Dobson, we have our first campus that I pioneered was in Owensboro, Kentucky. And we're talking about a small town. This is small town America, 50,000 people. They bussed people in to Owensboro, Kentucky to cause trouble. And if they're bussing people into a city that, on the national scene, it's a fly over place. They're very well organized and very well-funded. They're also being told things like this. We were reading on the guidelines, "Hey, wear long sleeves to stand against tear gas. Bring milk because it helps as a deterrent from pepper spray. Bring hammers to break glass."

They're being coached and they have a playbook to do damage. And this so misrepresents the Floyd family, who's asked for peace. It so misrepresents the good God fearing African American community that I love around this nation

who are protesting peaceably. And they're rioting, they saw an opportunity to try to destroy America and they're doing it on the back of racial injustice. And it just is horrific.

Dr. Dobson: We all respect the right of people to protest. And what happened to Mr. Floyd is unconscionable. I mean, it is awful. He was murdered. And the man who committed that crime, if he is found guilty, should be punished to the fullest extent of the law. And we support the right of people to protest, but this is beyond protest. This is violence for violence' sake, and this is looting for the purpose of stealing. And we cannot condone that. So it is a sad day for America.

Brian Gibson: No, it is a sad day. And I think one should stand against racism, stand for justice, and also stand against this horrible action and the looting. And we really need, I feel like many of the governors have backed off and let this happen. And I'm not sure why. So the peaceable protest, I mean, that's a First Amendment right. And that's right with religious freedom. That's right there with freedom of the press.

Dr. Dobson: Of course it is.

Brian Gibson: I mean, it is our right as Americans to peaceably protest. And so that's wonderful. That makes America, America. I don't understand allowing the rioting to go on. I don't want to see any more loss of life, but I think something needs to be done. Something needs to be done quickly. Now I know this, I know the government will never be the answer to our issues in America. I know the Democrats can't fix it. I know the Republicans can't fix it. But I know who can fix it. His name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

And I believe if we can get pastors of every denomination, every color, every race, every creed to link arms together, and to stand against this injustice, to stand for racial equality, but to stand against violence and looting and thuggery. I believe that the power that we have as the church could turn the tide and we could get America back.

Dr. Dobson: That is the only answer. Isn't it, Brian?

Brian Gibson: It is the only answer. And I think we see right now the power of the church, because think about this, Dr. Dobson, I'm sure you already have, but they closed the church down for maybe it's been 10, 12 weeks now. And when we come together, and I'm for online campuses, I have one, I'm not against that, but I see that as a supplement to the church, not the main course. We have to assemble together. You can't baptize somebody online, but when you shut the church down for 10 to 12 weeks, I believe a spiritual covering comes over a nation when the people of God gather together and pray and worship and seek the face of God.

Now we closed down that action in America. And I believe spiritually, a covering began to lift off this country. And it opened up for this mayhem, this

destruction, and this wickedness to come to our nation. I think even the church forgets how powerful we are when we come together.

Dr. Dobson: Well, I want everybody to know that I'm not suggesting that everyone should go to a crowded church and expose themselves to the virus. That's an individual decision everybody has to make. And it's up to an individual church and its leadership. So this phone call is not suggesting that everybody who is not doing that is somehow out of harmony with the Lord, but I'm fighting for religious liberty. And again, it's hard to understand the discrimination against the church that's taken place. That is dangerous. I see it as threatening to religious liberty generally, and we really must fight it.

And I appreciate so much you willing to take a stand and taking the heat for what you're doing. Tell us your personal story. You were raised on a farm, weren't you?

Brian Gibson: Yes, sir. I was raised in a small town, Providence, Kentucky, a couple of thousand people. And right there on a farm, my father was a broker of stocker and feeder cattle. So, when I was large enough to not get killed by the cattle, if it wasn't football season, when I got home from school every afternoon, we worked from 3:00 'til 10:00 every night, Dr. Dobson. Now when football season rolled around, my family loved football. There were three brothers in the house and we all played ball. But I learned the greatest lessons and got the greatest teachings and work ethic there.

Had a great mom and dad, had a devout Christian mother, and my father became a believer as well later in his life before he passed away. So that's kind of my personal background.

Dr. Dobson: How old were you when you gave your heart to Christ?

Brian Gibson: I was raised in the church, fell away from the things of God and got myself in a whole lot of trouble as a young man. So I actually got mixed up in the drug scene. I had a meth problem, I was a crank head. And Jesus stepped into my life when I was just about 21 years old. And I'd been abusing substances from 16, pretty much on a daily basis. The best way I know to explain it, I was a functioning drug addict. I could show up, shake your hand, raised by a businessman, look you in the eye. Very respectful. But I'd always hide. And Christ came into my life and radically turned me around.

And so at 21, I got born again. I got born again at a church in Amarillo, Texas, which I pastor now. It's a part of the HIS church network.

Dr. Dobson: [crosstalk 00:00:15:49].

Brian Gibson: I say this, I say, the pastor took me in there as a faith based drug rehab, got me saved, taught me how to live free from substances, and to pay him back for

everything he did for me, I ran off with his daughter. So I married the preacher's daughter out there.

Dr. Dobson: Well, you've obviously committed your life to Christ and will spend the rest of your life trying to serve him. What happened when you defied the governor and the powers that be and said that you would continue to function as a church?

Brian Gibson: In the State of Kentucky, Governor Bashear was against the church from day one. Every night, he would come out and he does his form of a fireside chat and he would talk about how a different church somewhere, how it had passed the coronavirus to so many people. But it was funny that they never brought up stories about people getting it in Walmart, people getting it in Target. This coronavirus is so smart. So intelligent it only seems to infect people in churches and synagogues, not anywhere else. And so they targeted us on a drive through Easter egg hand out. We only had 10 people there. They wouldn't let us pass out eggs. The Health Department shut us down.

Dr. Dobson: What had you done to make sure that those plastic eggs were not contaminated?

Brian Gibson: Sure. They'd been packed five days earlier and let to sterilize, it's what we were told to do to make sure there was no virus on it. Well, everybody had masks and gloves, those 10 workers had that. It was the highest protocol you could come up with. And we get the call, "You can't do this. We'll shut you down." So we complied because we're trying to be good people. But we were standing looking across the road and the fast food joints have teenagers putting French fries in cardboard boxes. The liquor stores, they were operating their patrons in the drive through and so was Starbucks.

So I decided to do a parking lot communion service where we safely, sanely, we got the prepackaged communion and we had people stay in their cars. But the governor said we couldn't distribute anything. I called the press. We called everybody, said we're going to do this anyway. And we did. We went out on the lot. We did it, the press showed up, covered it. They saw that we weren't wild people, that we weren't idiots, that we were just people that wanted our First Amendment rights and wanted to worship our Lord. Whenever we did that, the articles written about us were so positive. I think it backed the governor off, backed him off me personally.

Now he held his ground on his executive order and treated the church terribly in the State of Kentucky. Called the church non-essential.

Dr. Dobson: You're asking people not to vote for people who attack the church, aren't you?

Brian Gibson: Across America, I'm asking them, if they attack the church, we should vote them out. And I believe God wants to replace them with godly, logical, wise men.

Dr. Dobson: Where do you get the guts to do this? You've got a lot of pastor friends who have not said a word, I would guess, is that true?

Brian Gibson: I've got friends that have been friends of mine my whole life, that won't sign my petitions. They won't return my calls. They're scared of me now. And you know what, Dr. Dobson, it hurts my feelings, but I don't care. Somebody has to be the prophet when it's time to be the prophet. If you're going to do that, you're not always going to be popular. And I'm, really nationally, I'm a flea compared to some of the mega church pastors that are out there with massive followings and big bats to swing. I kept waiting on them to swing in their bat and nobody was swinging. So we said we'll take what little bat we have and swing it.

And we did it on a Monday, and on Tuesday morning, a friend of mine called me at 4:30 in the morning. I thought it was odd. He said, "Brian, you're on Fox News." I said, "Local Fox?" He said, "No, man, you're on national Fox." And I'm like, "Holy moly." So I got up, and then they've been so kind. The media started and it ran, it's been running hard. It's been a hundred miles a minute. But I think if we don't act now and we allow our First Amendment rights to be violated like this, a precedent's going to be set where the First Amendment is gone. My stepfather spent his life ministering to the underground church around the world. And I went with him, had the opportunity to minister in that context.

I've even been there in Vietnam where the authorities come in to break up the meetings, harass the pastors, and do everything they can do is to terrorize those people. The only thing that separates us from them, Dr. Dobson, is that First Amendment, that Bill of Rights and that constitution. And if we let them compromise that, we've lost everything as Americans.

Dr. Dobson: Brian Gibson is on the phone. For those who are tuned in today, let me say, you now know why I wanted to talk to this man. You now know why I consider him to be a national hero and that I wanted to let you hear him and get acquainted with him because this man's got it together. He knows what he believes and he's willing to fight to defend it. And there are very few people out there today who will.

Roger Marsh: This is Roger Marsh, and we hate to interrupt the passionate discussion here on the broadcast, but we are out of time for today. You've been listening to the first part of Dr. James Dobson's recent conversation with Pastor Brian Gibson here on Family Talk. Visit today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org for more information about this cause to reopen churches across America. That's drjamesdobson.org, and then tap onto the broadcast icon at the top of the page. Stay connected with Family Talk by following our various social media accounts. Find our profile on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest by searching for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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you often find online. Instead, fill your day with God honoring content. Go now and follow us on social media by searching for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Trust me, you'll be glad you did. Be sure to listen in again tomorrow as Dr. Dobson continues his timely interview with Pastor Brian Gibson. They'll discuss the need for everyone to stand up for what's right, whether that's racial or religious intolerance. Don't miss the conversation on the next edition of Family Talk. Have a blessed day, everyone.

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is Dr. Tim Clinton, executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks for listening today. We hope you found this program helpful and encouraging. Please remember that our ministry is here to serve you and your family. For more information about our programs and resources, or to learn how you can support us, go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, or call us toll free: (877) 732-6825. I pray that God will bless you in 2020. We're so grateful for your partnership. We ask you to stand with us and to continue to defend the Christian values in an ever changing culture. Thanks again for joining us. We hope you'll join us again on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: This is Roger Marsh. This year marks Family Talk's 10 year anniversary, and to celebrate, we've selected the most popular broadcast over the past decade. We've put these shows on eight audio CDs and present them to you on Family Talk's 10th anniversary broadcast collection. These entertaining and informative programs are sure to become a cherished part of your family resource library. You'll hear popular interviews that feature Eric Metaxas, Dennis Prager, Shaunti Feldhahn, and more in this compelling audio collection. These shows cover a variety of subjects that you care about from marriage and parenting to culture and the family.

This commemorative CD set is yours for a suggested gift of \$50 to support the work of Family Talk. Join Dr. Dobson in serving families by calling (877) 732-6825. Find out how you can have your own set with the most popular interviews from the first 10 years of Family Talk by calling (877) 732-6825, or you can visit our website at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Thanks for supporting Family Talk and celebrating our 10th anniversary.