



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** A Clarion Call for Life

**Guest(s):** Tony Perkins

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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.

**Roger Marsh:** Today is a monumental day in the history of the fight for the sanctity of human life. It was on June 24, 2022 that the United States Supreme Court upheld Mississippi's *Dobbs v. Jackson* case. A decision that ultimately resulted in the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Today marks the second anniversary of that momentous occasion, but has America really become more pro-life since that fateful day? I'm Roger Marsh and on today's edition of Family Talk, the Hon. Michele Bachmann is with us to share a powerful presentation about how each political party establishes their party platform and the role that legalized abortion will play in shaping policy decisions, for one major party in particular.

**Michele Bachmann:** Well, hi everyone. I'm Michele Bachmann. I'm dean at Regent University's Government School. It's a biblical worldview university, but today I'm here to introduce today's program with our guest, Tony Perkins. And if you've been a faithful listener of this broadcast, you know that Tony is the president of the Family Research Council. It was Dr. Dobson and others who began the Family Research Council 40 years ago in order to bring for the first time a biblical worldview perspective to Washington, D.C.'s decision-making.

This has been a powerful intervention in Washington, D.C. Recently, I had the pleasure of listening to Tony's presentation, and Dr. Dobson and Shirley believed that Tony's talk is important and urgently needed as the main two political parties are about to write their political platforms for the fall election. So our values will be voted on this fall at the ballot box, and those biblical values need to be clearly written out in the party's platforms so we know what the candidates will do when they're elected. I know this will be time well spent as you listen to Tony Perkins right here on Family Talk.

**Tony Perkins:** I never thought about politics as a profession. The Lord called me to preach at the age of 15. I've actually been preaching since I was 15 years old, and now the Lord called me to preach in nursing homes. Now little did I know that was preparation to work with Congress. I mean, I have found that both crowds are hard of hearing and very slow of moving. I remember when I first ran for office, I

was running against a 20-year political veteran in Louisiana for the State House, and I was out in August knocking on doors, and it gets pretty hot if anybody's ever been to Louisiana in August, a little warm, a little warm. We got these afternoon rain showers, and I had gotten wet and was knocking on a lady's door. And I knocked on the door, and this elderly lady came to the door, and I handed her my push card with my picture on it and my platform, and she took the picture and she stared at it. She looked at me, and she said, "My, that picture sure flatters you."

I would be lying, and I doubt you would believe me if I told you that we are living in the rosiest of times. The stresses on America, both internationally and domestically, are immense. We face the brute reality of war in Ukraine, which could easily spill over into a NATO country, drawing us into a war in Europe. Middle East is more volatile than any time since the founding of Israel 76 years ago. There are grim warnings from some of civil war here at home as the cancel culture seeks to silence and even eradicate the voices they disagree with. Political invective has become personal and ugly, even among friends. Now with that sobering backdrop, let me remind you and I speak here tonight, not just as a conservative Republican but more importantly as a Christian and a follower of Christ. We never face challenges without the hope and promise of victory.

These challenges we face, they have been entrusted to us. God has entrusted this moment in time, which I think is one of the most significant timelines on the timeline of human history. He has entrusted it to this generation. We have no reason, no reason to fear the difficulties we face because, as Paul wrote in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7, he says, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." This is our moment if we will embrace the challenge. Now, there's a lot we could talk about tonight, but I ask you to indulge me tonight about a topic that has become hard to discuss these days, and many political leaders are doing verbal gymnastics to avoid talking about an issue that has been is and will be a defining issue for our party and for our nation, and for Western civilization.

The Supreme Court reversed the calamitous 1973 abortion decisions, those rulings that led to the taking of nearly 63 million unborn lives. But what should have been the fulfillment of decades of efforts to heal the blot on our constitution and our national conscience has become a flashpoint of conflict. In the past 23 months, tens of thousands of infants have been saved in pro-life states, but perhaps 2 million more have lost their lives because of the Biden administration and the abortion industry combining to end all pretense that abortion is about healthcare and have begun promoting do-it-yourself abortion through the mail. We now have more abortions performed in this country through the abortion pill than any other means, and the Biden administration is fighting to send that to every state in every place through the mail. The *Dobbs* decision has given America a second chance, an opportunity, if you will, to repent of a horrible wrong.

The times call for a new campaign for life, but instead, we see sign after sign of a retreat among our fellow Republicans on this defining issue, and now there are rumors in reports of an organized campaign to weaken or even remove altogether from the GOP platform language that insists every boy and girl in the womb deserve a right to life.

And having written a large portion of the last two platforms and having once again been elected to serve on the platform committee from my home state of Louisiana, I'm actually involved in those conversations right now, and I'm hopeful if we will be clear about our convictions that we will end up in the right place. But I want to be clear about that tonight. The right to life transcends other political debates and the interests of any and all political parties and candidates. It is truly the right without which no other right has meaning. It is fundamental to who we are and to who we will become. In his last speech before his death in April 1865, Abraham Lincoln said these important principles may and must be inflexible. Please don't mistake my words for being partisan advocates for the sanctity of human life. When all political parties to embrace what our founders declared as the first among the rights with which we are endowed by our Creator. On this, we must be inflexible.

We must not yield to the voices, the temporal voices of the hour. We must stand firm on this understanding that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And it is fitting to go back to the very beginning of the Grand Ole Party nearly 170 years ago to understand the stakes that loom here tonight. All of us are familiar with the high drama of the mid-19th century. The turmoil that would divide a nation first divided the political parties of that day and actually gave birth to new political parties. The focus of the debate was not at first slavery itself but the extension of slavery into the territories of the rapidly expanding nation. The times compelled America's representatives to take a stand. Many did so at odds with their political party that brought them to office, but they were driven by principle and not by politics.

One of them, Pennsylvania Congressman David Wilmot, was first elected as a Democrat in 1844. Two years later, he stood on the floor of the House of Representatives and offered what became known as the Wilmot Proviso. The Proviso set the condition that no addition to the U.S. territory resulting from the Mexican War would permit either slavery or involuntary servitude. Well, Democrat Lewis Cass replied with the idea that became known as popular sovereignty. He wrote of this idea to a colleague, "Leave it to the people who will be affected by this question to adjust it upon their own responsibility and in their own manner." This manner of dealing with a matter of profound and universal significance, leaving it to one segment of the public or a state to determine whether other men could be owned as property, frankly, should sound somewhat familiar to our ears right now.

Thus was laid out the core debate between Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. Between the Democratic Party and the newly forming GOP. Now,

Wilmot re-emerged in time as a Republican. In 1856, the newly formed party met in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence. The convention adopted a platform that tracked the text of the declaration, then proceeded to make its application clear. It said this, "It is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism; polygamy, and slavery." Think about that. The twin relics of barbarism. From the very beginning, the very beginning of the Republican Party, they were concerned with the moral questions and rejected the idea that these were merely matters for local debate and resolution.

Four years later in Chicago, in May of 1860, Wilmot was among the first to take the floor of the Republican convention. Speaking of the reigning Democrats, he said this, "A great sectional and aristocracy or interest has for years dominated with a high hand over the political affairs of the country." That interest has rested in now wresting all the great powers of this government to one object of the extension and nationalization of slavery. He went on to say, "It is our purpose, gentlemen, it is the mission of the Republican Party and the basis of its organization to resist this policy of a sectional interest." Wilmot went on to cite the Constitution and held the revolutionary era, saying that the founders had, they thought, and I quote that "they were called upon to endure the hazards, trials, and sacrifices of that long and perilous contest for the purpose of establishing on this continent, a great slave empire, not one of them would have drawn his sword in such a cause." To the delegates gathered in that Windy City, these were not tweets, they weren't sound bites. These were real issues.

They weren't eclipsed by issues of commerce and taxation because these were the core issues. They understood these issues were the embodiment of the ideas and the ideals of Washington and Jefferson, they were the very reason that the party existed. And the reason was no mere, to use Wilmot's expression, "sectional interest," meaning state by state. It was the principle that all men are created equal and that governments exist to protect their inalienable rights. The 19th century brought another band of progress, the great waves of states acting to protect unborn children. These policies were advanced and adopted not by extremists, or Christian nationalists or whatever slur of the day that they might use, but by the newly formed American Medical Association. These forces converged in proposing and ratifying the 14th Amendment in 1868. In fact, I urge all of you to take a fresh look at the scholarship of people like Professor Robert George at Princeton and John Finnis at Oxford.

They persuasively arguing that the 14th Amendment's guarantee of due process and equal protection apply to human beings, as persons, at all developmental stages, prenatal as well as postnatal, and at all conditions. Some of you might say, "Hey, well, that's nice. That's good, Tony, but what does that have to do with the 21st century and the role of the parties in our legislature today?" I'm glad you asked that question. My answer is very straightforward. It has everything to do with it. Let's begin with the stark reality of the world as it revealed itself in the 20th century for all the progress in science and technology, and we can debate whether that includes the invention of the cell phone, the

internet, the *Barbie* movie. The 20th century was unparalleled in the development in the use of mass violence.

There were two world wars, dozens of smaller conflicts, the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the development and dropping of two atomic bombs, the H-bomb and long-range nuclear missiles, the millions of victims of Stalin and Mao. There was also something new to humanity, the top-down imposition of coercive population control, beginning in China but spreading worldwide. If Republicans were right about slavery, how should we respond to this latest manifestation of a dismissive view of human life? Well, the start of the 21st century has seen the emergence of a related issue. It is surprising that once man is free to end the life of a helpless child in the womb, he will then turn to the weak, the elderly, and the vulnerable who are outside the womb. To find our way forward at this 21st century, we only need to look back to America's debates on slavery. The ones I mentioned before.

The Democratic Party once embraced popular sovereignty, which held that issues of profound significance, such as slavery, were private decisions for the plantation owner and his state. Does that sound familiar? The Republicans of those days passed the 13th Amendment, ending slavery, the 14th Amendment, providing that's no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law" or "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." And the 15th Amendment, providing that the rights of citizens to vote shall not be "denied or abridged on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The Democratic Party was wrong then, and its ideology of privacy has been wrong for the last 50 years. To see abortion and assisted suicide as merely matters of private conscience is a cynical misreading of American history and a threat to the foundations of our American Republic.

I have said at the outset that life is not a partisan issue. We would, of course, like to see the party of Lincoln stand firm on what it has held as a matter of principle since 1856. We'd like to see it do so because it is the right thing to do, and the party's pro-life position has brought it more and more support from young people, from African-Americans and Latinos. The pro-life position is a position that has brought life to the party. In the first GOP platform to be written after *Roe v. Wade* in 1976, the Republicans took a stand and they wrote this and it's remained there to this day. Let me quote from the platform, "We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into the family structure through its denial of parents' obligation and right to guide their minor children. The Republican Party favors a continuance of the public dialogue on abortion and supports the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children." That's been in the platform since 1976.

In 1980, the GOP took another and even bolder step. Ronald Reagan was engaged in a nip-and-tuck primary contest with George H. W. Bush. To salvage his campaign, Reagan sought to resolve a controversy over his signing of a

liberal California abortion law in 1967 by sending a strong letter of commitment to pro-life leaders. What happened? They responded with endorsements in Reagan marched to victory. In 1984, the GOP platform took another massive step forward, going beyond endorsing a constitutional amendment and actively asserting that the Constitution, properly understood, already protects unborn life.

What it said, "The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the 14th Amendment's protections apply to unborn children." Now, from that point forward, the Republican Party platform has not only consistently affirmed the unborn child's fundamental individual right to life has actually expanded its language to include issues from adoption and defunding of abortion providers to opposing cloning and supporting federal protections for infants born alive after induced abortions. Likewise, abortion has not stood alone in these platforms because the issue is transcendent in other ways too. Attacks on human life have led to some of the most egregious assaults on the family and on religious freedom and conscience. And to these, the Republican Party has consistently and vigorously said no. And as the last four decades have shown, when these principles are celebrated, when they are embraced, the Grand Old Party prevails at the ballot box.

When the messaging or the candidate deviates or muddles these principles, failure is assured. Look at the results in 1996, 2008, and 2012. What are we to think of Republican leaders suggesting that the party reconsider its stance on the sanctity of human life or a constitutional amendment to protect the unborn? A commitment that this party has had for nearly a half a century that the Republican Party, for the first time, may sound the retreat on this core principle. Well, in such a situation, the alarm cannot be sounded too soon or too loud. We, champions of the God-given right to life, are under no illusions. The ravages of the sexual revolution are all around us. Today, we're even debating whether mutilating the bodies of children in vain attempts to change their sex is a good thing. Somehow that children can choose whether they're male or female. Shame on us as a nation. Under these circumstances, standing for the sanctity of each and every human life is hard, but it is essential for the future of our republic. Important principles may and must be inflexible.

I understand this is a challenge. We are not doing this for ourselves. We are seeking the protection of law and public policy for the most vulnerable among us, the unborn, and for their mothers, who maybe did not expect to be pregnant or did not expect the man in their lives to reject them when they got the news. Our call is to pray, to stand, and vote for justice. It's the hard way. It's the way of the cross, but it's what we've been called to. Luke, the great physician, records Jesus's words, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such of these." Let us rededicate ourselves to this battle for true freedom, the freedom that celebrates life and refuses to be silent while it's being destroyed. Let's stir the

spirit of the American people, of every party, and every persuasion to rediscover the gift of life and our duty to uphold it in every sphere. My friends, I leave you with this tonight, we must be inflexible on this important principle of the sanctity of human life, our future as a party, our future as a nation depends upon it. Thank you, and may God bless you. And may God bring the increase to our efforts to uphold the sanctity of human life.

Michele Bachmann: That was a powerful presentation given by Tony Perkins. What I hope you take away from this speech is the urgent necessity for our biblical values to be clearly written in the political party's platforms because our candidates follow the platform at least 80% of the time once they're elected. This is a crucial time to make sure that our values are clearly embraced by the candidates we vote for. And if you want to stay up-to-date on policy-related topics that affect you and your family, then be sure to check out the Defending Faith, Family and Freedom Podcast with Gary Bauer. To listen, just visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and click on Gary's podcast right there on the home page. I'm Michele Bachmann, and on behalf of Dr. James Dobson and the entire Family Talk staff, thank you so much for joining us today.

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