



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: SCOTUS, Roe, and the Hope We Share: The State of Our Nation with Sen. James Lankford

Guest(s): James Lankford

Air Date: May 16, 2022

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson, and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Hello, and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and so glad you've joined us today as we have a very special guest for today's program, United States Senator, James Lankford from Oklahoma. Dr. Dobson has known Senator Lankford for many years and considers him a good friend and a good man. In fact, if every state in our nation had a U.S. Senator with half the courage, moral conviction, and statesmanship as James Lankford, well, we would not be in the state of chaos and division that we currently find ourselves in. A couple of weeks ago, we sent a team from the JDFI to Washington DC to attend the National Day of Prayer. Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host of Family Talk and president of the American Association of Christian Counselors was among those who went. While in DC, Dr. Clinton had the opportunity to interview James Lankford in the Senator's office on Capitol Hill. We are going to share that very conversation with you in just a moment.

Before Senator Lankford was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2014, he served for four years as a U.S. Representative for Central Oklahoma. And before that, James Lankford served families and students in a ministry capacity for 20 years, including 15 years as Director of Student Ministry for the Baptist Convention of Oklahoma. When he's not on Capitol Hill defending traditional American values, Senator Lankford resides in Oklahoma City with his wife, Cindy. They've been married for over 30 years and have two daughters. Here now to introduce his guest and today's program is Dr. Tim Clinton.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Senator James Lankford is a strong conservative and servant leader who is committed to God, family, and the Constitution. Elected to the United States Senate in 2014, James has worked diligently for all Oklahomans, studying each issue and its direct impact on the family and individuals. He has earned the respect of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle for his knowledge on the pressing issues facing our country. While remaining passionate about life and traditional family values, he has become a strong voice for fiscal discipline and accountability in the federal government. He also has emerged as a leader in fighting government regulations that are suffocating business and weakening

the economy. I think impacting the family. Senator Lankford currently serves on the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, where he is chairman of the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management and the Indian Affairs Committee. In addition, Senator Lankford chairs the Select Committee on Ethics and serves on the Senate Republican Whip Team. Senator Lankford, such a delight to have you. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to join us.

James Lankford: There's a lot going on, glad to be able to do it as well.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Senator, Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, wanted me to convey their deep regards for your life in public service, standing strong on conservative issues, and for your love for the family. Wish they could be here, they wanted to shake your hand and just tell you that in person.

James Lankford: Well, it's always good to be able to see them and grateful for their friendship. In fact, we ran into each other just a couple of months ago. We both ended up flying into California actually for a meeting, different meetings on it. But, we actually just ran into each other at the airport in this random meeting. I'd literally just stepped off the plane, walked right into him, and we chit-chatted in the airport for a while. We got a nice California greeting with a Californian that walked right up into our conversation and just started screaming at me. "What are you doing in my state? I know who you are," and just started screaming. And, Dr. Dobson started rising to my defense to say, "This is a really good man." And, he would just have none of it. Then he just started screaming at him as well and walked off, so that was our California welcome to the sunshine state-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Only in California.

James Lankford: Well, I wish it was only in California. But, it was definitely a reminder, we did just land in California.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Elected officials in prayer. I want to just start there. We're here in Washington, DC on Capitol Hill, Senator Lankford's office, my wife, Julie, and I had the pleasure of being seated with Senate Chaplain, Barry Black at a prayer event here. I talked about how often in this city, Senators, members of the House and more will come together, do a Bible study, pray often. I just wanted to ask you, what has been your experience while you're here?

James Lankford: There are folks that say DC is such a swamp, and it's terrible, and it's awful. All that's here, but people would be surprised to know there are groups that gather Tuesday morning for intensive Bible study, Wednesday morning for a prayer time and gathering. There are different fellowship gatherings around with different groups of believers that are here, both in the staff, interns that come in and members of Congress. I'm in a Bible study group, and there's some folks that come to the Bible study that have literally never been involved in a Bible

study in their life. But they came here and thought, "I need to learn more about Scripture," and they're getting involved.

So, I'm amazed to be able to tell people, God is applying light to dark places. That shouldn't be a shock. But, this is a dark place, but God continues to be able to apply light here. He's always pursuing people in that, even here in this place. I encourage people all the time when they say I've just written DC off, I go, "Well, you know what? I don't think God's written DC off." So, what He has not written off, we shouldn't write off. We should lean in and engage.

Dr. Tim Clinton: When it comes to National Day of Prayer, what's in your heart right now as we move through the day and observe that moment on prayer?

James Lankford: There's a lot that really gets in my heart on this. I think about some things like recent Supreme Court case with Coach Kennedy, where Coach Kennedy in Bremerton, Washington was audacious enough after the end of the football game, he would just kneel down silently on the 50 yard line and thank God for keeping his players safe. For that, he was fired from his school district-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Horrific-

James Lankford: It's horrific on that. His school district said, "We'll give you a place to go secretly pray, if you want to do that." But, it's literally the school district saying, "You can pray, but only at a time and a place of our choosing." That's not who we've been as Americans. So literally, his school district celebrates an individual who would kneel during the National Anthem, but fires an individual who kneels to pray. Both those are silent kneeling, both those are protected speech and protected rights in America, at least they used to be. Well, that case has gone all the way to the Supreme Court. They're still Americans gathering to pray, and I believe the Supreme court's going to look at that case, and they're going to say, "That's absurd, that someone would be fired from their job for silently praying and just spending time alone with God at the end of a game, not compulsory anything."

But we've got so many things to pray about right now. What's happening in Ukraine, in Russia, right now. What is happening in different areas around Israel right now and the threats they're facing from an Iran that is trying to be a nuclear Iran and the real threats that they face. What the economy... What's going on. People are struggling to be able to pay their groceries right now and fill up their tank. It's a different world for people.

In addition, just all the hatred and the intensity of what's happening. The wickedness doesn't lead us to righteousness. And sometimes, we get so angry and caught up in culture, we forget, God is God, and He's got a plan. So, why don't we live our values and watch God do what only God can do and spend time in prayer saying, "God, do you see this?" And, He'll respond, "Yes, I do, and I'm at work there." And, it sets us at ease to go do the work we need to do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The world changed, went to a whole different place a couple of years ago when the pandemic hit. You think about the lockdowns and the loss, the loneliness, the racial tensions, the rioting, the election, chaos. COVID was like the gift that kept on giving, of course, Afghanistan etcetera. But, throw in censorship, suppression and everything else, it's like, "What in the world is going on?" To me, people are... They're filled with fear in some respects. You've got people who are confused. You've got media that's all over the place. They don't trust it. They're angry. There's a stirring that seems to be going on. What are you hearing on the front lines?

All of those things and more, as people are frustrated with losing their job, their transitions, the cost of energy prices, trying to be able to fill up. If you're driving a big rig right now, it's \$1,200 to be able to fill up your tank. It's just a whole different level of stretch for a lot of people. There are big issues they are facing. When people come and talk to me about it, and I have the opportunity to be able to be face-to-face with folks or are even in a public setting, I'll often challenge them and say, "All those are big problems, none of them are bigger than God."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

James Lankford: So, let's take a deep breath, and let's go to work. I always go back to the Nehemiah model. It's the place that I just return over and over to. Nehemiah as a slave, 150 years after the fall of Jerusalem, the book opens, his brother, Hanani, he's probably a slave as well, just came back from Jerusalem, and Nehemiah catches him and said, "What's it like there?" His brother, Hanani says, "It's terrible. The gates are burned. The walls are down. The people live in disgrace." And, Hanani goes, "It stinks to be them," and walks away. And, Nehemiah drops to his knees and pray and says, "God, what do I need to do?"

So, you've got two people in the opening chapter of Nehemiah. Hanani, who looks at the problem and says, "Stinks to be them." And, Nehemiah who says, "God, what's my part in making this better." And, my challenge and where we are in culture right now is to say, "Which one are you going to be? Are you going to be the complainer like Hanani and walk away, or are you going to be the prayer and worker like Nehemiah that says, God, do you see all this? What do you want me to do about this?" Then, get God's leadership and then go to work. I choose to be the pray and go to work group.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen. I love that. The American Psychological Association recently came out with a piece that highlighted the stress factor in the country, talked about inflation, you just mentioned. Talked about money stress and talked about Ukraine and how those elements were absolutely driving people to the brink. Then, I think it was recently... What was it? The Russian foreign minister comes out and says that, "nuclear options are on the table," blah, blah, blah. People start thinking World War 3, Russia-China Alliance and more. Next thing you know, Iran shows up in the middle of this conversation, something that's near and dear to your heart. I want to talk about that here for a moment because

you have a deep love for Israel. You look back at the Trump administration for a moment, the amazing Abraham Peace Accords that happened and you think about then where we're at. Just, what's your take... What's your update on all that? I know you've been working.

James Lankford:

I do work on those issues a lot, honestly. And, there's a reason we work on those issues because if we can settle the issues with Iran. Iran is the single most destabilizing force in all the Middle East. A nuclear Iran changes everything. I have folks that catch me... Even about you mentioned it, Ukraine and what's happening there. Folks will catch me and say, "Why don't we fly planes over Ukraine and try to give them the no-fly zone." And, I'll say, "Well, that actually puts us aircraft to aircraft with another nuclear power, and you have to be cautious on that. It's different when we're engaging with another nuclear power." Then I'll say to them, "That's why it's so important that Iran never has a nuclear weapon because we have to treat Russia differently because of this. We have to treat North Korea differently because of their nuclear weapons. We can't have that with the single largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, which is Iran, that they have a nuclear weapon as well. It's not just a threat to Israel. It's a threat to our security. It's a threat to global security."

So, I forced a vote in the Senate dealing with the Iran nuclear negotiations because the Biden administration is wanting to give up a lot in the dealing with Iran. They want it to be known that they got to a deal, and Iran is saying, "Well, one of the things that we have to have in a deal is you have to lift all the sanctions on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp." These are the individuals that were facilitating the murder of our troops in Iraq. These are-

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Bad guys-

James Lankford:

... the folks. It's really a bad group, in that. My opposition's not the Iranian people, it's the regime that they live under. So, we're trying to be able to keep pressure there on them. I continue to be able to speak out for, as you mentioned, the Abraham Accords. I serve as the lead person for the Abraham Accords Caucus in the Senate because I think this model that president Trump laid out of nations actually engaging with each other in that region will make an enormous difference. And, if no one's read the Abraham Accords before, just go look it up and read it. It begins with a statement of religious liberty. It's the most shocking thing to think about Israel and Bahrain and United Arab Emirates and Morocco and Sudan opening with a comment about Jews, Christians, Muslims all honoring each other's faith and living where they're in respect for faith.

The Abraham Accords don't start with an economic beginning. They start with a faith beginning to say that, "We're going to engage where we're going to allow for the free exercise of religion among our nations." It's a remarkable document that opens up multiple opportunities for the future. It's got five nations in it now. I'm working to try to get 7, 8, 9, 10. What would happen if that region actually all cooperated together, honoring their religious traditions and also

living economically engaged with each other. It's a long term revolution of peace.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's what this is all about. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here. Our special guest, Senator James Lankford from Oklahoma, a real voice in culture and here in Washington, DC, where we're at for the National Day of Prayer, such a delightful conversation. I wanted to shift to the conversation around life. You are strong champion for life. All eyes are focused obviously on the *Dobbs* case, and its impact on the *Roe versus Wade* ruling, coming soon. Your thoughts on this leak that happened with the Supreme Court, and it's just stunning. What's your take on what's happening? What should happen? What needs to happen?

James Lankford: This leak that's coming out of the Supreme Court is historic in many ways. The Supreme Court, people don't know how it actually functions. They're very focused on keeping secrecy there not because there's something secret. Because, they're supposed to stay out of politics. It's supposed to be just, "What does the law say?" That's it? What this leaker has done is they've tried to insert politics into this legal conversation, and they're trying to get public opinion to be able to sway justices, to say, "Don't say what the law says, say what we want you to say that it says," and that is a dramatic shift in what's actually happening in the Court. Now, we don't know. And at the time when we're recording this, we don't know what the Supreme Court's going to do. They could release out their final opinion at any moment.

We know at this point, in February, that there were five justices that were saying what's obvious to all of us. That, *Roe versus Wade* was not decided constitutionally. They literally invented a new constitutional something, including this whole viability rule that they imposed on every state. For 200 years of America's history, the abortion issue was decided in states and in legislatures. This issue of where does life begin was argued in legislatures, and they determined that.

In 1973, the court took that away from legislatures and said, "We don't want the people to decide this anymore. The court is going to decide this." Well, if this draft opinion holds true and what it really is, the court is saying, "That was a mistake in 1973. The court at that time should not have taken it away from the people, let the people to decide this hard, difficult issue of when does life begin." It doesn't eliminate abortion in the country. It just says to the country, "Go talk about this issue of life." Quite frankly, in my state, Oklahoma, we've already made the decision. We believe that life begins at conception and our legislatures already put that out there and said, "If *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, in Oklahoma, we're going to honor every single child. There is no child that we consider as disposable."

Dr. Tim Clinton: As a matter of fact, your Governor, Kevin Stitt, recently signed what some call as kind of a Texas style law on banning abortions. That just happened.

James Lankford: It did. Well, I would tell you that my Governor would want me to say to you, "We didn't sign a Texas style law. We went beyond what Texas did." So, Texas is going to one day have to sign an Oklahoma style law to be able-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Nice-

James Lankford: ... to keep up with us because we actually just made the very clear statement that, "life begins at conception." Every single child is important and should be actually protected. That basic principle, some would call radical. I think it's radical when someone says, "Some children are disposable and some children are valuable." I think that's a radical concept. I don't think it's radical to look at a child and to say, "That child's precious and what do we need to do to help them?"

Dr. Tim Clinton: Senator, we live in a country where the majority of Americans want some type of restriction on abortion.

James Lankford: That's correct.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The majority of Americans. Yet, we are now seeing states running rogue, like Colorado, Maryland, New York, go out to California and more. We'll add Virginia. Even saying, you can have up to birth-

James Lankford: Right and Virginia's after birth.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And, in some cases, 28 days after the birth of a child, how do we get to this place? It's unbelievable.

James Lankford: When you say, "I'm going to set my own agenda and everything's about my convenience." That's how you get to this place. When it's no longer about, "If a child is inconvenient, I can just destroy them and later when I want to, I'll make another one." It devalues all life for every single individual, and it makes everything in life about me, me, me, me, me, me. That to me is abhorrent, and I look at just the most basic principle of that of not only what it does in our culture, but what it does just to our conversation with each other, even. For me, I want to continue to be able to stand for the value of every single child and to say, "Where are we on this?"

And, states are going to do this differently. But here's what happens with that. It reopens the dialogue among the American people, where we actually start talking about this again. It's not just about choice, and it's not just about convenience. It's about children again, and that's the conversation that we should have. Because, I tell people all the time, there may be laws that make abortion illegal in one state, but we've got to move from talking about it being illegal to unthinkable. There's a big difference between the two. Illegal means you can't get it in the state. But, some mom is going to go to some other state and go get an abortion, if she doesn't realize what's really going on in her own

body. So, for us to be able to provide the opportunity to get information and education to her, so that what her gut says... Because, I'm convinced that every mom, when she's pregnant, knows in her gut, "That's a baby that's there." There's no sense of, "That's just random tissue." She knows in her gut, "That's a baby."

So, we need to move this from being just talking about illegal, to also unthinkable. That means compassion for us. That means engagement. That means quite frankly, holding men accountable to pay child support, to be able to make sure that we're actually as a state helping this mom in every way that we can as she raises this child to be able to have what she needs from a man that needs to take responsibility, from a culture and from churches and nonprofits that'll help wrap around her as well. So that as she grows and as that child grows, she can look at that child in the face and say, "I once considered taking your life, but now I'm watching you graduate from high school-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

James Lankford: ... and, I'm so glad you're right there." I've had all kinds of folks that have come to me and said, "Hey, this is a really bad time for us to talk about abortion. The elections are coming up and everything else. This is bad." I just smile at them and say, "There's not a bad time to talk about the value of children. There's just not a bad time." So, I don't care what the calendar says, or what's happening in the election cycle. I believe the vast majority of Americans don't believe in abortion on demand. They don't like late term abortions. They don't like that. Now, there's all these different definitions that are out there. I'm not saying everybody's where I am, that believes in life at conception. But, there are lots of folks that say, it should be at a heartbeat, or it should be at viability, or we shouldn't have late term abortions. They're not where the vast majority of the left is on this. The left is going to overplay this. They're going to run out and say, "We want abortion anytime, anyplace, we want it."

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know.

James Lankford: I think the American people are going to go, "No, not there, not there. Let's talk about this as a state and make a decision."

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's our prayer for sure. We're fighting the clock here. I have a lot more I wanted to talk to you about, like big tech, suppression and censorship. How people don't trust media. Now, hearing about this quote, "ministry of truth," disinformation and more. You think that issue, you think about parental rights. What happened in Loudoun County down to Florida and more. And, how parents are done with all this stuff. They're starting to show up and speak up. The war on men... You serve on the board of Promise Keepers-

James Lankford: I do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You have a real affection for men to step up and into this moment. I'll let you pick something here that's near to your heart right before we wrap up our time together.

James Lankford: All those are big to me. Obviously, I spent a lot of time with Allen Mayorkas talking about the Disinformation Governance Board, which is just bizarre-

Dr. Tim Clinton: It is.

James Lankford: Americans just seem to go get facts. We need the competition of ideas out there. We don't need government engaging on this. And, you are correct, I serve on the Promise Keepers Board. I'm very passionate about men actually stepping up and actually loving their wives, loving their children, engaging in their community. We need men to be able to step up and care about what's happening in the world and be the Nehemiah, pray and go to work on it. Get engaged, find a task that you can actually go and lead and to be able to help our communities on. When men just sit around and do nothing, we're missing people in our society that are important to be able to go fight and stand for justice.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Senator in closing, I've had many conversations with Dr. Dobson, talking about our times, how they seem so dark and evil, and you can get caught up in that lament that a lot of people are worried about their kids and their grandkids. My daughter, Megan said, "Dad, what's it going to be like for Olivia to grow up? Is she going to enjoy the country and the freedoms that we had growing up?" She said, "It worries me. That's what keeps me awake at night." And of course, reassuring her that God's in control. But, let me throw it this way. What I love about you is you're hopeful. You're hopeful for America. You love America. Would you say a word to us all here in closing about that hope that's in you?

James Lankford: Yeah, I would be glad to be able to share that. I have to tell you, I'm convinced that God is at work in our lives individually and in our nation. He has a purpose and a plan for our nation. He's been carrying that out. We've been the greatest missionary sending nation in the history of the world because of the prosperity that we've received, and individuals have been able to support mission movements all over the world. I look at books like 1 Peter, where Peter is writing to the church in Asia minor, who at that time had no clue about how to be at work with God, completely godless culture. Peter is writing to them, and he's saying, "Here's what I want you to do, I want you to live as aliens and strangers in the world. Live such good lives among these pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day that He visits us."

So, Peter's literally writing then going, "I know where you live. I know the craziness of your culture and how dark it is." Their total misunderstanding of marriage and their disconnect with so many different areas and all the things that he lays out in Peter. He says, "I know your culture, but here's what you need to do. Live as an alien and a stranger there, live such a good life that

though they accuse you of doing wrong, they would actually come to know God because they see your good deeds, and they will glorify God in the day ahead." So, I encourage Christians not to get caught up in the anger of our culture, but to live such good lives in our culture that we'll stand out and make an influence.

In our culture, it's lost. It's disconnected. It doesn't understand anything about God. So, what do we need to do? Model servant leadership, model the Jesus model on it. From 2 Corinthians 5, "It is be the ambassador," represent who God is. I firmly believe, again, coming from Paul's words in 2 Corinthians that, "I used to think of people in a worldly point of view. In fact, I used to think of Christ even that way, but I do so no longer. We are therefore new creations." I believe the culture that we live in, Christ can transform, but it's my responsibility to be able to live that out and model that. So, stop whining, get to praying and working and start serving people is really where I challenge folks.

Dr. Tim Clinton: "For such a time as this," and that is our prayer. Certainly what a delightful conversation. We, I think, know a little better on how to pray for you and your wife, Cindy, your daughters, Hannah and Jordan. Hannah went to Liberty University.

James Lankford: She did actually.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Have a little special affection for that. Senator Lankford, again, what a delight. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we salute you and pray that God would continue that great work He's doing in and through you. Thank you for joining us.

James Lankford: Thanks Tim very much.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Family Talk and that was our co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton speaking with James Lankford, U.S. Senator from Oklahoma. I'm Roger Marsh. If you've missed any of today's conversation, please visit drjamesdobson.org and select the broadcasts tab. You'll be able to listen to this program in its entirety while you're there. You can also learn more about Senator Lankford, and his recent work on Capitol Hill. That's drjamesdobson.org and then click the broadcasts tab or call us anytime day or night at (877) 732-6825. Well, we're out of time for today, but please 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.