



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Christians and the Right to Vote – Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Owen Strachan

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- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. It's no secret that we are living in unprecedented times here in the United States, but amidst the chaos, you may find yourself praying for the Lord to do a fresh work in our country. And perhaps now is the greatest time to pray for our nation. Well, today here on Family Talk, Gary Bauer is once again joined by Dr. Owen Strachan and they'll be discussing the state of our country and why we all need to be active citizens and get out and vote this election season. By the way, if you'd like more information on resources we have for you here at JDFI, just go to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. And now let's join Gary Bauer and Dr. Owen Strachan once again for the second part of their fascinating conversation on Christians and the right to vote. That's right here, right now on Family Talk.
- Gary Bauer: It's now in the history of American Christendom. That's a sad chapter. We don't want to think about that. That churches that followed Jesus Christ were rationalizing the idea that one man could own another man.
- Dr. Owen Strachan: You're exactly right. It's amazing how easy it is to hike up to our precipice and look back at history, and we even do this with Scripture and just list out how everybody got everything wrong and we're the ones who are above the fray and we don't make any of those mistakes. And in reality, when we're looking back at history, we're seeing the way we easily could go, the way we're tempted to go. And when we look at scripture and we see people messing up, we see the disciples messing things up. We see Old Testament followers of God messing things up, David or Moses or whatever it may be, we're them. They're not worse than us. We're right where they are. So I think that's a wonderfully destabilizing point you just made in just the right way because we don't want to think, "Oh, now we've graduated to being above the fray as the church in the 21st century."
- No. What we've got to learn from historical examples like the one you just gave, the mid-19th century pre-Civil War is there really are times for choosing, to use

Reagan's phrase. There are times for choosing where we have to step up and we have to realize that this is our moment. This is a test. This is a God-given test. Evangelicals and Christians don't like that word very much. We just want Jesus to tuck us in at night and give us a cup of hot cocoa. Knowing Christ is wonderfully comforting as a Christian, perpetual comfort is yours in Jesus, and yet the same Jesus who comforts you is the Jesus who calls you to go on a mission for His glory. And when Jesus wakes you up out of your sleep, He's not looking at you to try to transfix you back to sleep. He's got fire in His eyes and He wants you to go on mission for Him. I think right now, suffice it to say we're in a time for choosing. This is a moment for the church to wake up and to put our boots on and get to work.

Gary Bauer: Well said Owen. Now you get to the nitty-gritty here. I mean there's all kinds of things that a Christian citizen can do. The fundamental thing we can all do, and you don't have to talk much about it or anything else, is vote. You spend a lot of time in this e-book talking about the various reasons that justify from a Christian standpoint why every Christian should be registered to vote and then vote on election day. And by the way, atheists and agnostics are registered to vote at much higher percentages unfortunately than Christians are in America.

Dr. Owen Strachan: You're exactly right. The stats on the other side should make us sit up in our seat. You're exactly correct there. This e-book, *Why We Should Engage in the Public Square* is my attempt trying to partner very much with my colleagues at JDFI to say, "There are many reasons to vote." Let me just tick through a few of them, Gary, if that's fine.

Gary Bauer: Absolutely.

Dr. Owen Strachan: We should vote because God loves life. There's a lot of discussion about single issue voting. I would say you may or may not use that framework, single issue voting, but there are a lot of reasons to compel you to vote. And so abortion and the life issue is a huge one. We should vote because God's word supports secure nations. We're watching as our nation comes undone and voluntarily and for no good reason. God is the one, Daniel 2:19-23 teaches, who appoints kings and oversees countries. And so Acts 17 to bring that in, God is the one who sets up nations and borders. And so borders are not bad. Younger evangelicals, younger Christians have been trained for their brain to go to mush or soup when somebody starts talking about immigration. But that need not happen. If you're going to have a country, you got to have some borders.

We should vote thirdly because God made every person male or female. I mean right here, Gary, here is all the reason you need, here's all the ammo you need to get you to that voting booth because one side today tragically doesn't believe what I just said. We should vote because every person has God-given dignity. I've talked a good bit in my ministry and even for JDFI about wokeness, about critical race theory.

You want to talk about an uprising. An uprising sparked near your neck of the woods a few years ago, you're well aware. Not among conservatives, but among just about the most blue demographic there is, elite blues, rich blues because in Loudoun County, Virginia, little white kids were being taught that they hated the little black kids and that teaching, that woke teaching actually caused segregation on the playground. And so these Democrats, just these parents affluent fathers and mothers rioted, by which I mean went to the school board meeting and raised a ruckus. That kind of thought has swept over America. White people have been taught their white supremacists just for having white skin. That is yet another issue that should compel us to vote. There's a lot more I could say there, Gary, but those are some of the issues that I believe in and of themselves, each one of those issues should drive a Christian forward to vote.

Gary Bauer:

Well, Owen, I'm really glad you got into this race issue because you can see the decency in America that there's nothing worse you can say about an American than, "You're a racist." That horrifies anybody. "No, I'm not." I mean, nobody wants to be called that. We all understand, most of us understand that since we're all made in the image of God, we can never hate someone because of the color of their skin. But here we have in the public schools, little children being taught that they are either oppressed or they're oppressors. So you teach the little white kids that they're evil and you teach the little minority children, "Why work hard? You're not going to be able to make it anywhere in America because you're being held down by your playmate over there whose skin is white."

I've noticed something, I don't know if you've noticed this. I don't hear Martin Luther King quoted very much anymore among Democrats. I mean, Martin Luther King was a hero for the Democrat party, legitimately so. He was a hero for many of us in the party of Lincoln, the Republican Party. But Martin Luther King taught the exact opposite of this. Instead of teaching race is everything he said, "Race is nothing." He didn't want white power. He didn't want black power. He just wanted all children to be judged in the same way by the content of their character. How in the world have we allowed ourselves to go that far away from King's vision?

Dr. Owen Strachan:

Well, we have gone that far away from King's vision and really in common grace terms, Martin Luther King did understand the image of God as applied to that issue. He had some failings in other areas, of course, but King's vision was the one I was taught growing up in the eighties and the nineties. And again, I'm thankful I was taught that famous line about judging one another for the content of your character, not the color of another's skin. That's exactly right. That reflects what the Bible teaches about human dignity.

But I remember a few years ago, Gary, getting up to speed on what critical race theory actually was and what wokeness actually is. And learning from Ibram X. Kendi, who's kind of been anointed as the new Martin Luther King of our day, that MLK was actually a massive part of the problem and making America worse. MLK didn't win some major victories for civil rights, Kendi teaches in one best-selling book after another, promoted to the skies by leftist media. No, MLK

made things worse because he didn't focus on dismantling systemic oppression with all these white people committing white microaggressions. MLK just said, "Hey, let's treat each other with dignity." So I don't want to get too into the weeds here, but what that told me in sum is that Ibram X. Kendi's ideas we're utterly bankrupt and they still are. And so we've got to say these kind of things. It can land you in the cultural penalty box for a two-minute penalty, Gary, as you know. But we have to say these things because these woke ideas simply are not true.

Gary Bauer: Well, Owen, a couple years ago, as I recall, Dr. Dobson I believe was on this trip. A group of us met for sort of a weekend of a Bible study down in Virginia around the area where many of America's founding fathers wrote some of the great documents and did this study that led to the creation of the American Republic. In fact, we had an actor come in that played the role of Thomas Jefferson and speak to us, and he stayed in role the entire time. We even did a Q&A with him about what his political future might hold, et cetera, et cetera. But one of the things that was so amazing is that near Williamsburg and other places, we stopped at a lot of different bookstores looking for different things, historical things. In every bookstore in Williamsburg and surrounding area, one of the most prominently displayed books was Kendi's book teaching that the whole American experiment is fatally flawed and evil to its core. And there it was at the very place in America that probably patriotic families more than any other would bring their children to learn about our country.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, it reminds us a lot of how Bernie Sanders and Kendi himself and Robin DiAngelo and the neo-Marxist crowd will all tell you how horrible and oppressive the free market is and capitalism related issue. And one by the way, that should summon us to vote that I talk about in this e-book. And then they will go on to sell their case for why the free market is evil for the low price of \$39.99 on that hardcover book.

Gary Bauer: Oh, my goodness. They're laughing all the way to the bank, right?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Exactly. When you're seeing this kind of hypocrisy, you need to have a sense of humor as a Christian and as a conservative, and you have to say, "This is just silly." But then you also have to realize this is ideology that can't cash its check, no pun intended. What they practice is actually the opposite of what they stand for. We have something way better as Christians, very quickly. We have God giving us the free market, giving us market exchange, the ox being worthy of its wages, and we don't want socialism to prevail among the youth. Here again, Gary, you dare to raise these things and an evangelical crowd, a Christian crowd, eyes might start glazing over, phones might start getting checked, but the reality is a ton of us don't want to send our kids to college, paying very good money by the way, toward that end. And then the kids come back and they tell us how evil we are for being capitalists. It's a little bit ironic.

Gary Bauer: School prayer, for example. I don't think it made many Christians, but it did tell children what adults thought was important in life, which was to seek and find

God. Just like the national anthem doesn't create patriots, but again, it tells children, "You have a lovely country that deserves to be loved, and that's something, right? That counts for something. Having those messages relayed onto the next generation. In the list of subjects that you gave to as good reasons to vote, could you take a second and talk about a foreign policy issue? Israel's a good reason to vote. I believe you talk about that in your e-book. I was so happy to see that. Would you elaborate on that a little bit?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Absolutely. I'm so glad you pointed us to that because in this e-book, I don't dodge Hamas and Israel, for example, thinking of last October, October 7th, 2023 when 1200 Israelis were openly slaughtered by this wicked terrorist group of Hamas. It has become very common even in evangelical circles, conservative biblical circles, whatever you want to call them to do that sort of third way thing that we talked about at the beginning where you say, "Well, Hamas, maybe that's not ideal to sort of parachute in and slaughter kids as they're playing at the playground. But on the other hand, Israel, the bombings, the reprisals, a lot of people die there too." And what that has ended up in for a lot of younger Christians, Gary, is a sort of, "Meh," shoulder shrug response. And there is a lot to say about Israel-Palestine, right? I don't try to sort all that out in a paragraph in this e-book.

Gary Bauer: Sure.

Dr. Owen Strachan: But fundamentally, I know from Scripture that the Jews are hated. I know that though they have rejected Christ, they are yet called beloved. I know that God has not rejected his people whom He foreknew, as the apostle Paul says. I know that the Jews alongside the Christians have been targeted relentlessly in history. I know that anti-Semitism is a rising force again in our world. I know it's even creeping into Christian circles, including some corners of the Reformed world tragically. And I know this, Hamas is not equivalent to Israel. Hamas is a terrorist group and Israel is a genuine nation that we should support, a Middle Eastern democracy that has been our friend, and it is to our shame that various democratic presidents and leaders have essentially turned their back on Israel. I can't sort all of this out in my writing here in this e-book.

Gary Bauer: Of course.

Dr. Owen Strachan: But I will at least try to call the church to see we've got to stand with Israel.

Gary Bauer: I agree completely, Owen. And it's complicated. It takes more than a few minutes. I think there's a great theological discussion to be had. I believe that if we ever completely abandon Israel, that we're in considerable danger that will seal the deal of God abandoning us. But again, that's a longer discussion. Good grief. Owen, I could spend about five hours. There's so much packed in this book, and it's a must read, particularly this year.

One of the big stumbling blocks right now is neither candidate is exactly what we would hope for. Yeah, Jesus is never on the ballot. He won't run. He'll just declare the first legitimate theocracy and everyone will bow, including our own government. But we're always faced with a choice of flawed people. So how does a Christian wrestle through that intellectually when they're facing a candidate that really doesn't have any positions, in my view, that line up with biblical principles, but another candidate that pushes policies that does. But he's had, let's say, a few moral bumps in the road over the years.

Dr. Owen Strachan: This is a huge issue in the church today. I'm so glad you're driving us to this issue at the end of our discussion because we're told that if we vote for the lesser of two evils, we are then complicit and evil. And that's especially been sold to younger Christians. I keep repeating this, but I have my eye on that group, Gary, because that's the rising generation. And the older generation, I think, gets a lot of these things and is at the table and is ready to go, and we're a little bit struggling to get that younger generation to the table to care, to open their eyes.

So a part of how we do that again, is not haranguing them, throwing bananas at them or something like this, but we need to say, "You're always voting for the lesser of two evils." As you just rightly said, Jesus is never going to be on the ballot. You're always voting for an imperfect candidate. Here's a maybe more positive way to put it. You're always trying to vote for the best possible viable candidate, the best possible candidate who has an actual shot at winning. And just a quick word to follow up, that is not you morally compromising. That is not you failing to slip on your sainted third way robe and float above the clouds and above the political fray. I would argue that is you being salt and light. That is you putting on your winter coat, your barn coat and getting out there and shoveling snow. Because if you don't, people are going to be trapped in their homes. You've got folks to save out there. You've got a mission to fill.

So is this all going to mean that we're in some uncomfortable territory as Christians? Are we going to get frustrated with candidates that we so want to just stand in these certain ways and say these certain things and just be that candidate that we're all yearning for? Because at some level in our heart, we're all yearning by the way, for Jesus. We want Jesus to lead us, and that is totally right and one day He will. But until then, it's the time between the times and you've got to do the most good you can with the agency available to you. So to the church today in love, in hope we say vote for the best possible viable candidate.

Gary Bauer: Wow, that is a better explanation for this "dilemma" that's being thrown up that I've heard in some time, Owen. Look, I've been saying to folks that JDFI, we can't tell you who to vote for, but we can tell you and we do, we feel it an obligation to tell people accurately what each candidate believes on the great issues of the day. And then we ask you to pray for discernment to ask God what you should do when you have two candidates with the platforms they have.

And I would just point out that if there was no difference between the candidates other than the kind of judges they put on the courts, that alone would be a compelling reason because we've got the two examples of the judges that Trump-Pence put on the court and the judges that Biden-Harris have put on the courts, including a Supreme Court justice that told the hearing she didn't know what the definition of a woman was. Excuse me. But anyway, there is a difference and we do need to be discerning. Owen, this has been a fantastic conversation. I didn't warn you about this, but would you mind closing us out in a prayer that would encourage our listeners to be discerning Christian citizens?

Dr. Owen Strachan: I'd love to. Thank you, Gary. Father, thank You so much for this conversation. I thank You so much for Gary Bauer and James Dobson and the team around them. The many people whose names are not known out there to tons of folks in the church, but who have faithfully served in this ministry and faithfully called Christians to be salt and light. I thank You for many partner institutions out there as well that have done the same for years and decades now and have served faithfully, have put in their shift. And Father, it's my prayer and our prayer that the rising generation will put in their shift, that they will punch their card and they will show up to work. And they will know that that work is not fundamentally, sadly, to be loved and applauded at all times by the world. But in some cases, even though we have a loving posture to all, they're going to be disliked, they're even possibly going to be opposed and hated for the name of Jesus Christ.

But our prayer again is not that the Church will aspire to unblemished niceness, but that the Church will strive in Christ by the power of the Cross to be salt and light. And Father, our prayer is that You will bless us with a president in coming days and Supreme Court justices to follow, and senators and congressmen and congresswomen and others who will lead righteously in this country, who will continue to promote and preserve religious liberty and other tremendous common grace blessings. And that lastly, the gospel will go out in all of that and sinners just like us will be saved. So thank you that you're a great God. Thank you so much for this conversation. In Jesus' name, amen.

Gary Bauer: Amen. Thank you, Owen. It's been great to have you today. And thank you for being part of our team and we look forward to great days ahead.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a beautiful prayer to conclude today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I really hope you enjoyed the very compelling conversation featuring Gary Bauer and Dr. Owen Strachan. Dr. Strachan of course, the senior director of the new Dobson Culture Center. By the way, if you'd like to get a copy of Dr. Owen Strachan's brand-new e-book, it's very easy to do. Go online to drjamesdobson.org/engage and you can sign up to receive your free copy of the e-book called, *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage the Public Square*. Again that's drjamesdobson.org/engage and you can find out more

about how you can get a copy of Dr. Owen Strachan's outstanding new e-book called, *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage the Public Square*.

Here at the Dr. James Dobson's Family Institute, we are here to provide you with resources that you need to become better informed as a voter and also as a Christian citizen. When you go online to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024, you'll find voter guides that we prepared for all of the 10 key swing states in the nation. We've also prepared for you a whole series of videos that are done including an interview with Dr. Owen Strachan that are done to help inform you on what the real issues are at stake and why it's important to vote your values. Go online to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024 and you'll find all those resources there without cost or further obligation on your part. Simply go to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for joining us today. On behalf of Dr. James Dobson, Gary Bauer, Dr. Owen Strachan and then entire team here at the JDFI, thanks so much for listening and join us again for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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