

A Conversation with Pastor Mark & Andy Gould

- Well, welcome to Real Man. You guys excited to be here? Who's in a good mood? Amen? Well, we got someone special for you tonight and I thank you for joining us live in the room or online. I've got a special guest. Andy Gould is going to join us. Why don't you come on out, buddy? He's gonna talk to us about what's going on in culture. We're gonna have a little conversation about faith and freedom and family. You can go right there. And yeah, and this'll be interesting. So the Bible tells us to pray for those who are leaders and governing officials, and you're gonna learn some specific ways you can be in prayer tonight. So let me make sure that's on for you, my friend. We are great. There you go. Why don't you take a moment, and well, let's do this. Why don't you just give him a warm, warm welcome so he knows he's among friends, amen? So maybe we just start, tell us a little bit about just your story, however you'd like us to get to know you.

- Sure. Well, I'm Andy Gould. I am a candidate for Attorney General. I've been a lawyer for about 30 years. I'm 58 years old. I resigned from the State's Supreme Court to run for this job. So I was a Justice on our state Supreme Court for a number of years. I've been a judge for different courts over a number of years. And before that I was a prosecutor. I prosecuted on the border for many years, prosecuted cartels. And so that's my legal background. I've been a Christian since I was a young boy. My mother's faith and my father's faith led me to Christ, probably like many of you. I grew up without a lot of means, but we had faith, we had encouragement. We were all baptized on the same day. I remember, my mother was a singer, and we stood in the baptismal and she's saying, "I know that my Redeemer liveth and we were all baptized."

- How old were you at that time?

- I was probably 10 years old. And my mother since passed on, but that's... I'll see her again.

- Yeah. It'll be a good day too.

- It'll be a good day. So I've been married 31 years with my wife, Connie. She's my rock. I have two kids, Georgia and Anna, they're 26 and 25. And I've been here in Arizona in Phoenix and Yuma since 1990.

- Okay, and I'd love to get into some specifics, but you did mention that you're on this state Supreme Court and you had to step down, correct, to run for attorney general. And so that's an incredibly prestigious position that you work very hard for your entire adult life to get into. What caused you to vacate that position to go for attorney general?

- It is time for reluctant candidates to stand up in this country. And I saw what was happening. The biggest problem I have as a lawyer is the country is being torn apart for lack of rule of law. People won't follow the law. I see people being encouraged to go more on what they feel than

rather thinking and reasoning and following laws. And as I sat on the court and I watched what was going around the country, I saw some AGs that were weaponizing the law. And you could look at Michigan. You can look at Minnesota. Your old home state Washington, Oregon. Attorney generals, who were supposed to represent what the law is and uphold the law, refusing to do it. One group, it's rioting, another group, it's free speech. One group, it's assault or a trespass, another group, this is just peaceful protest. This country can't go on like that. And so as I watched this, I thought, "Maybe there'll be somebody who will step up in this state because there are strong forces that would love to take over the AGS office in this state. I didn't see it. And so I finally decided, look, it's not about me. I've been blessed, this is a great job being a judge, but we need an AG, and so I resigned to get into this fight to uphold the rule of law in the state and draw the line on federal overreach and the things that are gonna destroy the state.

- So as a Christian, why is the rule of law important to those of us who are Bible-believing Christians?

- Well, I think it's in Romans 13, you know, Paul talks about God has given power over to the government, and we should obey the government. And the underlying principle there is that even governments that aren't Christian governments, are meant to have law and order and to provide at least an environment where we're free to worship, we're free to live our lives the way we want, raise our families the way we want. You have to rule a law for that. And if you start undercutting that and you make people feel unsafe in their homes, unsafe in their property, you start taking away their property, not only does it undercut society, but it hurts us as Christians to be able to live and grow and raise our family and worship the way we want to.

- And you were talking, when we had coffee, you got a unique perspective being on the state Supreme Court as a Justice, seeing the protests and the media come in. And I thought that was a curious story. Perhaps share that.

- Well, you know, we struck the original Red Fred case off the ballot, and that day I watched 75,000 teachers come down and march around the Capitol and, you know, I had to be escorted out with security and so forth. And then I issued a decision about two-three years ago, it's called *Brush and Nib*. And in that case, we had two Christian wedding invitation designers. It wasn't a brick and mortar place. They were mostly online. And they would serve anybody, regardless of their sexual preferences or any of those things. But the one thing they wouldn't do is make a wedding invitation for a same-sex wedding, because it violated their sincerely held religious belief that marriage is between man and a woman. And so the issue came down to, wasn't they weren't unwilling to serve somebody based on their status, which you can't do in this country, it's a civil rights law, but it was more an issue of speech. They wanted to be able to freely exercise their speech as Christians and not celebrate something that went against what they believed in. And so there's a Scottsdale ordinance. Scottsdale was going to enforce it against them. They hadn't actually enforced it yet. And it carried a jail term with it, if you violated it, as well as they could have lost their license and everything. So they filed an action to strike down that ordinance. And I struck it down as violative of the First Amendment of not only free exercise, but

free speech. And we have a doctrine in this country called compelled speech. You can't make somebody utter a speech or a viewpoint that they disagree with. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But they felt that the government, Scottsdale, was trying to compel them to utter speech that was against what they believed in. So I upheld that. And I made a mistake: don't go on the internet and read what people say about you.

- I would second that motion. Yeah. Don't go on Twitter. Twitter is where all of the least healthy people spend most of their time.

- Well, my judicial assistant who's, you know, she's younger and she's very social media savvy, she's looking at these things and she says, "Judge, you got to come out here and look at this stuff." And so I started looking at it, and you know, you've been through this. I mean, the things that were said, the way it was characterized... I mean, I wrote an opinion to uphold the right of free speech in this country, and you would have thought I was trying to re-institute segregation in the South, and there's these publications and these bloggers from around the country I never even heard of before, and it was vicious and hard. They actually tried to organize a campaign at one point, we have retention elections as Justices in this state, it's just an up or down vote, they tried to organize an effort to have me not retained as a judge. And went around and put stickers on people's garages and things like that. So, free speech, I guess, in this country is okay as long as people like what you're saying.

- Well, what do you think..? What's going on nationally, everything's politicized, divided, weaponized, and it's almost like living in two Americas. And a lot of that is dependent upon who your governor is and who your attorney general is. And if they tend to veer toward the left, then you're gonna live in a certain kind of environment, your business, your schools, your worship, your freedoms. If they veer toward the right, it's going to be different. And it seems like Arizona is swinging in the balance. It's one of those places that may determine the next season of life in our nation. And why do you think this is an important time not just for our country, but for our state?

- You will see in this election for attorney general, George Soros pour more money in to elect my democratic opponent than has ever been poured into this state. This is a state that is being targeted to try to move it in a progressive way or however you want to phrase it. Look, we have this great constitution, Mark, and what we did is we got together in the 1780s, we had this great convention, we debated, and we ultimately gave over certain authority to the federal government, but we didn't give over all authority to the federal government. They were smart. They wrote down the powers that the federal government has. And then they said expressly in the 10th Amendment, states retain all the rest. States have great powers, police powers, the greatest power states have. States can pass laws to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens. It states' sovereignty. And so in this time when you have federal overreach that's so unprecedented, it really is the issue of our time for states to step forward and assert their sovereignty under the 10th Amendment. And it's not trying to overcome or preempt federal authority, whatever authority the federal government has, they have, but the states retain their

authority. So the one official, more than any other official, who protects state sovereignty is the attorney general. That is the elected official-

- You're the firewall between federal overreach and citizens.

- Absolutely. If there is an overreach, it's the attorney general that goes to court and protects it. You can see it with vaccine mandates. You can see it with election integrity. It's attorney generals for good or bad that go in and step forward and protect that. No other official has that authority in the state. And you can look throughout the country, these state AGs, some of them have been very brave. In my view, you have to have a good governor who can back up an AG, a good legislature, but in this day and age, the most important elected official is the state AG..

- So within that, you mentioned George Soros, and I think you'd mentioned previously when we were chatting that you had a unique perspective when you were on the state Supreme Court, your office overlooked the protesters that were coming to seek to create noise and media momentum, and narrative.

- Well, the first thing I noticed, because my office looked over the park there between the Capitol where all the protests are. I noticed that when the cars parked, almost every plate was a California license plate. So I think you have to recognize these are professional organized protests. This isn't some grassroots thing from Arizona. And so they would step out of their cars with the signs all ready to go. When you look at these ballot initiatives, it's a lot of people coming in from out of state, it's money coming in from out of state. A lot of these candidates, it's money from out of state. And then the other thing I noticed that was interesting was during all those protests and June, 2020, after the George Floyd protests, I went to work every day and I would look at these protests and, I don't know how to describe it-

- You can be honest with this, Judge. Yeah.

- It looked like a lot of work young men who liked their skateboards that were going around the park there, it was not what you thought you would see in a protest for George Floyd, let me put it that way. So there's a lot of outside influences that try to influence this state, a lot of money. And you've got to be vigilant to protect this state, because California, these other states, money coming in from the East Coast, it is coming here. Arizona is the state right now that is ground zero. And if they can flip Arizona, they'll move on. They've done it with Nevada. They've done it with other states. We need to stand for rule of law here. We need to stand for protecting private property, people's safety. As AG, look, I'll be honest with you, Mark, it should be a non-partisan job. Follow the law. We have laws on the books. You fall 'em. You're AG, you enforce them. If you don't like them, then that's up to the legislature to change them. But you don't decide what those laws are.

- So within that as well, a lot of these men that are here, people that are watching online or new, you know, most of the reports are that Maricopa county is the fastest growing county in America.

Phoenix is the fastest growing city in America. Quickly coming into that fourth position as fourth largest city in America. And people from the outside, they would think that Arizona was conservative. And I always say, if California and Texas had a baby, they'd name it Arizona. And that's a libertarian. And so maybe that kind of libertarian streak in history in Arizona and how that can swing either way, depending upon the candidate or the issue.

- I think that's true. Another way to think about libertarian is we have a strong independent streak in the state. You know, we like to think our own way, speak our own way. You know, we don't do things the way other states do things. We have a constitution that's different from other states. That's a good thing. That's a good thing. It's a Western individualism. You know, we have a lot of farmers and a lot of ranchers in this state and they want to protect their way of life and they don't want to be over-regulated. They don't want the government to take control of their property. And that's defined Arizona. And it's been that way for a long time. And I still think that defines Arizona.

- So before we get into some specific issues, I was gonna ask you more of just a general question as a Christian. How would you respond to those Christians would say, "We should not be involved in politics. We shouldn't get political. We should just concern ourselves with eternal, heavenly things, not temporal, earthly things, that, you know, ultimately as Christians, we just should kind of stay out of these issues"?

- Well, I don't know about you, but when I gave my life to the Lord, I wasn't translated up to heaven that moment.

- [Mark] Would have been great.

- It would've been great. But I'm here, and I believe that every minute, every breath we take on this earth is for a purpose. This life means something. Jesus came here and lived here. He went amongst the people, you know, healed the sick, he dealt with issues, and we have to live in this world. And I don't think you realize how close we are to losing some of these precious liberties we take for granted in this country, that we can go to church every day and we can worship the way we believe. We were talking about Canada earlier. And in Canada, they're passing oppressive laws that are directed against church doctrine, things that Christians have believed for many years. So in my view, it's fine to, you know... Obviously our home is in heaven, and we want to focus on those things, but Jesus talked about the church being the salt of the earth, the light of the earth. Christian influence is the greatest thing and the thing that keeps this culture and this world going. We're the light of the world. We set the example. We have to shine our light. We're the salt of the earth. We give flavor to the earth. We're not a majority on this earth, but our influence has always been a thousandfold. 12 ordinary men turned the world upside down in the first century. And so we're expected to be light, we're expected to be salt. And I think if not for us, if we don't stand up for the things we believe, this is gonna be a very dark world. So I worry about churches being able to worship and hold to beliefs that they've held for centuries that are clearly in the Bible. There's a lot of pressure to limit what pastors can do. I

think there's a movement afoot to take away the non-profit status of churches, that would shut down untold churches in this country. Pastor, I'll tell you, this is a time that really the church needs to stand up and be the light and salt of the earth.

- Well, and simply, if somebody is gonna make the laws, wouldn't you want people with the Holy Spirit to be involved? If someone's gonna write the curriculum for kids, wouldn't you like it to be someone with the Holy Spirit? If someone's going to determine whether the church is open or closed, or whether people are gonna lose their job and career over government mandates, wouldn't it be nice if somebody with the Holy Spirit was involved? I mean, just to give you guys, just some discussion we were having previously that the average church in America, according to most statistics, is running 30 to 50% of pre-COVID. And so it's effectively really wiped out a lot of Christian churches. There was a Barna survey recently that 38% of the pastors are looking to leave the ministry and they're trying to figure out economically how to do that. I was talking to an attorney this week for the largest firm that does churches in America, 15%, he said, are dead, needing to dissolve or close, 40% are on life support. 40% are fighting for their life. Only 5% are the same or larger than pre-COVID. And so what you have seen is a wholesale collapse of the church in America. And part of that is being closed and being controlled and being fear-based. And then you're seeing a lot of churches that are either woke or soft woke, and what the people are being told is actually not consistent with what the scriptures teach. And so if there is down to kind of that remnant of true believers, if they say and do nothing things, don't automatically get better. If we believe in sin and fall and the curse, the natural direction is down, not up, it's worse, not better. And so there are men in the Bible like Daniel who's in Babylon or Joseph who's in Egypt or Nehemiah, and they're working from inside political regimes and institutions to try and bring about as much freedom for God's people to worship, get married, raised their kids according to conscience as possible. And as believers, we're not saying that everyone needs to obey the Bible, we're just saying that they can't forbidden us from obeying the Bible. And so looking at our state, what are some of the big issues for human life and flourishing? I'm in Genesis now, and it talks about how God created the world. He prepared it for us, and He architected the world for human life and flourishing, so that we could get married and be fruitful and have children and create culture and build businesses. And so the primary job of government is to allow people to live. And what are some of the big issues that you would see nationally, or even more regionally in our state, that these are threats to human life and flourishing, as we understand it as Christians.

- I identify three that an AG would address, and I think are actually the three biggest issues independently of that. We have border security, election integrity, and free speech. I'll start with the last one. The internet is the way people communicate in this day and age. We have big tech, particularly Amazon and Google, that run the platforms that censor speech.

- And promote pornography. They will throttle certain things and promote others, for sure.

- Exactly, and some other things. So there it's a viewpoint discrimination. It discriminates on what your viewpoint is, what your ideas are. It wasn't a problem 30 years ago, but it is now,

because that's the way people communicate. The internet is like the phone system was 30 years ago or the mail was 100 years ago. But these tech companies are denying even entrance on the platforms to speak. Now, if somebody gets on the platform and says something that violates the law, they announced they're going to commit a crime or they're committing crimes, then they should be prosecuted for it. Just like if I get on a phone and there's a wire tap and I'm, you know, committing a crime, I'm prosecuted for it. If I'm using the mail to commit crimes. But 100 years ago, the mailman didn't stand at the mailbox and say, "Now, pastor, what do you got in that letter? 'Cause I'm not gonna let you mail it if it says something." Or 30 years ago, the operator didn't say, "Now, what are you gonna talk about on this phone call?" These platforms can't do that. And look, if you can control what people say, you can control what people think. And this is the only country in the world that actually has a constitutional amendment expressly protecting free speech. We were talking about Canada, Canada doesn't have a constitution with free speech. So, in this country, we've meant to foster it. And what does the First Amendment protect? What does free speech protect? It protects speech that's unpopular, not speech that's popular. You don't need protection for popular speech. It's speech that's unpopular. Now we have a lot of movements afoot to try to suppress speech. You hear this concept of hate speech. Let me just be clear with you guys right now. I've been a lawyer for 30 years. I've studied the constitution. There is no such thing under the United States constitution as hate speech. It does not exist. There's a doctrine called fighting words, but that's where you physically threaten somebody. So as AG, I've thought about many ways we can deal with that. There's an Antitrust avenue to break up big tech. There's a Civil Rights avenue in terms of if they're discriminating against certain viewpoints and these are public accommodations. I think there's consumer protection. I also think there's a First Amendment route. A lot of people say to you, "Well, you can't go after big tech because that's not state action. The First Amendment only protects against government action." That's true. Unless a private company is acting as the agent of the state, then that's state action. So, that that's something that I think is important, and a new AG is gonna have to address. The border is horrific. I lived on that border for 22 years. I've been all up and down it. I've visited with the ranchers, hunters, everybody. We have cartels that have taken control of that border. Here is a very simple thing I've learned as a prosecutor and a judge over the years: whenever the government announces that it's not gonna prosecute a certain type of crime, organized crime always moves in, always. They're always waiting in the wings to step in. And when you announce you're not gonna prosecute it, they step in. And once they're in, it is almost impossible to get them out. While the white House has essentially said, we're not gonna enforce immigration laws. They backed off on the border and the cartels have moved in. There are dead bodies down there. There are rapes, child molest, money laundering, fentanyl. It is so bad. In addition the caravans coming up. So the AG is going to have to address that. And my view is, we can't enforce federal law, but we can enforce state law. One of my ideas, pastor, has been to set up a no trespassing zone in Arizona, on state and private land, where when the cartels move in or the caravans come across, we arrest them for trespass, disorderly conduct, criminal damage, littering, whatever we can to try to set up a legal wall in this state, and do something to help our people, because the federal government isn't gonna step in. And then the last thing is election integrity. And what I'm concerned about is whatever you think of the 2020 election, there are many people who are losing confidence in these elections. Studies show that

if people believe in the integrity of an election, participation up, not down, I think voter ID is important. I don't know why we wouldn't have this in the state. We need other protections for the mail-in voting, but an AG has tremendous authority over our election laws. And an AG has to be willing to prosecute fraud, be strategic, step forward, and ensure that people have confidence in these elections. There's a lot of things I could talk to you about how I would do that as AG. I'll mention one. That's very simple. The Secretary of State is supposed to clean up the voter registration lists in this state. That's her obligation under the law. I would file a lawsuit today to get a court to order her to clean up those lists. She's not doing it.

- So, what does the path forward look like for you? Just practically, what is before you? And I know there's gonna be for you and any other who's pursuing this office, you know, there's gonna be great resistance the further you go into the conflict.

- The primary is August 2nd. The general election is November 8th. You know, for me, I'm all over the state. Most of it's here in Maricopa county, but I talked to people over the state. You know, we have to raise money, we have to organize volunteers, we have to get on the ballot. We have to get a certain number of signatures. You know, it's a difficult environment in which to do that. because the country is very split. My likely opponent for the Democratic party is campaigning on two things: the Green New Deal and how Republicans are taking away the voting rights of minorities. So that's what I have to fight against. There's a lot of out of state funding that is gonna fuel that. You know how it goes. If they don't have something to attack you on, they'll make something up. And so I deal with that every day. I deal with Twitter, I deal with social media. And so getting my message out, fighting that is a constant battle.

- So tell us about your wife and how we can pray for her, and it used to be, we're talking about it upstairs that, you know, the wife and the kids were off limits, there was some measure of honor and respect, and now it's just prison rules, and they'll drag the family into the fight to go after your wife and kids. They'll make it as ugly as possible. Tell us about your wife and how we can be praying for her.

- There are no rules now. Those things about not attacking the family is, they'll go after anything about your family, any weaknesses. I've been married to my wife for 31 years. She grew up on a sheep ranch in southwestern Idaho. She's tough. Before I got into this, you know how Jesus talked about, you count the cost before you commit yourself to something. Are you ready? Are you looking at this? And the most important thing that I had to assess was my family, and particularly my wife, how would she handle it. And I knew that she could, and we sat down and talked about it. And I knew from the beginning that I've got a rock there, they're not gonna move her. And so she's great. I can't imagine, I've known men in my life who, when they go home at the end of the day, they don't know what they're gonna face when they open the door. I've never had that. I know what I'm gonna face. She supports me. And without that, I would've never even thought about it. Never even thought about it. So she is my secret weapon, pastor, I'll tell you that.

- And so the Bible talks to me, tells us to be praying for governments and officials, specific things that we can be praying for, not just for you and your campaign, but our state and our nation as well.

- One of my favorite stories in the Bible is when Solomon was young man, he prayed to God, and the Lord said, "I'll give you anything." And he prayed for wisdom. And so pray for wisdom. Pray for these elected officials to have wisdom, to have discernment, to understand what their obligation is, that they serve the people, not themselves. And to every day be looking about how they can make the lives of the people that they serve better. For me, I pray for two things every day: strength and courage. Strength to carry on. This is 14 hours a day, seven days a week when you're running a statewide campaign. You know, it's grueling. And courage, courage to say the right thing, because it is so easy to go in and say what people want to hear instead of what they need to hear. But I think this country in the church and out of the church needs truth. They need people to tell them the truth, and it takes courage to tell the truth. In this environment of politics, it's heavily consultant driven. So you'll get these consultants will say, "You know, when you go to pastor Driscoll's church, here are three things you need to say. And when you go to this community, say that." That's not courage. That's just trying to tickle people's ears with things they want to hear. So if you have prayers for me and for all people in this, but I especially pray, give me strength, give me courage to say the truth, what needs to be saying, and the strength to go out and do this grueling battle seven days a week, 14 hours a day. Amen.

- It's interesting, I was reading in Revelation and it talks about those who will not be allowed to enter into Jesus' Kingdom. And it talks about the murders and the perverts and the vile, and it says, "and the cowards." And in the eyes of God, one of the worst things that a person can be, but I would say particularly that a man can be, is a coward. And cowards don't make it to heaven. And Jesus doesn't roll with the cowards. And his home is not one that he's building to house all the cowards. And so we will definitely be praying that for you. And so, just to respect our time, I'm gonna give you one last question. He had no idea what was gonna be coming. I'm gonna let you say whatever you want to say about Jesus Christ, and we're going to end with him.

- In times of trouble you draw closer to him. In times of stress. When I got into this race, you know, I felt very strong in my faith, but I've never felt closer to him. Most of life is failure, guys. 95% of life is failure. It's not failing that makes you a man or shows your value. It's how you respond to it. It's that 5% where you get back up and you respond to it. As a Christian, in my relationship with Jesus Christ, he helps me deal with the failures of life and he helps make those victories for me, so I can see hope, I can see beyond it. If I didn't have my faith, my life would end at the failures. I don't know how I'd get past them. But with him, he picks me up and he shows me, there is victory beyond this. These are not failures. And he shows me, look, it's supposed to be hard. I want this life to be hard for you, but these are not failures. These are my training for you. Get back up.

- Thank you for coming to share and if it's okay, I'm gonna pray for you, and if you men would

just raise a hand and join your faith with mine, Father God, we pray against the enemy's servants, their works in the facts, and God, wherever someone happens to be on the political continuum, we just say that this world is not doing well. This country is not going well. And the future seems very uncertain and seems more likely to have bad news than good news. But we thank You that You are over history, that we can not just look to the left or to the right, but that we can look up and we can see our King ruling and reigning over all. And Lord Jesus, we do pray that you would put into positions of power and influence not just in our state, but all states and all nations, people who love you and are filled with your spirit and believe in the laws of your Word and are seeking to bring about protection for faith and freedom and family, so that there can be human life and flourishing. And God, You tell us to pray for elected officials. So we pray for our brother. We pray for this grueling year, for his health and his wellbeing. We pray God that You would give him a tender heart, but a real thick hide. We pray for his wife and her encouragement and their friendship and unity to deepen. And God, we pray for our state. We want everyone to be able to open their business, open their church, open their life, lead their family according to their convictions. But we especially want that for Your sons and daughters, Your children who believe Your Word. And so God thank You for this conversation that we've had. And we pray, pray, pray for the future of our elected officials and our culture in Jesus' good name, amen.