



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Donkey That No One Could Ride

Guest(s): Anthony DeStefano and Ryan Dobson

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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.
- Ryan Dobson: Hello everyone and welcome to another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Ryan Dobson with our host, psychologist and bestselling author Dr. James Dobson. And today we're going to do something very special. This weekend, Christians around the world will celebrate the most important events in human history. They occurred 2000 years ago when the Messiah was crucified on Mount Calvary to purchase our salvation with his precious blood. And that's truly why we're here today, isn't it, dad?
- Dr. James Dobson: Oh, that's exactly right, Ryan. And as you know, I love this time of year because it recalls for us the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which those who believe on him are forgiven from sin and promised eternal life. What a message. Those three days in Jerusalem were the most significant occurrences in human history. And that's why we call this Holy Week.
- Ryan Dobson: It is. And today, dad, we're not going to spend time talking about the events of Easter weekend. Today we're going to talk about the events of Palm Sunday. We've tracked down an account of Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem from the most unlikely of sources. In fact, it's an animal.
- Dr. James Dobson: It is an animal, Ryan. And today we're going to read a children's book that is poetically written and very entertaining. And in fact, I want to say to the parents, if you have small children, that you get them and let them hear the rest of this program because it was really designed for them. And I think they're going to enjoy this story.
- Ryan Dobson: I do too, dad. The book is titled *The Donkey That No One Could Ride*, by our good friend and best-selling author, Anthony DeStefano. Over the next few minutes, you'll hear my dad and I read the book, along with our friend, Michiele Stapleton, who will be playing the part of the donkey. So let's get to it. Here now is the donkey that no one could ride on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

There once was a donkey young, weak, and small. So weak he could carry nothing at all. Even when children sat on his back, he'd wobble and tumble and fall on his side. No matter how much he tried or he cried, this was a donkey that no one could ride. He couldn't haul stones, he couldn't dig ditches, or carry rich men with their big bags of riches. He couldn't pull carts with huge bales of hay. Just lifting a feather would make his legs sway. No, this donkey was useless. No good at all. Too puny, too shaky, too scrawny, too small. Now the donkey's owner was quite mean and tough. He said to the donkey...

Dr. James Dobson: I've had quite enough. You can't lift a person no matter how light. So take all your things and get out of my sight. Go away from here, donkey, go away and just hide. What use is a donkey that no one can ride?

Ryan Dobson: So the donkey was led to the forage of town, pulled by his neck with his head hanging down. He was tied to a post on a small, dusty road. And left all alone, while his tears overflowed. Left all alone and wondering why he was born to be weak and born to be shy. And born to be frightened and born to cry. Just then two men appeared alongside the post in the village where the donkey was tied. They came without warning on that fateful day. They came and untied him and took him away. The donkey was frightened he said to the men...

Michiele Stapleton: Where are we going?

Ryan Dobson: And then said again...

Michiele Stapleton: Where are we going? And what about me? Please leave me alone and just let me be.

Dr. James Dobson: Keep quiet, the men said, we mean you no harm. Just follow us quickly. No cause for alarm.

Ryan Dobson: And they walked on for miles and miles until they got to a town at the foot of a hill. At the foot of the hill stood a man tall and thin, wearing a cloak and a beard on his chin. He had eyes that seemed sad and longish dark hair. And a voice softened gentle that floated on air. He said to the donkey...

Dr. James Dobson: It's time that you knew about the great thing that you're destined to do. You'll carry me into the city, we too. Into the city, I'll ride atop you.

Michiele Stapleton: What's that you say?

Ryan Dobson: Cried the donkey with dread.

Michiele Stapleton: There's simply no way. You've been misled. I'm just a small weakling. You must go ahead and look for another to take you instead. You see, I'm just hopeless. Ever since I was born, I've been subject to insults, and teasing, and scorn. My

back's somewhat crooked. My legs aren't strong. I'm just a big failure. Who does everything wrong. Won't you believe me?

Ryan Dobson: The sad donkey cried.

Michiele Stapleton: Just leave me alone and cast me aside. I'm just a poor donkey that no one can ride.

Ryan Dobson: The man looked at him with a face that was wise. With a warm tender smile and love in his eyes. And then in a calm and mysterious way, he opened his mouth and started to say...

Dr. James Dobson: My help is enough. It's all that you need. It's all you require in life to succeed. The weaker you are, the more strength I give. I'll be there to help you as long as I live. I know you feel tired, and frightened, and broken. But do you believe these words that I've spoken? Do you believe, I ask you again? Do you have faith? I can heal you, my friend.

Ryan Dobson: For some reason, the donkey was sure that he knew the words that the man spoke were honest and true. They were said with such kindness, and caring, and love. It's seen that they came from heaven above. The donkey burst out...

Michiele Stapleton: I believe that it's true. I believe.

Ryan Dobson: He repeated.

Michiele Stapleton: I believe. Yes I do.

Ryan Dobson: The man stretched his hand out and closed both his eyes. And then to the little donkey surprise. He felt a sensation he couldn't control from the top of his head right down to his soul. All of a sudden he realized that now, his body was stretching and changing somehow. Most amazing of all. At that very hour, the donkey began to sense he had power. He didn't feel small or weak any longer. Instead, he felt strong, and stronger, and stronger. He could feel in his body, the energy flowing. He could see with his eyes that his muscles were growing. His back felt like iron. His legs felt like steel. His chest felt so strong, it just couldn't be real.

Michiele Stapleton: It's a miracle. A miracle.

Ryan Dobson: The donkey cried out.

Michiele Stapleton: A miracle. A miracle beyond any doubt.

Ryan Dobson: In order to show all the thanks that he felt. The donkey bowed his head down and knelt in front of the man who made him so strong, with a beard on his chin

and hair. That was long. The man looked upon him with sorrowful eyes, then sat on his back and told him to rise.

Dr. James Dobson: We're bound for that city that's west of the hill. I have a great mission I need to fulfill.

Ryan Dobson: The donkey got up. His tears had all dried. With big bulging muscles, he started to stride. No longer a donkey that no one could ride. Now he had courage, and power, and pride. He started to stride. He started to run. He couldn't believe he was having such fun. With a clipidy clop, and a clipidy clop. He kept right on going with no need to stop. But as they drew near to the gate of the town, the donkey could hear a very strange sound. The curious noise made him perk up his ears. What could it be? It sounded like cheers.

Soon crowds of people came into sight. Shouting and waving their arms with delight. They were cheering the man and giving him praise, yelling, hosannas and crying hoorays. It was amazing to see the love they expressed. They called him a prophet and said he was blessed. In front of the donkey, they threw their arms, flowers, and garments, and branches, and palms. They laid all these down and started to sing, calling the man a savior and king. The donkey was happy, gone were his tears. Never had people sung in his ears. Never was there a moment so sweet as carrying a king with palms at his feet. And all his life after the donkey rejoiced, that the king had made such a wonderful choice. To help with the greatest mission of all. The king used a donkey, young, weak, and small.

For those of you just joining us, we've been listening to my dad, Dr. James Dobson, myself, and Michiele Stapleton read through a children's book titled *The Donkey No One Could Ride* here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Ryan Dobson and we are delighted to be joined in the studio by the author of this very fun book, Anthony DeStefano. Anthony is a best-selling author of many books, a TV host and a well-known speaker. He's also an avid pilot and successful businessman. And one of the things I am most thankful for a longtime pro-life activist with Priests for Life. And yet even with all of the busyness of his life, Anthony still finds time to write best-selling children's books as well. Dad, what a fun day and a neat way to celebrate Easter. Anthony, thanks for being here.

Anthony DeStefano: Well, thank you for having me. And what an honor to have the book read in this fashion by you wonderful people. Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Anthony, it's an honor to have you here. And did you enjoy what we did dramatically with the book?

Anthony DeStefano: I loved it and I loved hearing you, Dr. Dobson, play those different roles. It was really entertaining, And what a great honor. I'm very thankful.

Dr. James Dobson: There is a passion and a compassion to the story of the little donkey. And the artwork is outstanding. That really makes a great contribution.

Anthony DeStefano: Well, that was very, very important to me, picking the right artist for this. Because if you read some of the children's books today, some of the artwork is so... I don't know any other word I could use except for weird. But I want a story that-

Ryan Dobson: Man, have you've seen that just odd artwork in children's... I mean, I have little kids now. We look at these books and I think this is garbage.

Anthony DeStefano: Yes. And I thought that for a book that centered on the Holy Week, and our Lord, and the great and faith, and all these important themes, I thought, let's get an illustrator who can do this in the greatest kind of tradition of the best of Disney, the classic, traditional type of artwork. I did not want to get something that was weird or odd. And so I searched for this great illustrator named Richard Cowdry, who's a New York Times best-selling illustrator. And he's just incredible when it comes to portraying animals and their feelings. And he did just a wonderful job.

Ryan Dobson: He really did.

Dr. James Dobson: Anthony, when you sat down and write a book for children on Easter on a Holy Week, I would have thought that you would've gone to the cross and you would have focused on some aspect of that tragic but wonderful story. You went back to Palm Sunday, and the triumphant entry. And then worked the little colt, I think it's called a colt in the scripture, but a donkey in this case. Why did you do that?

Anthony DeStefano: I wanted the book to be about faith. That's what I want. The transformative, saving power of faith and the faith decision. That's what this book was really about, faith in Jesus. And what that faith does, how it transforms not only a donkey, but not only children, but all of us. It gives us the power to do incredible things. It saves us. And so, it wasn't as important in this book to go to the cross, although the cross is hinted at in this book from the manner of the way our Lord speaks, and from the fact that he's sad, and the way he's drawn by Richard Cowdry is very wistful. So the cross is always hinted at, and there's an illustration at the end of the book of the three crosses. And there's a lot of symbolism in the book that relates to the cross.

But I wanted the book to be about faith. As you may know, I wrote another children's book for Christmas called *Little Star*, which was one time featured on this program. And that's really more about not only the birth of our Lord, but also the death and resurrection of our Lord. So I've already written a children book with that theme of the death and resurrection of the Lord, and I want this one to center on.

Dr. James Dobson: Ah, and parents are looking for good biblical material for the children. Ryan, you just mentioned you do that with your kids or my grandkids.

Ryan Dobson: We do. That's right. With your grandkids. And it's nice to see these things come along. And I mean, selfishly, I wanted to do this program so I could have these in years to come for my kids. And hopefully, someday for theirs as well, because it's true. There's so little great material for children out there.

Anthony DeStefano: And for Easter especially, I'm so tired of that darn Easter bunny. We wanted to tell the Easter bunny to hop aside here.

Dr. James Dobson: That's insulting, isn't it?

Anthony DeStefano: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Colored eggs that got to do with anything.

Anthony DeStefano: Exactly. Exactly. So I thought there's got to be a great children's story here that's biblically based and conveys a deep truth about our faith. And so that's what I wanted. That was my goal in writing this story.

Ryan Dobson: Dad, I'm going to ask Anthony this question. But I've never asked you this question, so I'm going to put you on the spot a little bit here. Growing up, we had Easter traditions at our home. And we had a big Easter lunch after church, and we did an Easter egg hunt, but it was always after Easter Sunday. And there was lots of things planned. What did you do growing up? How did Gigi and Myrna, for those that don't know, that's my grandparents. That's what I call them. How did you all celebrate Easter as a family?

Dr. James Dobson: You know what, Ryan, I don't remember. And I remember most of my childhood, so I can't answer that question. But I can tell you what we were trying to do with you and your sister today, because we didn't want to mix the two. The fantasy aspects of Easter and to confuse what that means and intersects with Easter Sunday morning. That just didn't seem to work. So we always celebrated the Easter egg hunt on Saturday. And we didn't even talk about Easter on Saturday because I didn't want to confuse that. You kids loved the Easter egg hunt. We didn't talk about bunnies as related in any way to Easter and that kind of thing. But I think that's the way to do it. You don't want to take away the fun and the fantasy of a holiday like that. Some people don't want to do that. But that's the way we went about it. And I feel good about it.

Ryan Dobson: Yeah, we had a great time growing up. It was fun. And we separated it. We do that now in our neighborhood. We have a friends and family Easter egg hunt on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. And last year I think we had 150 kids show up. I mean it's-

Dr. James Dobson: He's got the most prolific street in the world, the most fertile street in the world, 150 kids, on a cul-de-sac?

Ryan Dobson: We live in a cul-de-sac and about eight people open up their front yards. Everybody brings eggs, to the point where you can't hide them anymore. There are no hiding spots. You just throw them anywhere you can. But we have a good time with that. And then Easter Sunday is for Easter. It's for the actual Easter. Anthony, how did you guys celebrate growing up?

Anthony DeStefano: Well, as your listeners could tell from my name, I'm Italian. And so Italian-Americans have their own traditions associated with pre-Easter. Of course, they usually center on food. So growing up, the main thing I remember pre-Easter was all the food that we had. The different fishes that we had, the different sauces, the different meals. Before the Easter day especially was a big feast with lasagna and everything. Because it was punctuated by this celebratory festive mood with food, and music, and church, and of course, the reading of the passion of Christ. So we sort of combined all that and what you came away with was this was a really special, special, special day. And I remember my father telling me at the time that of all the holidays of the year, this is the most holy. We all said, "I thought Christmas is the most important." But he would say, No, Easter is." And he tried to explain it to us. And so it's always been in my mind how that's fantastic central this holiday is.

Ryan Dobson: You know what else I remember? And I don't know why I just remembered this, but something that we almost did every year was Sunrise service.

Dr. James Dobson: That's right.

Ryan Dobson: When first Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena that I grew up in moved campuses, they built the tomb over on a side of a hill. And they would do an Easter morning sunrise service at the tomb, and it was empty. You could go and see the empty tomb there. And I remember when I moved to Colorado Springs, we did the Garden of the God's Sunrise. Man, it was freezing, freezing.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to tell you, I was the speaker. And I had to get up and speak in the morning. It was about five o'clock in the morning, 5:30 in the morning. I've never been that cold in my life. And I couldn't make my mouth work. I could not move my mouth. And everybody there was huddled up. But somehow the message came through, I think.

Ryan Dobson: Yeah, those were some neat times. I really enjoyed this. I've got to do that with Lincoln and Luci. Luci's a little young right now, but as soon as she's able. In fact, last year Easter was in the Palm Sunday celebration at church. And all the kids in the church had Palm Fronds and they danced and sang. And it's neat to get them involved again. That's why I was so excited about this broadcast because it brings the joy of Easter. It brings the new perspective for my kids to let them

hear the same story from a different perspective in a new way to open their eyes further to the beauty of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Dr. James Dobson: Now here's the bottom line. You don't allow the secular, fun, fantasy aspects of that time of year, including new clothes on Easter Sunday morning, all that. It kind of interferes with the meaning of Christ on the cross and what He did for us there. And you have to get across to kids in whatever way you can communicate it. That Jesus did not just die as a martyr in the sense that other martyrs would. His death means something different from every other person that died in a spiritual context.

Anthony DeStefano: And you know what, that's really central to the whole meaning of why He used a donkey to ride into Jerusalem. Because conquering kings who rode into cities at that time would ride on horses, symbol of their power. But Jesus chose to ride on a beast of burden, a servant animal. And the reason was because He Himself carried the burden of all our sins on His shoulders. And so He wanted to ride on a donkey because He was a servant king.

Dr. James Dobson: Anthony, that's terrific. I have never heard that concept before. That's very good.

Ryan Dobson: And they were expecting. When John the Baptist was in prison, he sent his disciples to Jesus saying, "Are you the one we've been looking for, or should we wait for another?" I mean, here he is. He's in prison. He's thinking the Messiah, they thought He was going to come on a horse with a sword and overturn the Roman rule over the Jews. And Christ said, "Tell him what you see." And it was, "You're not looking for this conquering war lord. We're talking about a whole new game here."

Dr. James Dobson: But next time, He will come as the conqueror.

Anthony DeStefano: Next time.

Ryan Dobson: Amen. Oh, Anthony, we absolutely love the work you do. We appreciate it so much. And we thank you for driving all the way out here. Brand new wife, been married for a short time, drove here from New York to do these programs. Honestly-

Dr. James Dobson: And she's silently sitting next to the wall here.

Ryan Dobson: Yeah. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Anthony DeStefano: Well, it's a great honor. And I'd drive out here anytime, Dr. Dobson and you, Ryan, ask me to come.

Ryan Dobson: Oh, thank you. Well, we'll definitely do it again.

Roger Marsh:

Well, what a wonderful story for kids about Palm Sunday and faith in Jesus. I'm Roger Marsh and you are listening to Family Talk. And of course, we all have Easter traditions and memories from our childhoods that we fondly look back on. I pray that this is a memory making year for you and your family as well. Now as we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, we all know there's quite a lot going on in the country right now. And a great way to stay connected to what's happening in Washington, DC is by listening to the new Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast with Gary Bauer. Gary, of course, is our senior vice president of public policy here at the JDFI. He shares his unique perspective on current public policies through the lens of the U.S. Constitution, and his unapologetic biblical worldview.

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Now, friends, before we close for the broadcast today, I do have a tough subject to discuss with you, and it's an important issue affecting every family in the world basically. I'm talking about the threat of pornography that is invading your home, and affecting your marriage, and stealing the hearts and minds of your children and your teenagers. Here at the JDFI, we have created an excellent resource to equip you to combat this sin and protect your family. It's called "A Parent's Guide to Pornography." You can receive your downloadable anti-porn parenting guide when you go to drjamesdobson.org/antipornparentguide. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org/antipornparentguide.

You can receive this valuable resource immediately and confidentially. Or if you'd prefer, give us a call at 877-732-6825. Give us your email address and we'll email it to you. Or give us your mailing address and we will send it to you at no cost through the US mail. Please prayerfully consider how you might use this clear cut PDF with practical biblical perspective to talk with your kids and grandkids and guard your family. You'll be glad you did. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org/antipornparentguide.

I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and the entire staff here at the Dobson Institute, thanks so much for listening and for making us a part of your

day. Please remember, we are a listener supported Christian radio program. And it's because of you and your prayers and support that we are able to bring quality content to you and your family each and every day. To learn more about the James Dobson Family Institute, all you have to do is visit drjamesdobson.org. And we appreciate your prayers and your ongoing financial support of our ministry as well. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for another edition of Family Talk. And may God richly bless you and your family.

Announcer:

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