

# Jesus Cleanses The Temple Again

Luke 19:45-48

## **MEMORY VERSE**

1 SAMUEL 2:30

“For those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A sock or simple muslin puppet for each child in your class, markers, and decorating crafts like plastic eyes, felt, yarn and pipe cleaners.

A couple of small brooms and dustpans and a bag of dry beans.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Temple Puppets**

Provide a sock or simple muslin puppet for each child in your class. Make markers, and decorating crafts like plastic eyes, felt, yarn and pipe cleaners also available to turn the puppets into New Testament characters like Jesus, Temple priests, and Temple worshippers.

Explain to your class that they must pay special attention to the story today, as they will be producing puppet shows to re-enact it later in the lesson.

## **LESSON TIME!**

Jesus was a teacher. As a teacher, He traveled to different towns sharing the good news of the kingdom of God. He taught and healed and forgave many people. He carried the news of God's kingdom everywhere He went. He visited the temple in Jerusalem early in His ministry and found it to be shamefully misrepresenting the Father, so He drove out all the people that were doing wrong and restored the temple to what God had intended it to be.

The temple was a place set aside by God for the purpose of worshipping Him and meeting with Him. Once Jesus had driven out those who were abusing the temple's purpose, He moved on to other areas to continue His teaching. During the last two weeks of His life, He came back to the temple in Jerusalem. What did He find there? Our scripture tells us:

### **LUKE 19:45-46**

**Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,**

**saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"**

We see that the priests in the temple no longer had hearts for God they were only interested in their own gain. They were using God's temple as a way to get rich. They were no longer concerned with feeding the people with God's Word and commandments, rather they were fleecing them. In other words, the priests were robbing the people in God's name. Jesus had cast them out of the temple once before for the same thing, but they had not learned their lesson.

They were misrepresenting God again. Instead of the temple being a place to come into contact with God, they had turned it into a business to make them rich. The priests had forgotten that they were supposed to serve the people in God's name. God was forgotten and self was on the throne.

Once again, Jesus burned with the white-hot zeal for His Father's will. Once again, He drove the evil priests out of the temple. They had been buying and selling in the temple, shifting the attention from meeting with God and presenting a spotless lamb as a sacrifice for sins to a big money making operation for the covetous priests.

What exactly were the priests doing? Everyone was supposed to pick a sheep from their own flock that was without spot or blemish and take it to Jerusalem to sacrifice

for their sins as they worshipped God during Passover. The greedy priests would tell the people their lamb was unfit for the Lord, meaning it had a blemish, and sell them one that was often worse for a lot of money. The lambs the people brought were good, but the priests lied so they could make money.

Another way the priests would make money was by “money changing.” The people were required to use special “temple” money to buy things at the temple. The priests would charge a fee to change the people’s money into temple money, and they would overcharge them for the sacrifice.

Worshipping the Lord became nothing more than a way for the priests to make money. The priests liked making money off of the people. As a result, no one worshiped God at the temple anymore; the wicked priests and their behavior kept the people from truly worshipping the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

We no longer need the temple in Jerusalem to make a sacrifice for our sins. When we ask Jesus into our lives our body becomes His temple. He lives in us, and we belong to Him! We were bought with the blood of Jesus, God's perfect, spotless lamb. His sacrifice for us got rid of our sin once and for all. The God of the universe inhabits us! Wow! Does He find our temple a place of worship? Do people see God’s light in our lives? (2 Corinthians 6:16.) Is the Holy Spirit in control of us, or are we letting our self rule?

Jesus had set the temple in order once before. But He found it corrupt again. God intended that the temple be a place where people could meet with Him. What happened? The priests went right back to using the temple for themselves instead of God. They disregarded what He had said about keeping it a place of prayer and worship.

We can be guilty of the same sin that the priest committed. When we accept Jesus into our heart, our body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. We give Jesus control over our life to use us to do His awesome plan. When we take back the control of our lives from the Holy Spirit, we have robbed God of His purposes in our lives, and robbed others of coming into contact with Christ through our "temple."

## **Sweep Up the Mess**

Bring a couple of small brooms and dustpans to class, along with a bag of dry beans. Give a couple of volunteers the brooms and dustpans and instruct them to sweep up the “mess” from the floor.

Scatter the beans around the floor and let the volunteers go to work. While they are working, continue to scatter more beans in various corners of the class. When they think they are done, point out that there is more sweeping to be done.

Give a few children a chance to “sweep up the mess”. Explain that our spiritual lives continually need to be swept up. If we ever feel like we are finished growing in the Lord or that we know everything about God, we will find ourselves like the priests in the temple, having the same mess to clean up that we had when Jesus first visited.

It is amazing and humbling to realize that Almighty God wants to come and live inside of us! As His temple, we need to ask Him to keep our heart turned towards Him. We want our little "temples" to accomplish His awesome purposes. His desire is that we become lights in a dark world, shining His love for all to see and leading people to His throne of grace. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

Maybe you have let something or someone take God’s place on the throne of your heart. He used to have control of your life, but you have taken it away from Him and corrupted His temple. Jesus will not force you to accept Him, but He wants the best for you and wants to be king of your heart today. Ask Jesus to come inside and lovingly cleanse your heart and life. Ask Him what He wants you to change or get rid of. Ask Him how you can get the focus back on Him instead of on your own selfish desires. He will lovingly reclaim His temple once again. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

### **LUKE 19:47-48**

**And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him,**

**and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.**

Jesus was now a very public and noticeable figure in Jerusalem. The priests hated Him for stopping their great money making operation! They were jealous of the following He had. They wanted to get rid of Him, to destroy Him, and to kill Him. But they could not do anything at this time! Why? The people loved Jesus. They followed

Him everywhere and hung on His every word. He had reclaimed the temple, and the people were happy.

It was once again a place where the people could meet with God. They listened closely to what He taught, drinking in His every word. Do you hang on every word Jesus says? Is your temple filled with the things of God or the things of self?

Does Jesus need to reclaim our hearts today? All we have to do is sincerely ask Him to take control of our life and clean us out. His love and mercy will then flow from us and affect the lives of people around us. His truth will flow through us. We will magnify and honor Him when He is in control of our temple. It is the best way to live! Our lives will be pointing others to God. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

## **Cleansing Puppets**

Have your children divide into groups of three or four and let them re-enact the story of Jesus cleansing the temple with the puppets they made at the beginning of class. After they have had a chance to work together, have them perform their puppet shows for one another. You can make a puppet stage by turning a table on its side and letting the children get behind.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to live their life as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Pray that others will see Jesus in them; if any children have not responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.