

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 in those days He traveled around to different towns to share the good news of the kingdom of God. He taught in places more than just one time. He said things more than once. He healed more than one blind man. 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 had cleared 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 God and meeting with God. Once Jesus had driven out those 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 again 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 their hearts toward God, but 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, but fleecing them, in other words, robbing them in God's name. Jesus came in again and saw them up to their old tricks! He had set them in order before and they had disregarded Him.

They were misrepresenting God again. Instead of the temple being a place to come into contact with God it was now a place committed to the worldly desires of getting rich and gaining things. God was forgotten and self was on the throne.

Once again, Jesus burned with the white-hot zeal for His Father's purposes. So Jesus again powerfully drove out all the evil doers. They had been buying and selling in the temple and the attention shifted 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? Everybody was supposed to set aside 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. 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 is by doing what is called "money changing." There was a requirement for people to use special "temple" money to buy things at the temple. The priests would exchange money for people, but charge them a fee to change the money into temple money and then overcharge them for the sacrifice.

Worshipping the Lord become nothing more than a way for priests to make money and get rich. The priests liked making money off of the people. No one came into contact with God at the temple anymore. No one really worshipped anymore. It was now a corrupt place, given over to sin.

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 come to and make a sacrifice for our sins. When we ask Jesus into our lives our body becomes His temple. He lives in us! We belong to Him. We were bought with the blood of Jesus, God's perfect, spotless lamb. The God of the universe inhabits us! Wow! Does He find our temple a place of worship? A place where others come in contact with Him?

(2 Corinthians 6:16.) Is the Holy Spirit in control of us, or are we letting our self rule?

Jesus had already set the temple in order once. He found it all corrupt again. What happened? The priests had gone right back to letting their own desires rule the temple. They stopped listening to Jesus. They disregarded what He had said about keeping it a place of prayer and worship. A place, like God intended, that brought people into contact with God. They went back to their sinful, selfish way and now they found themselves right back in the mess they were in before. They wanted control of the temple instead of letting God have control.

We find that can happen to us too. Our bodies are the temple of God. 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 and 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 with growing in the Lord, we will find ourselves like the priests in the temple, with just as big a mess as was there at Jesus' first visit.

It's amazing and humbling to realize that Almighty God wants to come and live inside of us! He does! We become His temple! 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. He desires for His love to flow out of us and His mercy to be ministered through us. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

If you have taken back control of your life, you have caused God's temple to be corrupted. He wants to reclaim it today. Ask Jesus to come 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 all back on Him instead of your own selfish gain. He'll 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, destroy Him, and kill Him. But, they couldn't at this time! Why? The people loved Jesus. They followed Him everywhere and hung on every word He said. He had powerfully 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 everything He said and fully intended to do as He said. Do you hang on every word Jesus says? When your heart is toward Jesus the enemies of God are put to shame. Is your temple filled with the things of God rather than the things of self?

Does Jesus need to reclaim our hearts today? All we need to do is to just sincerely ask Him and He will. His love and mercy will then flow from us into the lives of others. His truth will be coming through us. We will magnify and honor Him when He is in control of our temple. It's the only 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 life as temples of the Holy Spirit. Pray that others will see Jesus in you; if any children have not responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.