



# **Jesus Cleared the Temple**

**Mark 11:15-17**

Gus marched back and forth proudly in front of the stone wall of the King's castle. Just a few moments earlier, Sir Praisealot had promoted him to "Knight in Training" and given him his first real task. He was to guard one of the gates to the castle and keep all enemies out. "I do hope I do this right," Gus said to his horse Duncan. Sir Praisealot had told Gus to study the manual to know how to guard the gate. Gus opened the book to the place his teacher had marked, Mark 11:15-17. "Ah, check this out!" Gus said to Duncan. "It's a story about when Jesus went to the temple for the holy holiday of Passover. Some men were in the temple selling animals for sacrifice at an unfair price. They were cheating God's people in God's very own house. How disgraceful! Well, Jesus would have none of it. He overturned their tables and chased them out! And then Jesus quoted the Bible saying, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. But you have made it a den of robbers.'" Duncan whinnied as Gus continued. "I think I understand. Jesus wants His temple to be a place of prayer. His kingdom is no place to be dishonest," he exclaimed.

"Allo, allo there, Mr. Knight," a strange voice with a French accent called out from the other side of the gate.

Gus jumped up and peered through the iron bars. "Oh, I'm not a knight. I'm a knight in training!" he explained.

A figure covered in a cape appeared. "Oh, I would never have known! The way you stand there. So proud, so noble, such...how do you say? Jene' se qua?"

Gus smiled proudly. "Why thank you, kind sir. I do try to do my best to represent the kingdom."

"Oh, it is working you are almost the perfect image of a knight..." the visitor paused and looked around before continuing, "except, of course...do you know what you need to make the look complete?"

"No, tell me! Tell me!" Gus begged.

"You need a hat!" the mysterious visitor offered.

Gus was confused. "A hat?" he asked.

"Oui! Not just any hat. I have a very special knight's hat just for you and it will only cost you one gold crown!"

**"Yes, do! That's a high price, but I must have it!" Gus explained. "I am so excited! I shall soon have a helmet that represents who I am! A noble, dedicated knight of the King!" he opened the gate and allowed the salesman to enter the courtyard.**

**The salesman reached into his pack and pulled out a purple hat covered with green sequins that glittered in the sun. "Here you are, Mr. Knight," he said.**

**Gus took it and frowned. "Why, this a silly looking hat," he exclaimed.**

**"Oh no, zis is a chapeau de soiree'," the salesman encouraged. "This represents the joy and celebration of serving ze King!"**

**Gus studied the hat. "Are you sure?" he asked skeptically.**

**"Of course I'm sure! Would I lie to you?" the salesman asked in a pleasant voice.**

**"I suppose not," Gus replied. "Here you are, sir, one gold crown."**

**Gus tried on the hat and walked to a nearby window to see how he looked in it. Meanwhile, the mysterious salesman quietly led Duncan out of the gate. "Enjoy your chapeau, mon ami," he called over his shoulder with an evil laugh.**

**Gus didn't notice any of this. Instead, he admired his reflection in the window. "Wow, this is an amazing hat! What do you think of my new chapeau, Duncan? Do I look dashing? Duncan?" Gus turned to discover he was gone. He called out, "Duncan! Duncan!" He saw Duncan's hoof prints next to the salesman's footprints both leading right out of the gate. "What? That salesman stole Duncan! Why, I believe that was not a true salesman. That was Robespierre! That sneaky sneakster, now I must guard the kingdom even more closely!" Gus climbed a high tower in the wall for a better view. "Now nothing will escape me," he exclaimed as loud as he could.**

**An hour later, a shadowy figure in a gray coat and floppy hat appeared. "Glasses for sale! Extra special glasses for sale," the mysterious figure announced.**

**Gus ran down from the tower to the gate and held up his sword. "Halt! You there! You haven't seen a sneaky robber around here, have you?"**

**The visitor pulled his hat low over his face. "Why no, I'm just an innocent salesman," he replied in a familiar, French accented voice.**

**Gus squinted. "Wait a minute! You're that sneaky robber, Robespierre!"**

**"Oh no, monsieur, you mistake me for someone else," the man said as he pulled his hat down further. "I assure you, I have never been to zis Kingdom before."**

**"You look an awful lot like Robespierre," Gus continued.**

**"Does Robespierre wear glasses?" he asked as he quickly put glasses on.**

**Gus shook his head. "Why no, he doesn't."**

**"Then he couldn't be me. Perhaps you need glasses," the man suggested.**

**"Do you think so?" Gus wondered.**

**"Oh yes, and I have just the pair for you." He handed Gus a purple and green pair. "These special glasses allow you to spot a robber from a mile away and it will only cost you one gold crown! Here, let me hold your sword while you try them on. C'est magnifique!" He gave the glasses to Gus and put the sword inside his coat.**

**Instead, Gus put on the glasses and searched his pockets. "Another gold coin? Well...I must have them to protect the kingdom! Here you are!"**

**"Merci' beaucoup, mon ami," the man said as he disappeared around the corner.**

**Gus peered out from behind his new glasses. "Ha! Now, no one shall escape my eagle eye! I shall defend the Kingdom with all my..." he announced as he reached for his sword. Suddenly he realized it was missing. "Wait a minute! Where's my sword? That salesman! I bet it was that sneaky Robespierre again! Well, now that I have my special glasses, he shall never get past me." Another hour passed.**

**"Allo, monsieur. Would you like to buy a watch?" the now very familiar French accented voice suddenly announced from behind him.**

**Gus spun around and called out in his most knightly voice, "Robespierre! Stop right there."**

**"I'm not Robespierre. I am a salesman. Robespierre is not a salesman. Oh, Mr. Knight, you have no sword. Perhaps you would like to purchase zis one," he said as he pulled one from his coat.**

**"Well, I could use a new sword..." Gus stopped. "Wait a tick, that's my sword! Robespierre!" Gus lunged for the sword and grabbed it away from Robespierre.**

**"Oui, I am undone!" Robespierre cried. Gus grabbed Robespierre by his collar. "Listen here, Robespierre. You have robbed me of my horse and my sword and have made an unfair profit at my expense. That's no way to behave in the castle of my King. You are trying to turn the King's house into a den of robbers! Don't you know that it's to be a house of prayer for all nations? I am tossing you out right now." Gus pointed down the road and shouted, "Get thee hence, Robespierre! Don't come back until you are ready to worship my King and treat his castle as a holy place of prayer!"**

**Gus watched Robespierre disappear down the road. "Wow, I defended the kingdom and I think I learned something important," he said thoughtfully. "God's house is a holy place and we must always show respect in His house! Because, after all, serving the King is the noblest thing!"**