

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA**

**MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT (MED)**

**2022 UCZ THEME “ALL ONE IN CHRIST” JOHN 17:21**

**HARVEST WEEK LESSONS AND SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE**

**JULY/AUGUST 2022**

**SUB THEME: CALL TO HARVEST**

**MONDAY**

**TOPIC: THE BLESSINGS OF REMEMBERING GOD’S GOODNESS IN OUR LIVES**

**TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 8:1-18**

**INTRODUCTION**

If there is anything God is particular about, is for His children not to forget about everything He has done for them, and this we can see it in many instructions He was giving the children of Israel through Prophet Moses.

One time, He told them to tell their children what He had done for them in Egypt, at Red Sea, wilderness and also Jordan River where He instructed them to pick some stones as a memorial.

This He instructed the fathers of the tribes and families to sit their children down and explain everything God had done for them lest they forget. They were to explain to their children until they could remember everything by memory or recitation (Deut 4:9-10, Exodus 10:2, Joel 1:3).

**TEXT EXPLANATION.**

In this text, God told Moses to instruct the Children of Israel not to forget the Lord when they enter Canaan, the Promised Land. He further told them that, passing through the wilderness were a necessary tool to test their hearts and humble them. This was to make sure that they trusted in the Lord completely even when they had plenty and were successful in all areas of life. God’s provision and presence was demonstrated when He provided water, manna, and victory over their enemies in the wilderness.

**POINT FOR REFLECTION**

1. **REMEMBER WHEN YOU HAD NOTHING**

God knew that we human beings easily forget our past experience, especially when we have plenty; hence God had to remind the children of Israel time after time that they were slaves in Egypt before. He told them that, when you are in Canaan, don’t forget the time when you were lacking.

God insisted that, they keep remembering the wilderness period, the Egypt period and provision of manna because, all these served as a reminder of the goodness of the Lord.

My brothers and sisters! Have you forgotten your Egypt experience, wilderness and God’s provision when you had nothing? Therefore, the Lord today is saying remember that time when you had nothing, so that you may remain faithful to God and only Him the only provider.

1. **BEING READY TO ENTER THE PROMISE LAND**

The Lord always wants to see that, we His children are ready before he blesses us with anything. Imagine the children of Israel took forty years to reach Canaan which was a week or a month’s journey because of being not ready.

In this year’s harvest, we remind each other on the need to get ready for the blessing of God. Remember everything you have gone through in your life, God was preparing you so that, in the time of plenty, you will not be boasting but grateful to His provision.

1. **THE ASSURANCE OF GOD’S BLESSING IN THE PROMISE LAND.**

God assured the children of Israel of his provision and sustenance so long they kept on remembering that, it was He who has given them the power to posses the land and that, it was not their strength that had gotten them wealthy. The continued flow of God’s blessings and stay in Canaan was attached to staying faithful and obedient to God.

This also is the same to us believers in the new covenant through the blood of Jesus. God assured us that, we are co-heirs of God blessing through Jesus Christ, as long as we remain faithful and obedient to God and His word.

**CONCLUSION**

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, we want to encourage all of you that, in this year’s harvest we try to look back and see how God had been faithful to us and also remember that, whatever we went through in the past, He was preparing us for the blessings He had stored for us. He has assured us that, as long as we stay connected to Jesus, as a vine and we as branches, there will be an assurance of His continued flow of His blessings.

**TUESDAY**

**TOPIC: WHEN GOD COMMENDS YOU.**

**TEXT: LUKE 21: 1-4, ACTS 10:1-5**

**INTRODUCTION**

Imagine God himself coming down and saying, “my Son, my Daughter well done for that good work you did, for that offering you offered, for that widow, orphan you helped,

All that you did you did it to me and for my kingdom, for that well done”.

Just imagine the feeling wow!

**BIBLE EXPLANATION**

This day, Jesus visited the synagogue and was seated near the offering box strategically, because, He had a lesson for his disciples. He saw people giving offering and a widow without a name came and dropped her last coin as her offering. Jesus then, turned to His disciples and said out of all the people, this widow has given the best. Imagine the questions that lingered in his disciples minds!

**POINTS FOR REFLECTION**

1. **THE WIDOWS OFFERING . HOW BEST WAS IT**

Many people still have questions on how best the widows offering was compared to the rest?

The lesson here was that the widow gave the last coin that she had valued. However, her complete trust in God compelled her to give what had remained and trusted God to provide what she would need. The last coin meant it was the best in the life of the widow and the challenge was that when the rest gave to God from their plenty, it was not like that of the widow which could touch the heart of God. The issue here is not asking you to give to God everything you have but to give the best from what you have.

The widows offering shows us that giving to God is not about how much you have given but how valuable that offering is to you. The widows offering meant everything to the widow, it meant life to her, and everything about her life was in that coin.

We encourage and challenge every one of you to give like the widow.

1. **CAN GOD COMMEND YOUR GIVING?**

Jesus drew some serious lessons on the offering of the widow, that what moves God’s heart is not the big amount one has offered but what it means to the giver. Remember this widow gave her offering without being forced because God loves a cheerful giver.

The widows offering challenges everyone in the Church today that everyone can give something valuable to God and avoid excuses that do not hold water. Looking the status of the Widow at the time where much was not expected, this widow’s offering was able to draw the attention of God, what about us who are even advantaged in one way or another.

My question is; can your offering draw the commendation of God like the widows offering?

**CONCLUSION**

My Brothers and Sisters, we bring you this challenge of the widow, whose name is not known but her giving situation explains that she was not a rich widow, yet in her poverty she was still grateful to God and gave.

May you find encouragement through this attitude of the widow toward kingdom values! Remember also that the life of Cornelius whose giving was recognized by God according to the words of the Angel demonstrates a similar attitude of generosity and attitude.

How would you feel if God was to come down and say well done my son, well done my daughter all you have been giving to the advancement of my kingdom is being noted in heaven!

**WEDNESDAY**

**TOPIC:SUPPORTING THE MINISTRY OF GOD**

**TEST:LUKE 8:1-4**

**INTRODUCTION**

Every support that goes to a good cause whether it is material or financial is directly going to God; because God asserts that when you did it to one of the least of you , you did it to me. Jesus also had people who were just funding His ministry and this helped Him to concentrate on ministering the gospel across the cities and the nations. This shows that our men and women of God need support to win the whole world. How have you partnered with God in winning the world back to Him.

One must know that the support that is given to the Men and Women of the collar or pulpit is directly given to God Himself and this should make the people who are involved to feel proud, because they have taken part in God’s Mission through their contribution both of material and non- material support. How well have you supported the Church work?

**BIBLE EXPLANATION.**

The writer explains that Jesus began moving from town to town and village to village preaching the gospel. He was with His disciples, but note that there were also some women whom Jesus had saved from different illness and others who had been possessed by evil spirit. These women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and many others who were supporting the ministry of Jesus from their own resources.

**POINTS OF REFLECTION**

1. **PARTNERING WITH GOD**

God knows that He needs human partnership to achieve His salvation agenda, hence the involvement of humanity throughout the Bible both in the Old and New Testament.

Even now God is calling many people and blessing them with resources so that they too can use them to bless humanity while on Earth.

The Women mentioned here, some were sick and some possessed by evil spirit and after Jesus had cured them, in return they started following Him and served Him and His disciples.

The disciples and Jesus were not to worry of food or clothing because these women and others knew why they were saved and blessed by God and did the right thing.

The question we have now for each one of us is that, how can we partner with God in His salvation agenda on Earth?

This year, God is calling us to partner with Him by supporting His Mission on earth.

We encourage women, men and youths of this great Church to find ways that you can support the work of God and His Servants in various ways. In so doing you will be participating in God’s agenda to save the whole world.

1. **SERVE GOD WILLINGLY**

The problem we have today in the body of Christ is that many people want to be pushed or begged to serve God. This is why we see even con-men in the collar who are manipulating people using the Gospel.

We pray that God will raise women, men and youths like Joanna, Susanna and Mary Magdalene, who will serve God willingly without being forced or begged. God wants to raise people who will take pride in serving His servants so that the gospel can reach the whole world without fewer challenges.

We cannot all be preachers of the gospel. Just like in the soccer field, only 22 will be there and the rest of them will be there in the terraces cheering those playing, so the gospel needs supporters as well.

**CONCLUSION**

As we end this topic, we challenge you to introspect and asked yourself why you find it so difficult to serve God with your resources. May this year’s harvest be a turn around and may it help you to make up your mind to serve God with a joyful heart and also supporting those that are in the battle field fighting for the lost souls.

**THURSDAY.**

**TOPIC:THE SPIRIT OF ANANIA & SAPPHIRA .**

**TEXT ACTS 5:1-10**

**BIBLE EXPLANATION**

The early Church was just going through the structural establishment. And many believers were selling their properties and donate the whole money to the Church through the apostles lead by the Apostle Peter.

They came a couple by the name of Ananias and Sapphira who admired how other believers sold their properties and gave the whole money to the young (growing) Church. They also sold theirs and brought the money to the apostles but they did not bring everything, they kept part of the money for themselves. They lied that what they had brought was the whole amount and died instantly.

**POINTS OF REFLECTION**

1. **DO WE HAVE BELIEVERS WHO LIE?**

Lying is one sin God doesn’t like, because it births many things.

People need to understand that what killed this couple was not the issue of money but lying to the Holy Spirit before the apostle.

Can we find this spirit in the Church today? If so how can the Church eliminate it?

Many people lie in their offerings and they think they are lying to the man or woman of God but no it is to the Holy Spirit who sees and knows everything.

1. **HAVE YOU EVER PROMISED GOD ANYTHING BUT FAIL TO FULFILL IT.**

The problem we have is that many people have promised to give to God based on impulse, emotions, etc without realistic assessment and revelation.

Some have promised God to say if you give me a job I will bring half of my salary.

If you bless me with a marriage I will be worshiping you day and night but they have failed to fulfill what they promised .If you bless me with a child, I will do this and that etc. How many unfulfilled promises have you made before God’s presence and have failed to honor?

Can we even laugh at Ananias and Sapphira or we are the Ananias and Sapphire of this generation.

May God help us to stop promising what we will not fulfill. It is better not to promise, than you to promise and fail to fulfill.

**CONCLUSION**

We prayer that Christians be sensitive to what we say and pledge in the presence of God . Let’s be like Hanna who pledged to give back to God her son Samuel and she did. May God help and forgive us on the many broken promises we have made before Him. Let’s remember that our God is a covenant keeping God.

**FRIDAY**

**TOPIC: PARTICIPATING IN GOD’S MISSION**

**TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9**

**BIBLE EXPLANATION**

The Apostle Paul here tries to explain about how the small Church in Macedonia supported the work of the God through the collections to assist the Apostles in Jerusalem.

Despite being a poor Church, they literally begged the apostles that they could contribute to the spreading of the gospel.

Surprisingly, they gave more than they were expected and this made Paul to challenge the Corinthian Church which was well placed and well to do to emulate the Macedonians.

**POINTS FOR REFLECTION**

1. **AVOID EXCUSES WHEN CALLED TO SERVE GOD.**

We are told that the Macedonian Church were in great affliction but, that did not stop them in taking a part in the ministry of the saints.

In today’s world church we hear a lot of excuses when it comes to support the work of the Church.As believers we need to be proud in taking part in the Ministry of the Church, like the Macedonian Church who begged the apostles to consider them on those who will be supporting God’s work. What a Church to pastor!

We need Christians who will participate in the work of the Church without being forced nor asked, because God loves a Cheerful giver. How do you feel whenever you see a servant of God preaching literally begging people to take part in God’s mission?

We pray that God will raise members like those of the Macedonian in this great Church, who will go beyond their means in supporting Gods work.

1. **IS YOUR GIVING MATCHING YOUR STATUS?**

It is important to ask ourselves this question, Jesus said to whom much is given, much is expected. Therefore check what you have been giving to the work of God if it is matching your status.

Let’s always give generously to God knowing that, He is the one who has blessed us with everything we have. Imagine those that do not believe in God but believe in witch doctors give what they are told without hesitation, how about us the Christians who believe in the providence of God. How can we give to God with a similar generously like that of the Macedonian Church?

1. **GROW IN YOUR GIVING**

The Apostle Paul challenges the Church in Corinth and encouraged them that as much as they grew in other areas spiritually, they should make sure that they also grow in the area of giving. And so we must ask ourselves if we have grown in the area of giving like we have grown in other areas like prayer.

Remember as a Christian you don’t need to neglect other areas in order that the body of Christ can be complete in all areas.

**CONCLUSION**

We encourage you Brothers and Sisters that Christianity is about taking part in the mission of God here on earth and making people experience God’s love physically.

May the spirit that touched the Macedonian Church move in our Church so that her people will be able to serve God without being forced.

May God raise the Macedonian spirit in the Church in our time and help us take part in the mission work.

As much as we grow numerically, in structural development, may God also help us grow in the area of giving.



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**JULY/AUGUST 2022**

**SUB THEME: CALL TO HARVEST**

**SCRIPTURE READING: GENESIS 4: 3-7, 1 KINGS 3:3-5 & MALACHI 1:6-14**

**INTRODUCTION**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is with pleasure that God in His mercy has given us yet another year in which we can celebrate His goodness and provision through harvest.

In this world, the one calling you matters and the urgency of the call depends on who’s calling you. If it is your father, mother, a mate, or your boss calling, the response is dependent on the caller. And in this Year’s Harvest with the theme “Call to Harvest”, We will look at God being the caller Himself, the one who has given us all that we treasure and value in this world. Mainly, people have misunderstood the caller thinking it is the Minister or the Church leadership wanting money, farm produce or other gifts from them and yet God the owner of everything we have.

However, in this year’s harvest, we must have a bigger picture and realize that since God is the owner of the Church and that every service being done in the Church is done to Him, for Him and through Him. This is so because He is the one who has called all of us to serve Him in many ways.

Furthermore, this will make us understand that God is the one calling all of us to the harvest service and this call must be answered by each one of us.

This is to say, God is calling us to worship Him through our harvest with full understanding that giving is one of the many forms of worship. Just like He called Cain and Abel for a harvest service, this year God is calling the entire Church to the Harvest service.

**BIBLE EXPLANATION**

**GENESIS 4:3-7**

In this text, the writer explains how the two brothers who were differently gifted though both were agriculturists, there came a time when God asked each one to bring their harvest and present it before Him.

The writer explains that between them, Cain’s offering was not accepted while Abel’s was.

**1KINGS 3: 3-5**

Here the writer shows us that Solomon followed his father’s commandment and instructions of obeying the Lord. And in response he loved God such that he offered a huge sacrifice. This prompted and moved God in such a way that he had to appear to him in his dreams at night and asked him whatever he wanted to be given.

**MALACHI 1:6**

The writer in Malachi brings out some serious questions relating to human experience. He says that, the son honors his father and a servant fears his master and so if God is (was) the Father of Israel, he wondered where the honor due to him was and if He was their master, where their fear was? This was in the context of the polluted sacrifices people offered before Yahweh.

He says what was presented to God could not even be presented to an earthly king (Chief) or master, but people had gone ahead and presented their worthless sacrifices before God’s altar and desecrated it. Instead of the offering to be one of value, but it has not. We somehow take the offering that is of less value and give it to God. This attitude demonstrates how we honour or dishonor God in our dealings.

God further asked, is there no one among you who can stop you from disrespecting my altar and shut the doors but none, because the priests are the ones who have caused many to stumble by allowing them to offer worthless offerings before God. Can I accept you with such kind of offerings, asks the Lord?

**THE CAIN SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH**

There is a very big problem in the Church today, because the spirit of Cain has found its way in the Christians of today. There are people who want to have everything to themselves, they can’t stand other people being blessed unless it was them.

They are very ungrateful, very selfish, and full of jealousy. All they do is to think about themselves nothing else. They have discouraged many people to do well and when they see those who want to give more, they tell them not to, claiming that they are boasting, or want show off.

I pray that God will continue empowering us with his Spirit and power to overcome this Cain’s spirit in our Churches, families, and work places as well as businesses. This spirit if not checked, will kill many visions in our Church and families.

The Church needs the **Abel spirit** which is a grateful spirit. These are people who know that what they have is God’s, who they are is because of God and what they have achieved is all because of God’s Grace and Mercy.

They don’t struggle to support the Mission of God on earth. May the spirit of Abel live on in the Church and our families!

Many people have forgotten what God has done for them, where he picked them from, because once they hear about giving, it’s like an insult to their hearing. People could complain about this and that they will even start counting how many times they have given, but yet one thing they forget, is to count how many times God has saved them, protected them, and blessed them, but no one complain to say, God you are blessing me too much.

**POINTS FOR REFLECTION**

1. **LOVE THE LORD**

To serve God faithfully as a Christians we need to reach to a point where we should love God more than money, more than our business, more than our marriages and more than ourselves.

Look at this, God loves us so much that he could not hold back His son, but He gave us because He loves us. The key thing here is our love for God, if it is greater, then we will believe Him for anything and will give Him our very best.

Look at Solomon he gave the Lord more than anyone could give and His giving provoked God such that he had to come down and appeared to Him. Look at this God could not just bless him instead he gave Him a blank cheque. God asked Solomon, my son what do you want me to give you?

My brothers and sisters God is waiting for a Harvest full of love from us and it will compel Him to respond to us. God is still waiting to see our giving if it explains the extent of the love we have for Him. Solomon first loved the Lord and let our love for Him compel us to give Him our best.

Can we find an addict lover of God in the Church, who will give him anything and everything during this year’s Harvest? Because giving is the only true expression of our love, and the value of the gift (offering) explain the love one has for the one he or she is giving.

Abraham was compelled by his love for God and had no struggle to let go of Isaac. What have you planned to give during this year’s Harvest, is it reflecting the love you have for God for all that He has done in your life?

1. **BRING ME ACCEPTABLE HARVEST.**

Brethren in Christ! Always remember that your offering must be acceptable to God, the prophet Malachi explains how and what should be presented at God’s altar, because at his offering will either be approved or not.

Here, God is pleading with the Children of Israel saying that, if He is their father and Master, He deserves the honor and the fear due to Him. This complaint and warning from God through prophet Malachi is timely in our days where people offer less than what they really have depending on their abilities.

Always check what you bring to God’s Altar because it’s not the Minister who is calling you for the harvest but God our creator and is the one to bless you. During harvest the priest’s role is well explained in (Leviticus 23:10-14.) His role is to lift your harvest to God so that it can be accepted by God. Will your harvest be accepted by God, if the priest lifts it to God? Remember Abel’s offering was accepted by God, while Cain’s was not, because God loves a cheerful giver than a complainant giver. Where are you, are you a complaining giver or a cheerful giver?

I encourage you that these harvests you give like never before, reflect the value you place on God and His altar. Giving like this will earn us God’s commendation, like He did to Abel’s offering. Unlike a situation where one claims they do not have anything to give because they are lacking, God always wants to test our hearts and see where it belongs and also see whether we are grateful for all that we have, are and what God is still doing for us.

**CONCLUSION**

Brothers and Sisters if the scriptures are true which says; “God does not change” that is to mean, the way He was then, that’s the way He is today and will be forever. Then what He didn’t accept then, He will not accept it today.

May our harvest this year be full of love, let’s make sure our giving be an expression of our love for our God and also show how grateful we are to our Him for all the things He has done, and still doing in our lives. Looking at how he has preserved our lives during the COVID Pandemic period and for the rains despite it coming a bit late in some areas, may our offering be acceptable like that of Abel and Solomon! and let’s treat it as another form of worship to our God, so that at the end of it all, we may obtain favor from Him. How we will respond will show us that we know the one calling us to harvest.

***AMEN!***

**THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO THANK**

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**2022 HARVEST LESSONS AND SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE**

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