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**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA**

**MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT**

**2022 PALM SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE**

**UCZ THEME: ALL ONE IN CHRIST- JOHN 17:21**

**SUB- THEME: ARE YOU PURSUING YOUR MISSION?**

**READINGS: ZECHARIAH 9:9-10, MATTHEW 21: 1-11**

**INTRODUCTION**

We are living in the World where people are busy with many activities, achievements and pursuits.

Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week; the Sunday before Easter. It is also referred to as the Triumphal entry even though it’s Jesus first step towards His death. It recalls the event of Jesus entering into Jerusalem causing a great stir among the people. He rode on a donkey and was greeted by a multitude of people waving palm branches with great singing and celebration. For the first time in His Ministry, He didn’t stop the people from declaring in public who He was. This was a defining moment. The palm branch is a symbol of victory, triumph, peace and eternal life. This jubilant tradition originated in the ancient near East and the Mediterranean World.

In Christianity, the palm branch represents the victory of the spirit over the flesh (Revelation 7:9). One of the biggest lessons of Palm Sunday is that, any person’s fortune and life can drastically change overnight.

May God illuminate our minds with His Spirit and fill us with knowledge, wisdom and understanding. In this event Jesus was pursuing His Messianic Mission that led to His death? What Mission are you pursuing?

Let us journey through the scriptures as we examine the Palm Sunday event.

**EXEGESIS**

The events recorded in Matthew 21:1-11 are a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah about the coming of the Messiah.

In Jesus’ time, the Jews were under the rule of the Roman Empire and were eagerly waiting for the coming of the Messiah. At this time, Jews from all over the known world had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Unlike the leaders of the day who traveled with great ceremony and pomp, Jesus came riding on a humble donkey while the people laid their clothes on the ground; they waved palm branches and shouted save us now. This was a clear message that He was a different kind of King, He was the Saviour and prince of peace; He came in peace not for war; He came to serve and not to be served. Though the people shouted and sung with excitement, they had clearly misunderstood Jesus and His Mission. Yes! He was the Messiah, but not what they expected. They expected a political Messiah, but Jesus was a spiritual Messiah.

Brothers and sisters, are you pursuing your mission?

**POINTS FOR REFLECTION:**

1. **Know Yourself**.

You can know many things and how they work, but if you don’t know yourself, you won’t achieve much. Before you can pursue your mission, you have to know yourself. Who are you? What are you here for? Confusion about your identity will make you miss your mark. You are a child of God, of a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, called out of darkness into the light to declare the wonderful deeds of our God (1Peter 2:9). Jesus knew who He was, and what He came for. That knowledge set Him on the road to Jerusalem that day. No one and nothing could distract Him. Do you know yourself? Know yourself, be clear in the understanding of yourself, be yourself and not a copycat. Find your identity in Christ; be rooted in Him and you will bear abundant fruit.

1. **Know your Mission**.

Why are you here? You can’t pursue what you don’t know. Jesus knew His Mission and nothing was going to stop Him, nothing! Everything He did, led Him towards the achievement of His Mission. He was a man on a Mission. The people could have forced Him to do their bidding, but He steadily pursued His Mission. Today, we stand saved, recipients of God’s mercy because of that steadfastness. Do you know your Mission? Your Mission is not just to come to Church on Sunday, to sing, preach, wear a uniform, eat Holy Communion, or anything else. Ultimately our Mission is to do God’s Mission.

God’s Mission flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus Christ.

It is our Mission to give people an understanding of the Kingdom of God and the eternal hope that they have through Jesus Christ.

Our Mission is not to make fans for ourselves, get likes on social media, or make a name for ourselves. Our Mission is to be disciples of Jesus Christ who disciple others. The Church is a community of believers of who act together as one body, with Jesus Christ as the head, to fulfill this Mission.” Do you know your mission? Do your thoughts, words and deeds show that you know your Mission?

1. **Commit Yourself to Your Mission**.

Be committed to your Mission such that nothing should distract you or stop you. Jesus Christ was committed to His Mission even though it would lead Him to a very painful death. It was God’s will to be killed in Jerusalem, just like all the animal sacrificial lambs that were offered there before Him. Not even the fear of death could keep Him from fulfilling His Mission. What is keeping you from your Mission? Is it the fear of what people will say about you? Is it the fear of disappointing people? When you commit yourself to your mission, you will disappoint many people. That’s expected! Don’t you think the people who thought Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, who would wrestle political power away from the Romans, were disappointed? That didn’t stop Jesus from forging ahead and accomplishing His Mission. They wanted salvation from the terrible Romans, He came to offer Salvation from the tyranny of sin. Our task is always to put God and His expectations of us first.

Brothers and sisters, as you commit yourself to your mission, it is important that you stay on point. Guard against superficial acclaim. People will clap for you and shower you with praise when it suits them. Fame is a terrible master. As Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem, the people shouted “Hossana to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hossana in the highest.” What did they do to him after that? Did they continue singing? Just because you are celebrated today doesn’t mean you will be celebrated tomorrow, the mob is fickle. Your life and fortunes can change overnight. Just do what you have to do and live it at that. Are you committed to your mission?

1. **Prioritize Your Mission**.

We live in a materialistic world, where people prioritize things that don’t matter over things which really matter. People would rather spend their time, talents and resources in pursuing materialistic goals; fulfilling the desire to accumulate more stuff. The praise of the people is more important than anything else. Be different, spend yourself in the mission; invest yourself in the mission. How do you spend your time, talent and wealth? Friend, prioritize your mission. Always do what matters the most as the main thing. The main thing is to do God’s Mission.

**CONCLUSION**

Our Saviour came to this materialistic world, did His Mission and He desires us to take the road He took and make His Mission our Mission. Every day, every moment, we must pursue our mission. We must invest ourselves in the mission. It doesn’t matter the opposition ahead of us, nor the consequences, we have to do our mission. Use your time, talents and treasures for the expansion of God’s Kingdom. It won’t always be an easy or smooth journey; difficulties and challenges will arise. Keep moving forward. Things will be hard; you will be misunderstood. Keep moving upward and onward. Sometimes you will stand alone, keep your gaze, your faith, firmly fixed on Jesus.

Are you pursuing God’s Mission? May God bless us all as we pursue our Mission.

Blessed Palm Sunday to you all!

**THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO THANK
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**TRINITY CONGREGATION - KAWIMBE CONSISTORY MBALA-**

**NORTHERN PRESBYTERY FOR PREPARING THE**

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