**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA**

**SYNOD MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT
EASTER SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE
UCZ THEME: ALL ONE IN CHRIST – JOHN 17:21**

 **SUB – THEME: THE HOPE OF EASTER**

**READINGS: JOHN 20:19, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-20**

**INTRODUCTION**

Easter is an event in which Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead. As we know from the gospels, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. This is an event that proves to believers that trusting in God and accepting Christ Jesus as Lord and savior gives hope that we too will be raised from the dead and that God is our hope in times of adversity. If there was ever a day, that gives us hope, it is the resurrection day on Sunday.

This Year’s Easter Sunday theme is **“The Hope of Easter”.**

**BIBLE EXPALANTION**

The passage in John 20:19 gives us an account of Jesus appearing to the disciples after His resurrection. John narrates that, they fled and hid. “When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met, were locked for fear of the Jews …” One would expect that, the disciples would be celebrating by then, instead, we find them gathered behind locked doors. John says that, the doors were locked for fear of the Jews.

Since the disciples themselves were Jews, of course, the statement could not mean that they were afraid of Jews in general. Certainly not! they were afraid of the Jewish leaders who were behind the plot that killed Jesus. They were likely afraid for their own lives and afraid of their uncertain future.

Who can stay after witnessing a gruesome death of the leader? Remember that He had been buried. So, for them, Christ their redeemer was no more. They thought the grave had held Him. So, they were hiding because their hope was gone.

Jesus appeared to the disciples and said “**peace be with you**”, this shows His power and probable miraculous opening of the locked door in the place the disciples had gathered. The Words of Jesus come as words of Hope to people who are afraid and in despair. His resurrection brought hope to their lives.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 gives us the message of Paul to the Church in Corinth. The Apostle Paul explains the significance of Jesus’ resurrection to our faith and the hope it gives to those who believe in God. It is obvious that the people of Corinth doubted the message of resurrection and its relevance to their faith and their lives. Thus, in the text Paul tells the Church that, if Christ never rose from the dead, then there would be no hope to eternal life and forgiveness of sins, equally the preaching of the gospel would be rendered futile.

**APPLICATION**

As we reflect and celebrate this important event in our Christian faith under the theme: **The Hope of Easter,** Let us reflect on the following points:

1. **Hope In times of uncertainty**

Life has many ups and downs. Today we may be smiling, the next day it may be something else. There are many challenges that we face daily that often quench our hope. Even on this day, I am sure that there is somebody that has lost hope, others are probably about to lose hope.

Some people in business have lost hope maybe due to heavy losses, some single people could have lost hope over getting married, people who have been sick for a long time could have lost hope for healing.

Just as the disciples felt hopeless after the death of their leader Jesus, we too can lose hope when things are not going our way. This life we live has many shocks that can cause us to despair, but let us be encouraged that our redeemer lives. Jesus’ pronouncement of the words of peace to His disciples, is hope in moments of uncertainty. In case we have lost hope, in case we are about to lose hope, let us listen to the words of hope, in case we meet a hopeless threatening matter ahead, let us be encouraged in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He declared, “Peace be with you”, what an assurance that all is well, because Christ conquered death. There is nothing He cannot conquer in our lives, He lives triumphantly and, in His resurrection, we are made more than conquerors in these troubles of life.

1. **Hope Of Forgiveness And Eternal Life**

The resurrection of Jesus our Lord is not just some fairy tale, but it is the evidence of what God has done so that our lives might be delivered from death to life, from despair to hope, from guilt that destroys us to forgiveness that sets us free.

Sometimes we can lose sight of the truth of Christ’s resurrection in our lives and live feeling defeated by the evil and sorrow all around us. Christ never meant for the hope of His resurrection to be something that we only think about once a year, or appreciate only when we become baptized and received into communicant membership of the body of Christ. Rather, it is to be central to our faith, making us the light amidst darkness. The resurrection thus, gives us hope that when we give our lives to God, the promise of forgiveness is granted to us, setting us free from eternal condemnation.

Jesus’ resurrection in victory, makes our future resurrection possible. Our hope as believers does not just start and end here on earth, it will soon become a reality in eternity. If Christ never rose again, then we would live miserable lives with no hope at all, we would be greatly pitied. But thank God for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have hope to eternal life and forgiveness of our sins. Thus, Christ’s rising from the dead, is very crucial to our faith and our lives.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Let us all be encouraged that, our redeemer lives and is alive. Don’t give up, trust in the Lord, this day is meant for us to hope in the Lord that even though it seems tough, and there is no one to look up to, Jesus offers us hope. He offers us the peace that surpasses human comprehension, because those who hope in the Lord are like mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but abides forever.

There is hope for forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters in the Lord, we should not perish in our sins when in His resurrection we can find salvation when we run to Him through repentance.

**HAPPY EASTER!**

**AMEN.**

**THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO THANK
REV TIMOTHY MUKE - CONSISTORY CHAIRPERSON- UCZ KASEMPA CONSISTORY OF NORTH WESTERN PRESBYTERY FOR PREPARING THE**

**2022 EASTER SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE**

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