# THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA

# MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

#  2022 HOLY WEEK LESSONS

 **11TH TO 13TH APRIL**

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

# SUB-THEME: JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

**MONDAY: 11TH APRIL**

**READING: MARK 11:15-19,**

**INTRODUCTION**

Holy week is a time for us to remember God’s sacrifice of His son and God’s love for His people. This is a period we focus on the various aspects of Jesus’ life, Ministry and work on the cross. It calls us to reflect and ponder on the implications for us today. For our reflection this year, we will focus on Jesus’ commitment to His mission and what that teaches us. Let us open our hearts and minds, and let God speak to, in and through us.

**TEXT EXPLANATION**

On the previous day, Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly during the Palm Sunday. Apparently he noticed some activities within the temple that needed to be addressed.

***The actions of the Jewish hierarchy were infuriating to Jesus because, the stewards of the temple had become more concerned with how much profits*** could be made by exchanging money and selling expensive items which the priestly hierarchy deemed as necessary for pilgrims.

The High Priests had developed a convenient way for people to acquire sacrifices. The sacrifices had to meet specific standards in order to be accepted. Those who travelled great distances had a risk of their sacrifice being injured on the way and were declared unacceptable by the High Priests who set up the merchants selling “acceptable” sacrifices in the temple area.

Jesus also confronted the money chargers, the Jewish males were required to pay temple tax in Jewish currency, the money changers were there to exchange whatever currency the travelers had into Jewish shekels at a profit.

Jesus was angered by that, He came in to set His Father’s house in order and to set as a standard and lesson to every believer and local Congregation. When we come to worship Him, we must ensure that everything is done in accordance with His word to please Him.

**APPLICATION**

1. **Jesus Denounces The Temple Corruption Of The Priestly Hierarchy.**

We should not reduce the house of the Lord to a house of commerce- by encouraging self- promotion and greed as could be seen in our Churches today.

Today some servants of God are concerned about material gains rather than leading people to God. Jesus is speaking to the Priests (hierarchy) to make his house, a house of prayer for all people - to have a concern for people and not what they can gain by taking advantage of their vulnerabilities.

The temple represents the minds of Christians who contradict the word of God. Jesus refused to allow corruption within the temple and stood boldly against it.

1. **Jesus Demanded That His House Was A House Of Prayer And Not Commerce.**

When the Lord surveys the temple- your mind and your heart, would He be pleased with what he would see in you? Would He be pleased with your local Congregation? Are we here to promote the Gospel or defend our personal agendas?

When Jesus was driving out these heretics (false teachers) out of the temple, it is important to note that, they had not set up the sacrificial area inside the temple, but were set up in the court of the Gentiles, which reflects the Jewish view of Gentiles. In the history of the Jews, the Gentiles were at par with animals, this revealed that they had no respect for gentiles and they truly believed God did not care about the Gentiles.

The reaction of Jesus teaches us to mind how we treat those we think are far from God, for the scripture says “the first shall be the last”.

1. **Accept Jesus Christ And Welcome Him Into Your Life**

When evening came, Jesus went out of the City, this is the Son of the living God who was standing within the temple before built to worship God. One would expect Jesus to feel at home within the temple, but the opposite was the case, He felt like He was not wanted, so He departed to Bethany where He felt accepted. The people at the temple should have taken this as a sign, but because they failed, they would later deny Jesus and consent to His death.

**CONLCUSION**

It is a serious matter to deny Jesus for there is no other way of forgiveness of sin and acceptance of God. As Christians, if we check our actions, are we constantly denying Him or welcoming the son of God? He is welcomed by our acceptance, our purity and concern for the people of God.

**TUESDAY 12TH APRIL**

**THEME: A PLOT TO ARREST JESUS**

**READING: MARK 14:1-2**

**INTRODUCTION**

In our second day of Passion Week, let us focus on the theme, “A plot to kill Jesus”. A plot suggests a lay out plan. In human life some plans leads to stealing, robbing, or to the extent of killing someone.

**TEXT EXPLANATION**

After Jesus had foretold His nature of death in the Gospel of Matthew 26:2, we see in Mark Jesus’ words are fulfilled. His death was to be a political sentence, but combined with the help of the leaders of the temple (Church today) who sat to plan the way Jesus was to be killed.

According to Mark 14:1-2, it is self-explanatory that, the Chief Priest and scribes were to find a way; a plan was to be found. This was so, because they respected the important festival that was taking place at the time, the Passover festival or the Festival of Unleavened Bread and feared the people that they might resort to rioting. This was amazing, Jesus being the owner and the true fulfillment of the meaning of the festival, He was subjected to death.

**APPLICATION**

In today’s world and in our Christianity, we still have some members of the Church who plot the down fall of others, just like it was at a time of Jesus. The People who plotted Jesus’ death were not far away but those from within. Our enemies are not far away, but they are from within and they feel good to see others suffer. Jesus said in the gospel according Mathew 10:36, “your best enemy of your life is your brother.” People we eat with, laugh with and joke with are the ones who plot our down fall.

**DISCUSSION**

1. Do you think plotting Jesus’ death by Chief Priest and scribes was wrong?
2. Who is our enemy?
3. How can we run away from such enemies?

**CONCLUSION**

Tarnishing other people’s names is now common. We are no longer practicing Jesus’ teaching on being a brother’s and sister’s keepers. A brother or sister has turned to be our enemy. Let us refrain from such evil ways and love one another.

**WENESDAY 13TH APRIL**

**THEME: JESUS PRAYS FOR STRENGTH**

**READING: MARK 14:32-42**

**INTRODUCTION**

In our third day of Christ passion, we focus on Jesus’ prayer. I have been thinking, why prayer became so significant in the life of Jesus. On the other hand, we should look at the group of people in the United Church of Zambia who do not adore and believe in prayer.

**TEXT EXPLANATION**

If Jesus lived by prayer, why then do we still have some members of the Church who are not prayerful? They always object to have prayers in the Church. Those who are either charismatic or conservatives are called names and have been side lined in the running of the Church affairs.

We want to make mention here that, Jesus lived a life of prayer even though He was the Son of God and we too must emulate Him. Prayer is a good way of communicating with God.

In the Gospel according to Mark 14:32-42, Jesus went with His disciples to a quiet place called Gethsemane. Gethsemane was a nearby Garden where people had planted olive trees and other plants. It was an olive place. It was from this place where Jesus had time to pray for His disciples and seeking God’s strength for what He was about to go through. We must mention here that, in the prayer of Jesus, He did not pray for protection, but prayed for strength and let God’s will come to pass. He went by a distance with His three close disciples Peter, James and John and was deeply troubled in His soul. He told them that, my soul is troubled with grief to the point of death, stay here and pray with me.

**APPLICATION**

In our Christian life today, prayer is important. Take time to kneel down and pray whenever you have problems and when you have no problems. Prayer will make you face difficult things with confidence in your life. The devil will only be defeated by prayer and that is one of the best weapons a Christian will use to chase the devil away. If Jesus’ life was all about prayer, then let us emulate our Lord Jesus Christ. From today begin to pray for your spiritual revival and every aspect of your life and others.

**DISCUSSION**

1. According to scriptures why is it that Jesus chose only three disciples and went with them to pray leaving the eight behind, Was He segregating?
2. In UCZ we have some Christians who are not prayerful, how can the Church help such members?
3. Does a prayer change the mind of God? If yes or no provide supporting scriptures

**CONCLUSION:**

Let us be prayerful for the sake of our Christian livelihood.

**THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO THANK
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**2022 HOLY WEEK SERMON OUTLINE**

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