**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA
THE UNIVERSITY SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE**

 **THEME: HERE I AM, LORD. SEND ME!**

**TEXT: ISAIAH 6:8**

**INTRODUCTION**

This year we have been given yet another opportunity to partner with the UCZ University on what is called a University Sunday. This Sunday has been set apart in order for the Church to appreciate the work of the Institution and to participate in its mission. The UCZ University plays a critical role in the life and work of the United Church of Zambia in that the institution is mandated to train leaders of different disciplines, including Church workers who are later sent across Zambia to impact society with their various ministries. It is prudent that all members of the Church participate in supporting the institution for the growth of its mission. As we observe this year’s University Sunday let us reflect on the theme **“here I am, Lord. Send me.”**

**BACKGROUND**

The statement ‘Here I am’ describes an answer or response that a person gives when they have been called. In some ways it is a response of identifying your location to someone willing to have your attention. ‘Here I am’ is used to aggressively declare your location to the person calling on you. It is an acknowledgment that someone has heard the call and that they are available. This statement describes a person who is willing to be sent or to participate in any assignment no matter its magnitude. On the other hand, “send me!” is a response to make oneself available for the intended task. Therefore, when one says ‘here I am Lord’, they are indicating their willingness to be used by God and to participate in God’s mission.

**BIBLE EXPLANATION**

The text we have read describes what can be regarded as Isaiah’s call to ministry. It is here that, he hears the voice of God for the first time. Our focus in this passage should be his spontaneity and self-abandonment characteristics of his response. Though he was ignorant of the nature of his mission, he trusted the one who called him and throughout his life he never felt his mission to be a grievous burden. In the text, two questions are asked by God and all of them have to do with being sent. “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? The question we may ask is; what assignment did God have that he required the involvement of a human person? God’s involvement of a human being is clear picture that he wants to work with them because he desires to create a strong relationship with us. Yes! God cannot call and later on send his people if he has no assignment for them. Whoever he calls, he equips. This is also obvious to us that God cannot bring us into the world without an assignment. In the same manner we cannot be members of the United Church of Zambia without a mission. Isaiah had a very difficult assignment, which was to tell the people to respond and be attentive to what God wanted them to be and do. And to be agents of change. When we look at that assignment we see that it was difficult and frustrating. Yet Isaiah accepted the call and was ready to go.

**APPLICATION**

Considering our theme, **‘here I am lord. Send me,’** it is imperative to acknowledge that, God has been calling many to serve, but only few responds to his call. What are we learning from Isaiah’s call? What are we doing about our calling?

1. **There is a Call.**

God has a calling on everyone regardless of who you are or where you come from. Thus, it is vital on how we respond to it. Dear brethren, there is a call. It does not matter how sinful you may think you are, God counts you as one of his people he wants to build his relationship with. Therefore, God is calling each one of us to one assignment today, just like he called Isaiah, to be partners in the mission of the Institution. Whom shall I send? These questions are fresh today. We must ponder upon them. This call is on every member of the Church. We must respond and act. The UCZ University needs our prayers, our moral and financial support to run efficiently, expand infrastructure and improve on library and computer facilities.

1. **We must respond in affirmative**

Let us learn from the response of Isaiah. Here I am. Send me. We too should respond in affirmative. The Church calls on us to support the University and to do so with all our hearts. We should use our resources and all that could be at our disposal to support the institution. We should show that we love our institution and that we are willing to be partners in its mission. No matter the assignment, we should be willing to travel all the way and be the friend that we can be. We should not only wait for University Sunday to support our institution, let us consider it as our baby and support it anytime and anywhere. The University needs friends who can be there to contribute their time, knowledge, skills and expertise to move the University to great heights.

1. **We are all blessed**

Dear brothers and sisters one thing we should learn from Isaiah is that, first it is important to believe in ourselves that we are capable to help in any way possible. Isaiah believed that he can do it though he was just a no body, in the same way we should all believe that we can do it. For God to ask that who shall I send? God knows that whoever is going to respond, he is going to bless him/her with available resources to support the calling. What God is expecting from us is to believe in ourselves and respond spontaneously to the call of supporting the University. He knows that we are all blessed materially, financially and spiritually. Let us rise and be part of the work of our University.

**CONCLUSION**

Today is the day dedicated to the UCZ University. The success of the University is our success, the failure of the University is our failure. There is a lot of support we can offer to our University, such as prayers, monetary support, material support and technical support. Further we should never cease to pray for it.

We must accept this call and positively offer ourselves by responding affirmatively. Our resources are part of the blessings God has offered to be instruments to this call. Our response should be ‘**Here I am’ send me Lord. Here I am equip me lord’** for this cause.

Therefore, let us dedicate ourselves to this noble cause so that our University continues to register sustained growth.

**AMEN!**