



"All One In Christ"

THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA

MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT
2023 ASH WEDNESDAY SERMON OUTLINE

22nd FEBRUARY, 2023

UCZ THEME: "UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES & WHAT TO DO"-

1CHRONICLES 12:32

SUB THEME: CREATE IN US

READINGS: PSALM 51: 10-12 & JAMES 1:15

INTRODUCTION

Ash Wednesday is a time of renewal and repentance. It is time that we seek God to create in us a new heart. It is a time of realizing that in the moment of our brokenness we can call on God's love and mercy. It is also a reminder of our mortality that we are prone to die and hence our dependence on God. It is a time to create anew and restore our lives. Today as we celebrate Ash Wednesday and continue reflecting on the theme "**Understanding the Times and What to do**", our subtheme on this Ash Wednesday is titled; "**CREATE IN US**"

BIBLE EXPLANATION

The scripture read is a discourse of the king David seeking mercy from God after being confronted by the prophet Nathan of his sin with Bathsheba. Psalms 51 is a confession of David after committing adultery with Bathsheba

THEME: "create in us" psalm 51: 10-12 (REV SAMUEL PHIRI)

and murder of an innocent man Uriah. In seeking for repentance David writes this psalm as a prayer to plead for mercy. He says in sin he was born. He knew God had power to blot out his sin as well as his iniquities. Not only is God able to forgive him but He can create in him a new spirit and a new heart. Lord create in me! David recognizes the unfailing love and creating power that is able to forgive him of his sin as a mortal being. Therefore the phrase used 'create in me a clean heart' was as a result of a sincere repentance and dependence on God's forgiveness through his mercy that would bring joy and peace of mind. As such Psalm 51 is David's prayer for renewed joy, creating a clean heart and a renewed spirit. Beloveds this Ash Wednesday as we seek for true repentance it is a reminder that;

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. SIN HAS POWER TO DESTROY US

Unconfessed sin has potential to destroy our soul and body. Beloved in Christ, sin does not only have spiritual consequences but has physical consequences on our lives, families, communities and businesses and ultimately our relationship with God. Like David's sin destroyed Uriah's marriage as well as the life of Uriah, a man who had pledged his life to help his community through his services in the army. Today it is sad that those that hate sin, they are hated for hating sin. It is more normal to uphold sin and wrong living than its normal to uphold right living. Modern society has made it easy that those that hate sin are perceived to be outdated and old fashion and are accused of being self-righteous. Sin is more celebrated than right living. But sin is a detestable to the Lord, God is not pleased with sin. Create in us is a theme that is reminding us that unconfessed sin has more consequences both on our physical and spiritual lives. David acknowledged that the problem was the nature of his heart.

2. OUR SIN CAN CAUSE DEATH OF MANY INNOCENT SOULS

Without the confession of sin and repenting from it, the impact of it is not only felt by the sinner but innocent souls connected to him or her are destroyed too. The sin of David and Bathsheba is sin that caused the death of two innocent souls Uriah the husband and the child that was bore by Bathsheba. Our unconfessed sin has deadly effects even on innocent lives. Many can suffer for the sin that one person has done. Today it's unfortunate that many have lost their lives because of the sin of few individuals. The corruption of one or few individuals can cause calamity and disaster to befall many innocent lives in our nation. Hence 'create in us' in understanding the times and what to do, is calling for us to understand that our actions have ripple effects on many other souls. Our sin can affect innocent lives and destroy them. But today as we come, that may God create in us a pure heart that will seek forgiveness for the trouble that we have put on others. We should further ask God to restore the innocent lives that have suffered for our sins.

3. NEVER CONCEAL OR HIDE SIN

Today we continue to conceal sin in our lives rather than confessing it before God and our fellow men. There are secret sins that we are struggling with day and night. In Church and society today, there is a tendency of hiding our sin. Beloved we can hide our sin from our fellow human beings but we cannot hide our sin from God. Just like David tried to conceal his sin before men but his sin was open before God. God can bring the things done in secret in broad day light. Beloved in trying to conceal our sin, we commit more sin. For one sin requires another sin to defend it or cover it. David in trying to conceal the sin of adultery, he ended up committing the sin of murder. We may travel to different place to hide and cover our sin but one day they will catch up with us. David understood that before God he would lay bare his sin and find renewal and pardon. God create in us hearts that refuse to conceal our misdeeds but seek for your forgiveness.

4. NEVER TO ALLOW SIN TO GROW

Beloved sin has power to grow if left unresolved. My brothers and sisters, today many people that we see as robbers never began as robbers. They began with stealing small things as little as a five kwacha or sweeties for example. But because they entertained sin, today they are armed and dangerous robbers. People that are witches and wizards today never began as witches and wizards they may have begun with hatred and jealous. Therefore there is no small sin, that thing we are saying is small sin, it has the potential to grow into something big and deadly. When sin has grown, it will give birth to death. Never entertain sin in your life. Let us not make friendship with sin. Lord create in us a heart that refuses to entertain sin and friendship with the world.

Sin has a tendency of growing into something that we cannot control. David is the perfect example of how sin can grow into something dangerous and uncontrollable from envy to stealing somebody's wife, to becoming a liar and finally to becoming a murderer. From a sin of desiring to get someone's wife to becoming an expert in planning and executing murder. ***Indeed when desire is fully grown it gives birth to sin and when sin is fully grown it gives birth to death.***

CONCLUSION.

Beloved we may have lived or are still living in sin. But today like David, may God create in us a new heart. This Ash Wednesday, God is creating in us hearts that are obedient to his ways and voice. This Ash Wednesday, God is creating in us hearts that are repentant. This Ash Wednesday may God create and restore our relationship with him. Create in us clean hearts that do not keep evil. May God restrain himself from casting us away from your presence but create in us pure hearts, right spirit and restore to us the joy of our salvation.

Amen !

**THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO THANK
REV. SAMUEL PHIRI, MINISTER IN CHARGE OF UCZ MUKOKO
CONGREGATION, MONGU-WESTERN PRESBYTERY FOR PREPARING THIS
YEAR'S (2023) ASH WEDNESDAY SERMON OUTLINE FOR THE MONTH OF
FEBRUARY, 2023.**

**FOR ANY FUTHER DETAILS GET IN TOUCH WITH THE MISSION &
EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT ON THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS-0977-753
999/0969 -838 693/0955-883 221**