

THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA



SYNOD MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

GREEN HARVEST CELEBRATION

**THEME: UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND WHAT TO DO – (1
CHRONICLES 12:32)**

SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE

SUB THEME: CELEBRATING GREEN HARVEST “TODAY”

BIBLE READING: DEUTRONOMY 26:1 – 4; PROVERBS 3: 9 – 10

INTRODUCTION

The United Church of Zambia is observing and celebrating green harvest today. Green harvest is a miraculous offering that sets apart the rest of the crop or investment that remains in the field. Green harvest is an anticipation of a great harvest that shall follow soon. On this day, we draw our thoughts to God and count every harvest that we have made in all fields of our lives.

“Today” in the theme for our reflection refers to the context that we are all living in. We can all agree that though our contexts vary, they are all marked by similar activities and tenets that have a toll on the existence of mankind. These are things that are affecting both those that believe in God and those that do not.

For instance, our lives are marked by hardships, economically, prices of commodities on the markets are ever rising up on a daily basis and generally people are living in uncertainty and fear of the unknown future. Such a situation does not favour the majority of people that live in a low- class bracket. In some cases today, our lives are marked by hatred and people in our communities are fighting one another making our society volatile and unstable for peaceful human interaction. Our today is marked by pain and sorrow, medically speaking, our health institutions remain challenged by the current pathological bodily processes – Sickness and disease appears to be unending. In this reflection we are answering the question, **“How do we celebrate green harvest today?”** surrounded by all these social, economic, political and religious misfortunes.

BIBLE EXPLANATION

The book of Deuteronomy is traditionally attributed to have been written by Moses. Moses was a great leader, prophet and the law giver of Israel. The passage we are reflecting upon is an excerpt from the larger sermon given by Moses to the children of Israel at Moab before the people crossed the Jordan River to take possession of the Promised Land.

Among others, the purpose of this sermon was to remind the people about God’s law, the deeds of God in their midst and the promises God made to them. Thus, in the law Moses instructs Israel to perform the act of first fruits harvest and commands them to do it exactly according to the instructions. The instructions states that this **offering shall be put in a basket. In this sense, it could mean, that an offering must be well packaged and secured taken to the priest, who places the offering on the Altar.** An Altar had great significance to Hebrew worship and theophany. An Altar, was a place where divinity met the spirit of humanity. Today, an Altar is a where the Church or individuals meet with their God, the Church cries to God and God hears them. This is a place where God’s children find solace in God.

At the Altar, God manifests, encounters His people and changes the lives and attitudes of the people.

Therefore, in this text, Moses reminds the people that when they have come into the land that their God was giving them as an inheritance to possess, they were to take some of the first of all the fruit of their labour and present it to God to thank him and worship for His provision because throughout the exodus they had been in transit as pastoral farmers.. It is also important to note that, this instruction must be performed irrespective of the time and season one is in, because the land is spacious, fertile and has a lot of minerals. According to Moses, the children of Israel would be able to fulfil this command if they remember where they had come from, see where they were and when they looked at the promises of God and His faithfulness, they had a reason to worship God with their first harvest. This way, they would joyfully give to their God and have perpetual fellowship with Yaweh.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

How do we celebrate green harvest “today”?

1. Remember Where You Have Come From

To remember is to bring to mind a past event. When the Lord uses this word in this context, it means to relive an experience that has eluded our mind. In this sense, the Lord is the centre and the object of this experience.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, it is true our “today” remains a challenge to fulfil the command of giving our green harvest. The text is calling us to remember where we have come from. Who were you before the lord came to deliver you out of that Egypt? Remember, that you were nothing before, you had no name before, you had no status but when God step in your space everything changed.

Come and honour the Lord with your wealth and substance.

2. See Where You Are Now

To see is to use your sensory organs called eyes and observe roundabout. In this context the word refers to possessing the power to perceive by sight what we have.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, you will agree that the Lord has been gracious to us this year. Some of us started this year jobless, sick, disappointed, but see where you are now. It's true you may not have everything you want, but you are not lacking everything you used to lack. Today, you may not be where you want to be but you are not where you used to be.

Come and honour the Lord with the first fruits of your land, in the field, work place, your garden, from investments and all that God has blessed you with.

3. Do Not Forget The Promises Of God

Today, it is impossible to live by our own means, regardless of how hardworking one maybe. The current times demand that one leans on sure promises that cannot fail.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, the current challenges we are facing as individuals, families and nation has capacity to blind us. This would eventually instill fear in us and cause us to fail to keep the command of giving back to God the produce of our hands. The scripture says of the Lord, "He is not man" that He should lie. As you give your green harvest come fully resolved in your heart that God will fulfil all His promises to you, your family, your marriage, businesses and all that concerns you.

Come and honour the Lord with the produce of your hands

CONCLUSION

Green harvest is an opportunity that God has given us to reflect and count on the blessings of the Lord lavished upon our lives, families, and as a congregation.

When we behold the benevolence and the mercy of God, let us remember where we have come from, see where we are now and do not forget the promises of God. Come and honour the Lord with your wealth and all the produce of your hands.

AMEN!

THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

WOULD LIKE TO THANK

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