



“All one In Christ”

THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA

SYNOD MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

SCHOOL RETREAT LESSONS TO BE HELD ON

3TH & 4TH JULY 2023.

THEME: UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND WHAT TO DO,

1 CHRONICLES 12:32

SUB THEME: THE MATTER IS IN YOUR HANDS: (EZRA 10:4)

INTRODUCTION:

It is yet another year we count it a blessing to be alive and being part of this year's school retreat. When something is in your hands its incumbent upon oneself on how or what you do with it, you can develop it or destroy it or still just leave it and watch it. Thus as we journey on the theme “understanding the times and what to do” it is just important to realize that the “matter is in your hands” hence our theme for this year's retreat.

So many times people have remained silent on matters waiting for others to do it for them, waiting for assistance from government but not in this err because we have realize that it is incumbent upon ourselves to take action, hope you be blessed by these lessons.

TOPIC ONE: THE MATTER IS IN YOUR HANDS:

BIBLE READING: EZRA 10:4, 2 KINGS 7:3-6

INTRODUCTION

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BIBLE EXPLANATION

The text read gives an account of 4 lepers who were placed outside the city gate, because leprosy was a socially devalued condition with serious consequences. So people diagnosed with leprosy were excluded from the community. Now as they sat there outside the city gate they began to ask each other, why should we continue to sit here and die of hunger? Because there was no one to bring food for them outside the city. Because their city was also struck with hunger.

They said to each other we cannot continue here we will die of hunger, let us go into the camp of Arameans if they spare us better but if they kill us we shall die,

they decide to take that risk because staying outside the city gate was not changing their situation so they decided to take to take action and the risk of going in the camp of their enemy. So when they began to advance towards the city of Arameans the Lord was with the four men and caused the Arameans to hear huge sounds of chariots and thought Israel had hired armies so they fled for their lives. When they reached the city they found the place deserted no one around and they found food and they eat and eat then they remembered the people in their own city and so they invited their own people to come and take and eat too.

From Ezra we see Ezra praying, confessing, weeping and throwing himself up and down before the house of God and a lot of people men and women doing the same. But EZRA was told to by God “rise up and take action for the matter is in your hands”. There are times when we need to take action but we find ourselves praying for failing to understand the situation, Ezra was told “rise up take action it is in your hands”, it is in your powers.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. Rise Up And Take Action:

So many times we have dwelt in the same situation complaining yet no action to improve it but I want to challenge you that complaining or mere talk will not change the situation in our lives, in our institutions, in our families or the nation as a whole.

The four lepers realized that sitting outside the city gate will not help but will just bring disaster and death so they had to take action which yielded and benefited others, also Ezra as he was praying, weeping he was told to rise up

and take action. Nothing will change unless we rise up and take action, the situations we see not to be okay are waiting for my action, for your action, and for our action, it is time to rise up for the matter is in our hands, your academics, the situation in your family, in our institution, the matter is in your hands.

2. Take Courage; You Can Do It:

The four lepers despite their condition they had to take the risk of entering the camp of their enemies even though they were impaired. Mostly we are afraid of taking courage to confront our challenges, for fear of failure, fear to be a laughing stock, or just fear of unknown. But from the passages read I want to urge each one of us to take courage and work had to turn around our situations. We are the people to bring about the much needed change; we are the people to bring about the much needed difference, child of God take courage the matter is in your hands. Courage is the beginning of change, courage is the beginning of the things we want to see and without it you be just looking at things falling apart. But we want people who when they see things are not okay they will take courage to correct the situation. You can do it, be brave enough and tell yourself I can do it, take courage child of God for the matter is in your hands.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion I want to say the matter is in your hands, God has given us the capacity, the wisdom and the energy, all we need is to develop the will that we can to do it, understand the times we are in, it is not time to just sit and wait for others to do it for you, to do it for me, to do it for us, this time it is about me, it's about you doing it, it is about you making it better,

it is about “us” making things better. It is only when you take courage to do it that you will have a breakthrough; continuous complaining will not change the situation, weeping will not change the situation, child of God it is time to rise up and take action,; it is time to take courage; you can do it, the matter is in your hands. **AMEN**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What situations can we cite where people will instead of taking action resort to prayer?
2. What do you think makes many people static in life and how can we deal with that?
3. Why are people afraid to take up risks in life?
4. What can we do to make our institution better?

TOPIC 2: BE OF VALUE:

BIBLE READING: MARK 11:12-14

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about value, we are looking at the importance of something, the usefulness, or rather the worth of something. it is pertinent that as we journey on the theme understanding the times and what to do, we must understand our value, when we look at things let's say a bottle of water, or cooking oil it has a certain value that's why it is sold at a certain price on the market because it has a certain value. We too as human beings must understand our value because when God created each one of us he bestowed a certain value upon each one of us which makes us relevant, useful and worth in society.

BIBLE EXPLANATION

The passage read gives a narrative about Jesus coming from Jerusalem from a place called Beth'a-ny (translated by some as the house of figs).

Jesus seeing the fig tree from a distance in leaf, the tree was looking good and had hope to find some fruits. However, when he came to the tree he found no fruits but only leaves.

Jesus just saw how beautiful the fig tree was looking and anticipated to find some fruits because from a distance it was beautiful and appealing. So he expected the fig tree to have a certain value which he did not find and was disappointed to the extent of cursing the tree. The value for the fig tree was to bear the figs now Jesus did not find that value which was anticipated from the fig tree, thus, ended up cursing the tree.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. Our Value Must Be Seen:

When God looks at you and me there are certain values that he anticipates from us being his children, just like Jesus was expecting fruits from the fig tree we must realize that God expects a certain value from each one of us, not only that; Society also expects certain values from us, our institutions are expecting a certain value from us, and our families are expecting a certain value from us. What value is in you? The value seen in us will show our worthiness, our relevance in society is dependent on our value. We must endeavor to be a people of value, not only that but a value relevant in a time such as this were we have a high technological world, and so many challenges around the globe. We must be able to be seen as valuable people that will contribute to the well-being of our society.

2. Our Value Is Seen In The Things We Stand For:

The things we stand for in life shows our value or rather our worthiness, if you stand for useless things, petty things it shows your value. What things do we spend our time on, when you know you are supposed to be studying but decide to do otherwise, when you are supposed to work but you decide to do otherwise;

Let us stand for things that are worth and will add value to us and in turn make us valuable; Stand for important things, stand for lucrative things, stand for things that will take us to higher dimensions, stand things that will add value to your life, things that will add value to the institution, things that will add value to the family, things that will add value to society and things that will add value to the nation as a whole.

CONCLUSION:

It is time you realize your value and when you live by it, will exalt you because society want people who are useful and not useless, worthy people, even God is looking for people that are relevant to bring salvation to the world. Thus, from this retreat begin to reposition yourself because you were created with an expensive value so do not undervalue yourself by going for things that add no value to you and society. Society needs you to add value to it, your family needs you to add value to it, the institutions needs your value addition too; the nation needs your value addition. We cannot afford to be of no value, make sure you acquire your God given value and you shall be prosperous.
AMEN

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Mention some values that we can say God put in us as human beings?
2. How can we make ourselves to be of value and relevant?
3. What are some benefits of being of value?
4. How can we make our institution to be of value?

TOPIC 3: THEME: COME BACK:

BIBLE READING: LUKE 15:11-32

INTRODUCTION

When someone goes into a wrong direction or engages into doing wrong things those who know the right way should call back that person or himself/herself after realizing that it is a wrong way one must come back. However, some people never realize they are in a wrong way and have continued on that trajectory that is not even lucrative. Thus, in this topic we must realize that there is a way in which we are supposed go, to live, to do things as children of God and if we are not doing what God purported for us we are saying “come back”

BIBLE EXPLANATION

The parable under consideration gives us a scenario of a son who got a share of his estate from his father.

After that this son travelled to a far country to live by himself and squandered his wealth in wild living and now after spending everything he became in need. And famine rocked the city.

He got a piece of work of feeding the pigs and started admiring the pods for the pigs but no one gave him anything.

When he came to his senses, he said how many of my fathers hired servants have food to spare and here am starving to death. I will go back to my father.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. Come Back To Your Original Senses:

Most people are lost and not different from the prodigal son, who started doing crazy things that could not sustain him. Today we are living in a world that is a global village with high technology and moral decay has become the order of the day, most people today are lost in senses and have been found doing things that are not right. The high levels of corruption, political violence, blood shed, thuggery, tribalism, nepotism, just to mention but a few; all these are a sign that we people are lost in senses hence this call that we need to come back to our God given senses. As students we must endeavor to operate in God given senses and uphold high levels of morality. Do not digress from God given senses and indulge in illicit doings, instead of concentrating on studies. If you are already lost we are saying come back to your senses. Understand your time and what you ought to do, come back to your senses child of God. Our society will only be better if we have people whose senses are in a right mode, not selfish, not greedy, not self-centered, but our minds must be in the original functionality in which God designed it to be.

2. Come Back To Your Original Purpose:

The prodigal sons desire to return to his father entails that he felt he had lost his purpose and started doing the work of feeding pigs. Even in our society we have such kind of people who are lost in senses and in purpose and thus find themselves doing things not meant for their status. The sooner we realize our God given purpose the better because will be executing the right purpose for our life.

So many things have caused people in life lose purpose and direction; some because of losing their loved ones, some because of being disappointed, losing

employment, business, circumstances in families or life and many other things. But I want to urge each of us that despite the challenges of life we go through we should not lose our purpose. If you have lost your purpose and doing other things we are being called to come back to our purpose in the name of Jesus the Christ.

CONCLUSION:

It's time to introspect, are we on the right trajectory, are we operating in the original senses of God our creator, are we moving in the right purpose. If we are, Gods blessings will follow us and we shall be prosperous but if not we are called to come back and begin on a good note with our God it is not too late we can do it.

Amen

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What ways can we cite in which we act like the prodigal son?
2. Why is it important to realize our wrong ways in good time and correct them?
3. How can we help our friends who are lost from their purpose and right senses?
4. What are the benefits of operating in right senses and the purpose of God?

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MONTH OF JULY.**

**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