



Theological Education by Extension in Zambia

An Ecumenical Program of Several Churches

TEEZ SUNDAY 25TH JUNE, 2023.

TEEZ SUNDAY LITURGY AND SERMON

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 11:17 – 44 AND EXODUS 3:7 – 10

THEME: GOD'S INTERVENTION IN OUR LIFE SITUATIONS.

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR TEEZ SUNDAY

This is the proposed liturgy on TEEZ Sunday. *You are free to use the liturgy that suits your denomination Order of Service.*

- Call to Worship: **Psalm 150:1 – 6**
- Prayer of Adoration
- Hymn of Praise
- Prayer of Confession and Lord's Prayer
- Choir(s)
- Welcome and Announcements
- TEEZ Sunday Institutional Update and Appeal
 - The minister or any TEEZ tutor chosen by the congregation can explain the purpose of TEEZ Sunday. He/she could say something about the on-going work and needs of TEEZ and encourage the Congregation to be involved in the work of TEEZ and give generously to the work of TEEZ (**100% TEEZ Sunday Offering Remittance according to Bi Annual General Meeting of 2019**).
 - ***The 2023 TEEZ Sunday Institution Update and Appeal has been given separately.***
- Prayer of Illumination
- Scripture reading
 - **John 11:17 – 44 and Exodus 3:7 – 10.**
- Hymn of Preparation
- Sermon
- Prayer thanking God for His Word

- Offerings (As a Choir Sings)
- Offertory Prayer

- Closing Hymn
- Benediction (Minister In-charge)

THE TEEZ SUNDAY SERMON.

1. Introduction.

Christian life does not promise good things all the time, all year round. There are moments when we pass through really challenging times; times when we feel discouraged, times when we feel abandoned, times when we feel ignored, times when we literally see that some things are not happening according to our expectations.

It is in these stressful, painful and depressing moments that we yearn to see a God who can intervene and come to our rescue and help.

As we celebrate and this year's TEEZ Sunday I would love the Lord our God to speak to us on a message titled: **“GOD’S INTERVENTION IN OUR LIFE SITUATIONS”**

2. Scripture Explanation (Exegesis).

- Mary and Martha are first mentioned in the Gospel of Luke 10:38 – 42 when they both welcomed Jesus in their home. It seems evident that probably from this connection, their brother Lazarus became a good friend of Jesus. ***John 11:5 “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*** Jesus had a special connection and relationship with this family. In John 11:11 Jesus actually calls Lazarus “Our Friend”, this clearly shows us further the depth of the relationship he had with this family.
- In the preceding verses, which we did not read (V1-16), Martha, Mary and Lazarus are in a town called Bethany while Jesus is across the Jordan about only eighteen miles (30 kilometers) away. The Bible records that Lazarus fell sick and having assessed his sickness, her sisters Martha and Mary sent a word to Jesus who was not too far away. They had heard that not too long ago, Jesus had performed miracles in Jerusalem and they too believed he would come and intervene in the sickness of their brother.
- However, despite hearing the message of Lazarus’s sickness, it is surprising that Jesus did not come but chose to stay where he was for two more days. It

was for the purpose that glory must go to God when he does intervene in ***dead person situation***.

- When the sickness progressed Lazarus died and was eventually buried. Jesus confirmed the death of Lazarus to his disciples in ***John 11:14... "Lazarus is dead"***
- Verse 17 shows us that by the time Jesus arrived at the House of Mary and Martha, Lazarus had been buried for Four days. There was a common belief in those days that when a person dies, the soul would stay near the body for only three days after death, hoping for an opportunity to return. Thus Four days meant Lazarus was irrevocably dead with no chance of anybody's intervention.
- Verse 20 – 21 shows how Martha was disappointed and seems to tell Jesus, "***Sir you are late***", more like saying "***your intervention at this stage is not needed, neither is it necessary***". You had an opportunity to come earlier but you decided to delay. "***Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died***"
- Martha further mentioned that God is able to give whatever he wants but it seems to exclude the resurrection. She was thinking of God's ability to provide everyday life needs and not a movement from death to life.
- Thus when Jesus assured her of his intervention and that his brother would rise again (V 23), she replied "***I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day***" This was an extreme statement of hopelessness in the face of a tragedy that had fallen Martha and she simply never saw any way out of it. The loss of his brother had happened, so be it!
- Verse 25 – 27 gives us a picture of Jesus striving to explain that he can still intervene in the situation by using his Fourth ***I am saying*** in the book of John, ***I am the Resurrection and life***. This explanation did not still make sense such that Martha invited the sister Mary, ***The teacher is here and is asking for you (11:28)***. Mary's interaction with Jesus was similar to that of Martha. She too was hopeless and started weeping and so did the Jews who were there. The Jews who were around her started to follow her thinking she was heading to the tomb to weep even more.
- Upon seeing her grief, ***Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled (11:33) such that he too wept (11:35)***. The famous shortest verse in the bible comes from a concern and pain Jesus had for Martha and Mary.
- In the same way that Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled, is the way God was troubled upon seeing and slavery that the Israelites went through for over 400 years under Pharaoh that he confirmed in the words of ***Exodus 3:7-10, God knew the pains of his people Israel and had a deep concern for them that he was ready to Intervene.***

- **Verse 36 – 44** provides a whole procession that led to the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus demanded to know where they had buried Lazarus and told them to roll the stone away as he had been buried in cave. Martha protested that its four days since his death and Lazarus had started to rot and that there will be a bad odour. How does one attempt to intervene in resurrecting a rotten person? It did not make sense to Martha.
- Jesus then started to pray thanking His Father in heaven who has always heard his prayers. After this prayer, Jesus shouted; “Lazarus, come out”
- Verse 44 says “*that the dead man came out*”...and further demanded that they “*take off the grave clothes and let him go*”. At this stage we can conclude that the anguish, pain, distress from Martha and Mary came to an end because of the intervention and it translated into their untold joy.
- The Israelites were too overjoyed when God intervened in their slavery situation at the hands of Pharaoh.

3. Scripture Application.

What is it that we can learn from the scripture we have explored today in relation to God’ intervention in our life situations as believers”?

i. GOD’S INTERVENTION IN OUR LIFE SITUATIONS DEMANDS THAT WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

It is important to note that Martha and Mary did not have the audacity to send a message to Jesus to come and heal Lazarus from without... They had over a period of time built a relationship with Jesus and when trouble struck, they were very comfortable in seeking his intervention because they had related with him.

You might be here and seeking God’s intervention in your life situation. The question is do you have a relationship with God?

- Psalm 34:15 “*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry*”
- James 4:8 “... *Come near to God and he will come near to you*”.
- Isaiah 59:1 – 2 *Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear.*

The above three scriptural references show clearly to us that God values our **relationship** with him. Whilst having a relationship with God, we can boldly approach his throne of grace and desire to receive an intervention when we desperately need it. Without a sound relationship with God, His intervention becomes compromised.

One person jokingly said God is not like the Fire Brigade whom you can call for an intervention even when you have no any sort of relationship with them. From time immemorial God demands and desires a relationship with us. ***He will be our God, when we are His people. He is a relational God and is ready to intervene in our life situations.*** A well establish relationship with God through a well-established prayer life, dedicated reading of His word.

ii. GOD WILL INTERVENE IN OUR LIFE SITUATIONS AT A TIME HE DEEMS BEST.

There is always a temptation from us as believers to push God to intervene in our situations at a time, day, month, year or season we think and are convinced is the best. For Martha and Mary, Jesus was so close to them that if he was to come and intervene, it did not have to take four days. He was supposed to come and pray for Lazarus immediately. Did he come immediately? No he did not. He only came after four days and by then, Lazarus was already dead and probably rotting in the grave. We must understand that **delay may not necessarily mean denial**. There are instances that God manifested his intervention after an evident prolonged delay, but he finally intervened and His glory manifested for all to see.

- God intervened after the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt for Four Hundred years (Genesis 15:13-14).
- Sarai was childless until she was 90 years old when God intervened (Genesis 21:2).
- The paralytic at the pool of Bethesda was there for 38 years until Jesus intervened (John 5)

The intervention of our God may not come at a time we desperately need it. We must understand that God will always work out an intervention at His own terms and not our terms.

When this delay is experienced in our lives, it is not a time to complain and begin to brand God as “an absentee landlord” (A landlord who doesn’t care about the welfare of his tenants renting his property)

iii. GOD WILL INTERVENE REGARDLESS OF THE GRAVITY OF YOUR SITUATION AND RESTORE OUR JOY.

On several occasions we have heard situations in the health sector where doctors will inform relatives of a patient whose condition they cannot do anything to provide palliative care. In these instances, it simply shows that the doctors have come to realise the gravity (extreme or serious) condition of the patient and because of their limitations cannot do anything that will change the patient’s condition, thus no further serious medical interventions are sought at this stage.

The gravity of Martha and Mary's situation was that Lazarus had been dead for Four days, the soul could no longer return to the body according to the belief of that time. A normal thinking person would not at all seek to intervene to bring back to life a person who has been dead for four days. It simply doesn't make sense.

- It's possible your life situation is so grave according to you and those who surround you. People may have no solution for your situation and all they can do is to cry with you. This was similar to what Martha and Mary went through, all the Jews could do was to offer the ***"crying support"***.
- Despite what your condition might be, in the same way Jesus intervened in the situation of Martha and Mary, he is more than able to intervene in your situation.
- God does not look at how long you have suffered, how long have been unemployed, how long you have persevered in your marriage, how long your business has not performed according to your expectation or how many times you have failed examinations. Despite the gravity of our life situations, even when our hope is completely lost, God is more than able to intervene. And He does so to restore our joy.
- Isaiah 61:7 ***"Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours."***

The ultimate desire for God as he intervenes in our life situations is that we experience everlasting joy.

4. Conclusion (The Touch)

Much as our lives might experience moments of sadness, anguish and desperation, we can be assured that our God will never leave or forsake us. He remains to be a wonder working God who remains concerned about his creation. We need to have a **relationship with him**, we need to **understand that he intervenes at his own time** and we need to **know that no matter the gravity of our life situations he will intervene** in order to restore our joy.

**All this has been spoken in the Name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
One God blessed forever.**

AMEN!!!!