

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL KAMPALA

EASTER EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

March 31st 2018

THEME: ROLL AWAY THE STONE AND MEET THE RISEN LORD

Prayer: May the words and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight .O lord my rock and redeemer.(Psalm 19:14)

Welcome and Appreciation

This is the most blessed and the most joyful night as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are so used to hearing of Jesus risen from the dead and inside us we keep saying “oh yea We know all about it.”

And because of that, we end up missing the grace of entering fully into this celebration “ we these things .“

We come with “we know all about it mentality.”

How I pray that tonight each one of us will have that grace of entering fully into the celebration.

We should not be like the Hebrew people who shouted hosanna and yet their hearts were far from the truth 2 Timothy 3: 5 “having a form of godliness but denying its power.”(NIV)

I want us to think about it that Jesus rose from the dead! Death is not the end.

It is only the door to beyond.

We should not allow the resurrection of Jesus to fight for room in our lives.

Instead let death and resurrection of Jesus be the centre of our lives.

We always celebrate Easter eve with a candle light service –which symbolizes Jesus rising from the dead and bring light to all of us.

The light of Christ has shone in the world scattering darkness forever.

This is a moment the people of waited for ,for thousands of years.

We read about the creation of man and woman and the fall because of disobedience.

We also read about from the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egypt.

All these were God's plan for mankind but the highest point in God's plan for us was and still is; the resurrection.

This is the greatest celebration of the church.

This night is the most blessed of all the Easter proclamation.

The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that there is life beyond the grave,

The resurrection of Jesus reminds that there is more to each of us than what our eyes can see that we live as immortal souls.

Although our bodies will return to dust (which is very scary), our souls will live forever with God.

Mark 8:36 "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? "

We gain the whole world to make our bodies feel good . No satisfaction.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL IN LIFE?

WHERE IS YOUR HEART IN LIFE?

Life has one ultimate goal and that goal, is to prepare for the next life.

The things that take most our time in this life to the extent of causing us to sin against our God and fellow men.

Are the things we shall not go with to heaven?

Can you take your house to heaven with you? Then why make such a fuss about your house?

Can you take your car to heaven with you? Why then become so engrossed with the car? In West Africa, they make coffins in shapes of things that people liked most in their life.

Recently, a man in Nairobi was buried in his car seated in the driving seat.

Can you take your money to heaven with you? Use your money to bless the poor. Use your money for the spread of the gospel.

Why are we so busy that we have no time for God; people come to church only on Easter and Christmas?

It is God we are to meet in the next life and yet while in this life we tell him "Dear God I am too busy, I have no time for you. "

It is a big contradiction to say that you believe in God and you do not pray and involve in our life's business.

THE GLORIOUS FUTURE Romans 6:5

Think of the glorious future that awaits each of us.

In his letter to the romans 6:5 "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his."(NIV)

Paul was saying that if Christ died ,we shall die with him ,if Christ rose from the dead we too shall rise.

We will imitate Christ in his resurrection.

Paul wrote to the Philippians in Phil 3:20-21" But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

Just think of it, you will be transformed to become glorious like Jesus.

Do you live like someone who believes in such a glorious future?

If you do then every thing in this world takes on a new perspective so that as I said earlier ,we do not become possessed by our possessions.

1 timothy 6:8 "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."

And since we are promised to be transformed to be glorious like the risen Jesus .why do we not find substantial amount of time to serve him where he has placed us.

Why do we not pray for a substantial amount of time every day?

"Those who glow in this life are men and women who have groaned before the lord."

It is a contradiction to say that you believe in God but you don't pray.

Paul tells us in Phil 3:20-21 ;"But our citizenship is in heaven.And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. "(NIV)

In 1 john 3:2 "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."(NIV)

We can only expect such a glorious future only if we have come to know and accept him as Lord and savior of our lives through confession and baptism.

John 1:12-13 "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."(NIV)

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children.

1 John 3:1 "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"

It is madness for us to get caught up in the things of this world and not engage in kingdom business.

Romans 6:3-5" Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his."(NIV)

What he means is that when we receive , believe him and be baptized ,we take on a new lifestyle ,leaving sin behind to live a new life with Christ because we become sons and daughters of God.

Mark 16:1-4" When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away."(NIV)

Some people (christians) have allowed stones to prevent them from meeting Jesus.

Have u allowed the stone of being engrossed in what you have and own and what others have and own to be a stone to block your way to jesus?

Ask your neighbor-What is that stone you have allowed to block you from meeting the risen lord?

If you are not living like adopted son or daughter of God, roll away the stone.

If you are not happy and excited in the things of God that is a sure sign that the stone needs to be rolled away in your life.

GOD SENT AN ANGEL TO ROLL AWAY THE STONE .

The stone was not rolled away from the entrance of the tomb by the angel for Jesus' sake no!!!

Jesus could have thought the stone away and the stone could have moved.

Jesus could have spoken to the stone away and the stone could have moved.

Jesus could have touched the stone away and the stone could have moved.

Jesus could have thought the stone out of the tomb because Jesus Christ has all the power to do anything.

The stone was not moved for Jesus sake but :

It was moved for the sake of Mary Magdalene.

It was moved for the sake of Peter.

It was moved for the sake of Salome.

It was moved for the sake of John.

It was moved for the sake of me and you.

The stone was moved for their sake so that they could go into the tomb and see that Jesus was no longer dead but that he has risen from the dead and that he is alive forever.

Because Jesus is alive ,SALVATION is available.

Because Jesus is alive ,ETERNAL LIFE is available.

Because Jesus is alive ,DELIVERANCE is available.

Mary Magdalene was delivered from seven (7) demons by Jesus Christ.

That is why she was standing there at the cross John 19:25-26

That is why she was standing there when Jesus was buried.

That is why she was early at the tomb on the resurrection morning Matthew 28:

She followed him as he ministered.

She followed him to the cross.

She remained at the cross until his death.

She was the first one at the tomb on the resurrection morning.

Because Jesus is alive, forgiveness from sin is available.

APPLICATION

Even though this incident took place more than 2000 years ago, God is still rolling away stones.

God is still able to roll stones out of our lives.

In order for us to be able to move forward in our lives as individuals as families as communities and as a nation called Uganda.

There are stones that need to be rolled away.

What is the stone in your life?

What is the stone in your marriage?

What is the stone in your place of work?

What is the stone in your home?

What is the stone in your fellowship?

In order for us to move forward and receive the blessings God promised us the stone of UNFORGIVENESS must be rolled away.

This is the foundation of all the blessings.

It was laid by our Lord Jesus on the cross when they prayed and said "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. " Luke 23:34 (his first statement on the cross)

Imagine the suffering, Jesus went through but still prayed for those who killed him.

"Forgive me for they don't know what they are doing"

How do we respond to those who wrong us ? We always want to call fire from heaven to consume them.

Jesus prayed "Forgive me for they don't know what they are doing."

In order for us to move forward the stone

:BITTERNESS, CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, HATRED, RACISM, NEPOTISM, ENVY, JEALOUSY, SLANDER, ANGER, LUST, PRIDE, FEAR, UNBELIEF AND DOUBT.

Corruption –This stone is killing our motherland Uganda .It is on the increase every other day.

When we talk about stones that need to be rolled away in our lives as individuals, as a family ,as the church ,as a country we are talking about the obstacles that get in the way of our blessings to see the risen savior the source of all blessings.

We get the stone rolled away in our life by receiving, believing and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is only the lord Jesus Christ who can roll away the stone of SIN and EVIL out of a person's life.

Instead of having the stone of Sin in your life, you ought to have the stone the builders rejected which become the cornerstone ACTS 4:11

That cornerstone is none other than Jesus Christ who is the rock of our salvation.

He is known to be the rock in a weary land.

There is no stone too hard for Jesus to roll away.

Accept him ,call on him and he will help you to roll whatever stone that has hindered to move forward.