

Message on Janan Luwum day at All saints Cathedral Nakasero

Topic: **Breaking the yoke of inherited resistance** Acts 7:51-60

Many of us have a background of resistance which if not broken we can never inherit everlasting life or be zealous for Christ. Stephen made this very clear to the Sanhedrin “you stiff necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. Circumcision was a great heritage of the Jews yet it blocked them from seeing or accepting Jesus.

Today is an important day in the life of the history of the church in Uganda. For some of us that were alive during that time have a clue of what happened that day. Dad’s story in 1977.

It is documented that on February 05th 1977, armed men attacked Janan Luwum’s residence in Namirembe. Two weeks later on 16th February 1977 he was pronounced dead in a motor accident. This followed a letter that he had written to the president complaining about the deteriorating state of affairs in the country. Letter stated...

...the gun which has been pressed against the archbishop’s stomach, the gun which has been used to search the house of the Bishop of Bukedi Diocese, is the gun being pointed at every Christian in the church.

We have buried many who have died as a result of being shot and there are many more whose bodies have not been found. The gun which was meant to protect Uganda as a nation, the Ugandan citizen and his property, is increasingly being used against the Ugandan to take away his life and his property. **He was bold/courageous**

Stephen’s speech to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:51-53, reflects the same boldness that Archbishop had when he faced death. One of the seven deacons chosen because he was full of the Holy Spirit (6:3-4).

Stephen helped the Sanhedrin to appreciate their rich heritage and how God worked through them in history. Friends Uganda has a rich heritage of Christianity that is worth appreciating. We celebrate a faith that men and women have died for (Bp Hannington, Uganda Martyrs, Janan Luwum).

The Sanhedrin, which can be equated to the Parliament today, was full of men who were rich in the Jewish law, they knew God but denied his power. They were not ready to face the truth and put the law in practice (7:53). The

sin of disobedience to the word of God had destroyed and continues to do so today.

Archbishop Luwum's faith in the resurrected Lord made him see victory ahead of time. He accepted Christ in 1948, 6th January, following his father's example who had also been inspired by Yusto Otunnu, one of the first converts in Kitgum. It is this zeal for Christ and spreading the good news that slowly led him to life in Christian ministry.

In November 1948, Luwum was preaching to a group of people in the compound of the All Saints Church in Kitgum when tears started streaming down his face and said, The Spirit of the Lord has shown me that many educated men have run away from the church. They want the church to fall and to fall alone. Today, I promised before God and all of you assembled here, that if the church is falling, she will fall on me. I surrender myself to the church (Ford 1979:24). **He defeated peer pressure.**

Someone commented that Luwum was a man who never sat back in his priestly robes, he had his leadership finger in nearly every piece of the national pie that mattered to this country. Today there is a lot of intimidation that the church has to be politically right even when issues have gone wrong. From the inception of the church, ministers have had a prophetic role to face the realities of the state and to rebuke evil. Luwum refused to be silenced and after his death, people became more bold and ready to die for the faith.

One day he told the government that, you are good people and our beloved brothers. It is not you, but your master, Satan, who is using you to torture us and leave us to go hungry. We love you and our master, Jesus Christ, loves you too. The wooden bars at the window of this tiny cell cannot separate us from the love of God, nor stop us proclaiming his message of salvation, through his son Jesus Christ. All of us here are committed to Christ, even unto death.

For Luwum only love can heal and restore the human family into a beloved interrelated community and only a person spiritually strong with love can break the cycle of hatred in the world.

The suffering in Uganda taught Luwum the idea of *agape* as the ultimate means for confronting social and political injustice. Henry Okullu affirms that, Janani Luwum had a role to play in the affairs of his nation. He refused to tremble before Idi Amin. He faced him. Archbishop Luwum was not seeking martyrdom: and the church leaders should not seek martyrdom. However,

they must not run away from it. As the situation worsened during Luwum's last days, his wife, Mary pleaded with him continually to flee Uganda. The Archbishop refused, stating clearly that he had no guilty conscience concerning Amin's accusations. Luwum laid down his life for the sheep. It is said that he kept telling his brother bishops "we must see the hand of God in this". He saw God's hand in everything that was happening in those few days before his murder.

How can we break the yoke of inherited resistance?

1. Appreciate our Christian heritage as a church or nation (7: 51ff)
2. Be obedient to the gospel even when it hurts 7:54-56, Luwum was obedient to the one who called him and feared him alone.
3. Know who you are in Christ - that is the source of the courage/boldness 6:3-4, Luwum's salvation in 1948. If our boldness to speak out is not rooted in Christ, it ends up being selfish. None of us was in there but he faced the gun with courage.
4. Avoid peer pressure - as people moved out of the Anglican Church, he said let it fall on me, I will remain and preach the gospel.

Conclusion: Today we want to ask the Lord to cause us break the yoke or barrier of inherited resistance. Some of us have resisted salvation not that we hate it but there is resistance in the background.

