

Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>,2023

**Topic: Why is the cross the symbol of Christianity and not the empty tomb? What does that mean for mission and ministry?**

**Preacher: Brother Muhindo MALUNGA**

Matthew 28:1-10

On this special Easter Sunday, which marks the Resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after his death by crucifixion, the celebration of the new light that announces restoration, we are going to reflect on the cross as the symbol of Christianity. If someone goes to any church around the world, he will find the cross. Every time when we see a cross on the top of a building, we can directly conclude that it is a church. We know that the cross is the symbol of suffering. Jesus at the cross is the defeated Savior. Why would we take this symbol of defeat to be the symbol of the Church and not the ultimate symbol of the victory of Christ.? The logic would ask us to carry the empty tomb as a symbol of victory, the proof that Jesus is alive.

Four ideas that we may carry as we think about Easter:

1. **The empty tomb:** The angel rolled the stone not for Jesus to come out but for the women and the disciples to come in and witness the resurrection.
2. **The earthquake and the angel:** to advance his kingdom, God chooses a spectacular demonstration of his power to reach those who only understand the language of power.
3. **The disciples/women and faith:** even when we are willing to trust God, our imagination is often limited. It's easy to trust a savior who is alive than a dead one.
4. **The cross and the scars:** there is no resurrection (victory), no empty tomb without the cross and the scars.

Dear Congregation, in order for Jesus to be victorious in death, he had to go through the sufferings of the cross and the scars. A victorious Savior is the Savior who has first suffered. Some of us as Christians, want people to be victorious without suffering. We want people to celebrate us without suffering.

It is the suffering, the going through the pain that gives us the platform for victory. And Jesus demonstrates that in order for him to be the exalted king, he had to be the suffering king.

One of the reasons why the cross is the symbol of Christianity is because the empty tomb is one only once. Jesus has resurrected, that will never happen anymore but the cross is carried every day. Jesus said, if someone wants to be my disciple, he must take up his cross and follow me. Jesus carried the bigger cross but He causes us to carry small crosses. Every time when we see a cross, it reminds us to carry our everyday cross to follow him. That has an implication for ministry and mission. What is your cross for ministry and mission? Happy Easter to every one of you.