

Pentecost 6/5/22
Genesis 11:1-9 C

“COME, LET US GO DOWN AND THERE CONFUSE THEIR LANGUAGE, SO THAT THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER’S SPEECH.” SO THE LORD DISPERSED THEM FROM THERE OVER THE FACE OF ALL THE EARTH, AND THEY LEFT OFF BUILDING THE CITY.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Ge 2:28).

Those are God’s words to Adam and Eve in the Garden. And, He said the same thing to Noah and his family after the flood,

Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh – birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth – that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth” (Ge 8:17).

But, here’s the key: **They didn’t**. They ignored God. They did not do what God commanded them to do. Rather than being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth, they gathered together and settled in the plain of Shinar. There, they spoke one language, one “tongue,” to use the King James Version word. And that’s not all they did. They were so impressed with themselves, their might and their own importance, that they made bricks, burning them thoroughly, and using bitumen for mortar, and said, “Let’s use these bricks and mortar to build a city, and let’s build a tower that reaches into heaven, and let’s make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the earth,” to which we could add, **which God instructed us to do** (v. 4). So, they just ignored what God commanded them to do, to do what they wanted to do.

And you know all too well about ignoring God and doing what you want. God commands you to love your neighbor. God commands you to make disciples of all nations, teaching your neighbor all things about Jesus. The Bible tells you that “whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none and whoever has food is to do likewise” (Lk 3:11). And that you are to forgive as Christ has forgiven you.

But, well, you know how it goes. Your neighbor is a jerk and just plain rubs you the wrong way, so... loving...no. And talk about Jesus, forget that! After all, you fear people more, much more, than you fear God. And share, share, I don't think so! You hoard and hoard, so you can more stuff. And, you keep a good record of your neighbor's wrongs; and are not shy or quiet about telling everyone what your neighbor's sins and faults are.

So ,you just do what you want. You settle into a nice place, within yourself. We could just call it Me-Ville. In Me-Ville, life is good because you're the mayor. You call the shots. You say, “Let's build – a city, a tower to heaven. But let's not use bricks baked thoroughly and bitumen for mortar, let's use the bricks of my accomplishments, my money, my stuff, my sexual conquests. And, let's use the mortar of my pride and arrogance to hold it all together. Let's build a tower to the top of heaven – so that the Lord God can look at the wonder and the glory of ... ME!

Know what the Lord God says about that? The same thing He said at Shinar. He comes down and looks at the towers that we try to build to heaven, whether it's a tower at Shinar built with bricks that are burned thoroughly and bitumen for mortar or the tower we try to build into heaven by our own works, and says, “How pathetic!”

“‘Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.’ So the LORD dispersed

them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth” (vv. 7-9).”

Confused and dispersed. That’s what sin will get you each and every time.

But today, Pentecost teaches us that Lord your God is unwilling to let you stay confused and dispersed. He wants to bring you to faith in Jesus Christ, to bring you into His fold, the ark of His holy Christian Church. That’s what the Lord your God is doing on Pentecost and what He does for you.

When the Day of Pentecost had come, there were people who had come from all over the places where God had dispersed them. They came from Persia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Rome, and all such places. They all came to Jerusalem and they were all speaking their confused languages. And, the Lord acted. The sound of a mighty, rushing wind came and tongues of fire appeared upon the disciples and these Galilean disciples began proclaiming the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation we have in His name, in the language of the Parthians and Medes and Elamites, the residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and parts of Libya, and all those places. They all heard them proclaiming the Gospel in their own language. And the people heard it and believed it. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, these people who had been confused and scattered, came together as one in Christ Jesus.

Do you see what’s happening here? God fixed the confusion and dispersion of Babel on the Day of Pentecost by sending the Holy Spirit to bring people to Jesus and make them one in Him.

And you know what? The Holy Spirit is here, to do the same thing this morning for you. From wherever you came, confused, hurting, bearing unkind thoughts about your neighbor – even wishing harm and ruin upon them. Here comes the Holy Spirit to call you, gather you, enlighten you, sanctify you through the preaching of God's Word and the administration of the Sacraments.

He comes to you, you who are confused, scattered and separated from one another, maybe even someone you love and care for very much, beat up by the world, and carrying the burden of your sin, causing you to look to Jesus; because there is your Savior, carrying all of your pride and arrogance, all of your confusion, all of your dispersion, all your sin to the cross. He carried it all and He paid the price for it all by His suffering and dying, so that you are forgiven.

There's no need to build a city out of your own accomplishments, your achievements, your arrogance. God Himself has given you a city, the new Jerusalem of heaven. And it shines in glory, not your glory, but the glory of God Himself.

There's no need to build tower to try to reach into heaven. You have the cross of Christ. You have no need to make a name for yourself. You have the best name anyone could ever have -- Child of God, redeemed by Christ; a child of God called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. A child of God who will be gathered into the holy city, the new Jerusalem of heaven, in body and soul, that you will be forever where Jesus is.

That is your future. For today, the Holy Spirit has called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified you Christ, so that you don't live in Me-Ville anymore. You live in Christ and Christ lives in you, so that you can love

your neighbor as Christ has loved you. You can tell them about Jesus. You can share all things with them. You can forgive, as God has forgiven you in Christ. You can weep with those who weep; and rejoice with those who rejoice.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.