

The Tower of Pride

Our current sermon series is called The Eternal Story.

... We know from Jesus' words to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that all of scripture speaks of Christ and of His redemptive work.

So, four weeks ago we began by considering the **eternality of God** and the promise of our redemption from even before the foundation of the world.

We saw in the **story of the Garden of Eden**, God making the promise (Gen. 3:15) that one day a redeemer who would come into the world crush the serpent's head. – Theologians call Gen. 3:15 the proto-evangelium.

... the first good news (gospel)

Then two weeks ago **Cain and Abel brought an offering** to the Lord,

... but God only accepted Abel's offering because it came from a pure heart, and it was a blood sacrifice.

Last week we saw that the ark of Noah was a prophetic symbol of Christ and our salvation

... the God who has opened the door and offered salvation is also the God who shuts the door

... the offer of salvation is for **everyone**, to be in Christ is to be **secure** ...

... but today is the day of salvation. Come while you still can.

That brings us to the 5th story in this series and it is a story of people, fueled by ego and pride, building a tower.

The story of the tower begins in Genesis 10

⁸ Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. ⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (Gen. 10:8-10)

This was after Noah and his family had left the ark and began to repopulate and replenish the earth.

... everyone in the world spoke the same language.

... some of those people settled in the land of Babel ... or Babylonia

... This was Nimrod's kingdom and he wanted to be famous

... He wanted everyone to know how great he was, so he convinced the people to build a tower.

... a tower that would reach into heaven.

... so, the people went to work making bricks to build this mighty tower.

... they believed living together in this tower would keep them united and together in the same spot.

... the problem, however, was that this was the opposite of what God had told them to do

After Noah and his family had gotten off the ark God had commanded them to *go out, multiply, and fill or populate the earth.*

... but here they are congregating in this one place.

And God knew that these people were united in their disobedience to His command.

... but they didn't care

... they were not focused on God they were focused on themselves.

... and God was angry at their sins of disobedience and pride...

... But here is what is so interesting

... God judged them in a way that really wasn't a punishment

... God judged them in a way that corrected their rebellion ... and forced them into obedience.

⁶ The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." (Gen. 11:6-7)

Because of what God did the people could no longer understand each other

... suddenly they all spoke different languages, and this forced them to scatter throughout the earth.

When the people started building the tower the word 'babel' meant "gateway to God" today we used the word "babble" to mean someone speaking incoherently.

In this story we can see what God thinks of pride ... the unchecked human ego.

Today I want us to learn 3 lessons and see how this story of disobedience points us to Christ's work of redemption and restoration.

Please remember what sin destroys Christ redeems.

Lesson #1: Never listen to THEY

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ² It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. ⁴ They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." (Gen. 11:1-4)

Nimrod might have been king, but he was not forcing and unwilling people to act against their will.

Everyone one of them conspired together to disobey God.

- They found a plain in the land of Shinar
- They encouraged one another in their disobedience
 - They didn't have rock or stone, but they didn't let difficulty stop them
 - ... they worked together to make brick.

Genesis 11 is a picture of the modern world.

... but instead of our collective egos building a tower ...

... the modern ego is trying to build a world where deviancy and perversion is the norm.

It would have been much easier for these people to obey God, to go out and fill the earth ...

... instead, they went to work making brick

... and it was hard work, but they were going to get this tower to go into the heavens and nothing was going to stop them ... or so they thought.

Consider our present world.

It would be much easier and simpler to teach boys to be boys and girls to be girls ... and to craft laws according to that logic and reality ...

... but instead, society has chosen gender insanity over science.

How many genders are there? ...

... according to Tracy Marsh, PhD, at Walden University's PhD in Clinical Psychology ... nobody really knows.

“These concepts and terms will continue to evolve. The best way to stay informed is to ask others how they identify and how they prefer to be addressed.”

Now here is what Dr. Marsh is actually saying ...

... it is not gender that is fluid ... what is fluid is language and preference.

And yet people say this is about freedom, liberty, being true to your real self ...

... it just about the towering ego of a godless society

... what is at stake here is real lives and truth.

“Gender cannot be at real risk because it is anchored in an immutable reality. What is on the cards is oppression, socially engineered dysfunction and the loss of individual freedom.” – Melanie Phillips The Spectator 07/22/2017

The very things that our present society is championing as the cornerstones of a free and liberal society

... socialism, CRT, Gender fluidity, abortion on demand ...

... they are, in fact, that things that will ultimately rob us of our freedom.

When archeologist dig up a body, when they examine the skeleton, they will always (without exception) classify that skeleton as either male or female.

... because the biology is absolute.

In a world that keeps saying “trust the science”

... apparently that doesn't apply to gender and human sexuality

Hear me today: When THEY (the larger society) unify themselves they protect and promote sin,

... they will always ostracize, demean, and punish those who speak out against that sin they promote...

... and the end result will always be confusion and destruction.

The most effective poison to lead men to ruin is to boast in themselves, in their own wisdom and will power. – John Calvin

You see the real issue behind all of today's conflicts and disagreements isn't freedom, isn't liberty, it isn't about living your best life ...

... it's about pride

... the real issue is rebellion against God.

Lesson #2: Pride turns ANGELS into DEVILS

⁴ They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name"

This attempt to build a tower probably occurred no more than 100-150 years after Noah's flood and by this time the population of the world had expanded considerably from the eight people who had gotten off the Noah Ark ...

—to perhaps as many as 30,000 people

... and they were not just a group ... they had the same mind ... the same ego

... BECAUSE THEY DID NOT OBEY GOD'S COMMAND TO DISPERSE AND FILL THE EARTH

Jewish scholars claim that this passage in Genesis 11 is God's first condemnation of urbanism.

... and when you think about Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Detroit, Chicago, NYC, Washington DC

... they may not be far off.

John Paul Sartre wrote a book titled Being and Nothingness

“Human beings act differently when they are alone than when there are in the presence of someone else. As humans we are usually aware of how others expect us to act. So, we end up accommodating others by acting as we know they expect us to act. That’s why all of our housing subdivisions look the same, that’s why everyone in a certain generation pretty much dress alike.”
– John Paul Sartre

We are not necessarily better together ...

... in fact, the more congested humanity becomes in cities and urban areas ...

... not only are they more wicked they encourage one another in that wickedness

[I told Justin we ought to sing a verse of “Thank God I’m a Country Boy” ... but we won’t]

In their ego and pride, they rebelled against God.

... and it wasn’t a generic rebellion

... this was the original sin

... this was the sin of Lucifer himself.

Here is a description of the devil before he fell from heaven.

‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ “You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: ... ¹⁴ “You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God ... ¹⁵ “You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. (Ezek. 28:12-15)

What does God mean by “unrighteousness was found in Lucifer.”

We find the answer to that question in Isaiah.

¹² "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (Isa. 14:12-14)

Lucifer was cast out of heaven because of the sin of pride.

... it was pride that convinced Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit with the hope of “becoming like God, knowing good and evil.”

... It was pride that caused Cain to rise up in anger and kill Abel his brother

... It was pride that kept people out of Noah’s ark

... and it was pride that caused the crowd to attempt to build a tower in order to make a name for themselves.

- **Never listen to them**
- **Pride will corrupt even the best person**

Lesson #3: God is not curious, He is judge

⁵ The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." (Gen. 11:5-7)

Why would God have to come down to see, didn't He know?

Why would God have to come down, isn't he already everywhere?

This is the challenge of God communicating infinite truth through finite human language.

Much like God's rhetorical question to Adam "where are you" or to Cain "what have you done"

... this is said to bring awareness to sinful humanity ... not to describe some deficiency in God.

... God isn't learning, discovering, or growing in His knowledge

... the Bible does not teach of a weak insipid God who needs to be educated

There is no place in the bible for an unholy god who overlooks sin, or an ignorant god who needs to be taught.

... the God of the Bible is infinite, absolute, holy, omniscient, faithful, omnipotent, immutable, omnipresent, gloriously eternally boundlessly God!

... Praise His holy name!

- Our pride doesn't like that kind of God.
- Our pride prefers a bible with mistakes, gaps, and loopholes.
- Our pride wants a religion that makes no demands upon us.
- Our pride desires a God that allows us to sin without impunity.
- God isn't coming down to learn because He is curious, God is coming down to judge.

Egotistical humanity calculates upon its own strength and ingenuity and in foolish and hasty confidence it plunges itself into its own destruction

... and from time-to-time God (in His infinite mercy) has to remind us of this.

... God's coming down is His merciful reminder to us that He is glorious, holy, high, and lifted up

... and that we desperately need HIM

... and that He desires for us to want Him

That brings me to my final point today.

4. God's Ultimate Work is to Restore what is Lost

⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. (Gen. 11:7-8)

This, however, is not the end of the story ...

... and the God who creates and judges, is also the God who redeems and restores.

... Let me show you another scripture that talks about multiple tongues.

- After the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- After Christ ascension back into heaven
- On the day of Pentecost

The followers of Jesus were in the upper room praying and waiting on what Jesus had promised

... Jesus had told them that if He went away, he would send the Holy Spirit to them as a paraclete, a comfort

... and look what happened

² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

People see that word "tongues" and many of them get so excited about it they become heretical

... that's a heavenly language

... that's private communication between you and God

... well before you fall down and have a new revelation look at what happens next

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? ⁹ "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."(Acts 2:4-13)

That's a good question in verse 12 ... WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Well thankfully the Apostle Peter tell us.

¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. ¹⁵ "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND ... ²¹ 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' (Acts 2:14-17, 21)

In Genesis 11 we see God judging and dividing the peoples of the world because of the sin of pride ... because of rebellion.

In Acts 2 we see God reversing that judgment and bringing us together through the power of the gospel.

Jesus has come to tear down our towers of ego and pride ...

What towers have you built in your life?

Into what long term hardships has your pride forced you into and tricked you into defending just so you can have a momentary pleasure here and there?

What cherished rebellions against God are you still harboring in your heart?

... I want you to know today that you are not unique in your condition

... I also want you to know that Jesus has come to restore what your tower of ego has destroyed.

The work of God is a perfect work. Yes, God condemns but He also forgives.

And when God forgives

... He wipes away all record of guilt

... and when the record of guilt is gone, then what guilt has stolen, Grace at once restores.