TITLE: The Lesson of Babel

TEXT: Gen. 11:1-9 & 1:28; 1 Co. 14:10-11 & 1:10; Eccl. 4:9-12

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about the lesson of Babel.

 I believe that this is a very valuable lesson for our nation today if we will continue to be the America our founders intended, One Nation under God!

 So just what is it we can learn from the Scriptural account of the tower of Babel?

**Genesis 11:1-9(NIV)**  **1Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.**  **2As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.**  **3They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar.**  **4Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”**  **5But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building.**  **6The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.**  **7Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”**  **8So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.**  **9That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.**

 In the early days of creation after man had started to procreate and populate the earth everyone spoke the same language. **1Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.**

 Which was a good thing in those first centuries as the world was starting to be developed by man just as God had planned. Cities were being built for man to populate and expand across the earth.

So what happened at Babel?

**2As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.
3They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar.
4Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”**

 Here we see a major departing from what God’s plan for man was.

God gave mankind a command shortly after he was created:

**Genesis 1:28(NIV)**  **28God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”**

Man was to fill the earth and subdue it!

Here at Babel man said: **Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”**

**So that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”**

 Man’s calling was not to settle in one place and make a name for themselves BUT they were to fill the earth and subdue it!

So how does God respond?

**5But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building.
6The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.
7Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”
8So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.
9That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.**

 To keep the people from committing the great sin of self-sufficiency and a pride that would lead them away from God, God came down and did something to separate them, get them to scatter, to motivate them to go about their calling to fill the earth and subdue it.

 How did God do that? By confusing their language.

 Just picture what this must have been like—you go to bed one night able to communicate with everyone through a common language and wake up the next day to find that your neighbors are, all of a sudden, speaking gibberish to you. You can’t understand them and they can’t understand you.

 The confusion ends up separating people into groups of common language.

 All of one language go one way and people of other languages go their ways….

 I wonder if any husbands and wives found themselves waking up speaking different languages.

 (I really doubt that happened) (Even though there are times that I swear Pam speaks a different language than I do)

 One major lesson that we learn from the account at Babel is this: A common language is a great unifier!

**6The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.**

 In America today we see a kind of a reverse Babel situation taking place.

 A nation once pretty much unified by a common language and culture is now being divided by different languages and multiculturalism and the results have not been all that good.

 Richard Lamm is the former Governor of Colorado. Several years ago there was an immigration overpopulation conference in Washington , DC , filled to capacity by many of America 's finest minds and leaders.

 A brilliant college professor by the name of Victor Hansen Davis talked about his latest book, 'Mexifornia, published in 2003' explaining how immigration, both legal and illegal, was destroying the entire state of California. He said it would march across the country until it destroyed all vestiges of The American Dream.

 Moments later, former Colorado Governor Richard D. Lamm stood up and gave a stunning speech on how to destroy America.
 It is said that the audience sat spellbound as he described methods for the destruction of the United States . He said, 'If you believe that America is too smug, too self-satisfied, too rich, then let's destroy America. It is not that hard to do.

 No nation in history has survived the ravages of time. Arnold Toynbee observed that all great civilizations rise and fall and that an autopsy of history would show that all great nations commit suicide.'

Here is how they do it, Lamm said:
 First, to destroy America, turn America into a bilingual or multi-lingual and bicultural country..

 History shows that no nation can survive the tension, conflict, and antagonism of two or more competing languages and cultures.

 It is a blessing for an individual to be bilingual; however, it is a curse for a society to be bilingual.

 Historical scholar, Seymour Lipset, put it this way: 'The histories of bilingual and bicultural societies that do not assimilate are histories of turmoil, tension, and tragedy.' Canada, Belgium, Malaysia and Lebanon all face crises of national existence in which minorities press for autonomy, if not independence. Pakistan and Cyprus have divided. Nigeria suppressed an ethnic rebellion. France faces difficulties with Basques, Bretons, Corsicans and Muslims.'

 Second, to destroy America, invent 'multiculturalism' and encourage immigrants to maintain their culture. Make it an article of belief that all cultures are equal; that there are no cultural differences. Make it an article of faith that the Black and Hispanic dropout rates are due solely to prejudice and discrimination by the majority. Every other explanation is out of bounds.

Third, we could make the United States a 'Hispanic Quebec ' without much effort.

 The key is to celebrate diversity rather than unity. As Benjamin Schwarz said in the Atlantic Monthly: 'The apparent success of our own multi-ethnic and multicultural experiment might have been achieved, not by tolerance, but by hegemony *(hegemony is the political, economic, ideological or cultural* [*power*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_%28philosophy%29) *exerted by a* [*dominant group*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominant_group) *over other groups, regardless of the explicit consent of the latter.)*

 Without the dominance that once dictated what it meant to be an American, we are left with only tolerance and pluralism to hold us together.'

 To destroy America, Lamm said, 'I would encourage all immigrants to keep their own language and culture. I would replace the melting pot metaphor with the salad bowl metaphor. To destroy America It is important to ensure that we have various cultural subgroups living in America enforcing their differences rather than as Americans, emphasizing their similarities.'

 The first great waves of immigration to this country were very different from a lot of the immigration that we see today.

When many of our former immigrants came into this country through Ellis Island, they all came with the hope of becoming a citizen of the greatest country on earth.

 A big difference between the immigrants coming to America back then and now it that back them they all seemed to understand the importance and necessity of assimilation! To come and blend in! To speak a common language, to engage in a common culture.

 Most made it a first priority to learn the language of America, to learn English.

 It wasn’t until they did that they would start to feel American and assimilate into the American culture!

America has been described as the great smelting pot!

 People from all over the world have come to our shores and have blended together to make up this great nation called America!

 Do you know what a smelting pot is?

 If you had gold or silver ore you would smelt it down, melt it to separate the impurities from it, so that the impurities could be removed and just the pure gold or silver would remain.

 Part of the smelting of America was when people from other languages and cultures came here to be a part of the American dream! They would go through the smelting process of learning the common language and culture of America so they would blend into it.

 And that has worked wonderfully! It has made us the greatest nation on earth, where still today we find countless millions who would like nothing more than come to America and take part in the American dream.

 But there is a problem with immigration today, both legal and illegal.

 In my opinion Illegal immigration should be fairly easy to address ….. Seal the borders and make anyone entering this country come in through the proper channels.

 But there is also a problem with a lot of the legal immigration in our nation, in that we have people coming in from other countries and cultures with no intent of assimilating, of coming into a smelting pot where they become a part of the American culture, but instead, want to be more like a salad bowl where they retain their individual language and culture.

 The result is that instead of creating a unified America, they contribute to a divided America.

 Nothing drives me crazier than going to a Wal-mart or Target and have people all around you speaking in different languages…

 I can understand that if someone comes here it may take a while to learn the language, but to come here and never learn the language blows my mind.

 If you never learn the language you will never assimilate! You will always be a foreigner to me and I to you!

**1 Corinthians 14:10-11(NIV)**  **10Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.**  **11If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.**

 That is why personally I am in favor of “English only” in our schools.

 I am in favor of government signs and forms being printed only in English!

 I am especially in favor of ballets for American elections being in English only.

Why? Because I am anti-immigrant or anti Hispanic or anti-Asian or anti-eastern European?

 No! Because I am very pro -American!

I am not a native American as I believe neither are any of you here this morning.

 We are all the decedents of immigrants! My Grandmother and Grandfather on my moms side come here from Norway. They came as Immigrants who came here with a hope of fulfilling a dream!

 To become a part of the greatest Nation on the planet.

 To assimilate into a society of great people called Americans!

 People who came together in all their diversity to assimilate and become a unified and united people.

 It breaks my heart to see major demonstrations or rally’s in this nation where Hispanic citizens of the United States of America march under the flag of Mexico.

 To me that is a direct insult to all the brave men and women of all ethnic backgrounds who have fought and died and paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep secure the Freedoms of all American citizens.

I think it is great to be bilingual, to know more than one language. I really wish I had paid more attention in my high school Spanish class.

 I think it is good for immigrants from other countries and cultures that come to the United States to teach their heritage to their children.

 But as American citizens their allegiance must first and foremost be to the United States of America.

 If America is going to survive as the great nation that it is than its people need to be a united people not a divided people!

A common language is essential for a people to be or remain united.

**10Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.
11If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.**

 God saw the potential of a people united in common language…

 **If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.**

 What makesa Common language so important is because it is how people communicate with each other.

 If we speak totally different languages than you will always be a foreigner to me and I to you.

 If we are foreign to one another than how can we ever be united or unified?

 How will we ever be able to do great things together if there is no way of communication?

This language barrier not only affects the life of a nation but it affects us as the Church as well.

 If you are in a Wal-Mart and see a family that is obviously having a problem but they are all speaking a different language than you know how are you going to minister to them?

 Will you even make the attempt?

Example: We had a large family of Hispanics roll their car out in the country. I was the chaplain on call so I went down to the hospital to see what assistance I could give them.

 The little girl was in the ER getting a broken wrist taken care of and there were 4-5 other kids running around the hospital waiting room. The dad, who could speak some English, was in the ER with his daughter and the mom, who spoke no English, was in the waiting room with the kids.

 It was all but impossible for me to communicate with the mom to assess the need.

 One of the young children could speak English pretty well so I used her as a translator.

 I ended up taking all the kids to our house to wait on things to get taken care of at the hospital.

 It all ended up working out and we were able to help them but how much easier it would have been if we all spoke a common language.
**1 Corinthians 1:10(NIV)
10I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.**

To become perfectly united in mind or thought, whether as the Church or as a Nation will require communication and communication requires a common language.

When I was young if I saw someone of Hispanic decent or Asian decent I just assumed that they spoke English, the common language of America.

 Today when I see people of these ethnic groups I no longer have that natural assumption.

 Think about it, what would America be like today if the first great waves of immigration to this country acted like many today and never learned the common language of America?

 Like at Babel they would have separated into different groups and communities totally separate from other groups and communities.

 America would not have become a united nation but a nation of division. Possibly better known as the Divided States of America.

 I would urge all immigrants coming to this country to make it a first priority to learn the common language of America. Otherwise assimilation will never be possible and if one never assimilates than they will always be a foreigner to me and I to them.

 I would also encourage all the Churches that have Hispanic or Asian ministries where they hold services in their native languages, to also have programs where English is taught so that they can assimilate into the culture of America and the local Church body, helping to make America a united America and not a divided America and the Church a united Church and not a divided one.

 The thing that makes me the proudest to be an American, the one attribute of America that, I believe, has made us the great nation that we are, is that we have been that city on a hill that has been a beacon of the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world around us.

 The freedoms that we are blessed with as a nation are but the reflections of the freedoms that we have in Christ Jesus.

 If we are to continue to be that beacon of the light of Christ to the world around us it will require that we remain a united people not become a divided people.

In the lesson of Babel we see a great promise…

 **6The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.**

Why? Because unity is a powerful force!

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12(NIV)
9Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:
10If one falls down, his friend can help him up.      But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!
11Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  But how can one keep warm alone?**  **12Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.**

**10Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.
11If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.**

 A common language is important because communication is important. Relationship is dependent upon communication. Without communication relationship is not possible!

 That is true in our relationship with God and it is true in our relationship with one another as the Body of Christ and it is true in regards to one another as Americans.

 There is an old saying that has its roots in the Bible and also in the beginning of our republic—“United we stand--divided we fall”.

 In 1768, prior to the American Revolution, when a young nation was struggling with the issue of separation from Great Brittan, Jon Dickinson wrote a song called the “liberty Song”. Its lyrics—“then join hand in hand, brave Americans all! By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall”.

 Later, [Patrick Henry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Henry) used this phrase in his last public speech, given in March 1799. Clasping his hands and swaying unsteadily, Henry declaimed, “Let us trust God, and our better judgment to set us right hereafter. United we stand, divided we fall. Let us not split into factions which must destroy that union upon which our existence hangs.”

 To remain that nation that is a beacon of light to the rest of the world will require that, we the people of this nation remain or once again become a people united. Being united by a common language and a common culture. For it is this, along with Gods continued blessings, that will ultimately define our greatness.

Will we learn the lesson of Babel?

United we will stand---divided we will fall…..

 Today there is much division in America that goes far beyond just having a common language.

 Politicians have intently strived to bring division within America for their perceived political gain.

 Many have tried to stoke the flames of racial division.

 So today we have Black Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Somalia Americans, Hattian Americans and the list goes on and on.

 Many loyal to their native lands and culture with no intent to fully assimilate into a united American culture.

 The result has been seeing America become a more and more divided nation today.

 As I see it the only hope to restore America to be a truly united America falls upon the Church, upon us as the body of Christ..

 For Jesus is the great unifier.

**Colo 2:** [**9**](http://biblehub.com/colossians/2-9.htm)**-10 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form…**[**10**](http://biblehub.com/colossians/2-10.htm) **and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.**

**Ephe.1:** [**22**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/1-22.htm) **And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,** [**23**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/1-23.htm) **which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

**Gal. 3: 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** [**29**](http://biblehub.com/galatians/3-29.htm) **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Jesus is and always will be the greatest unifying force in this world.

**Romans 12: 4-5 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,** [**5**](http://biblehub.com/romans/12-5.htm) **so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.**

 The example of the Church needs to become the example for America.

**There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

 A united America will necessitate us not identifying as : Black Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Somalia Americans or Hattian Americans but simple as Americans….

United in Him we stand---continue on the path of

Division and we will fall…