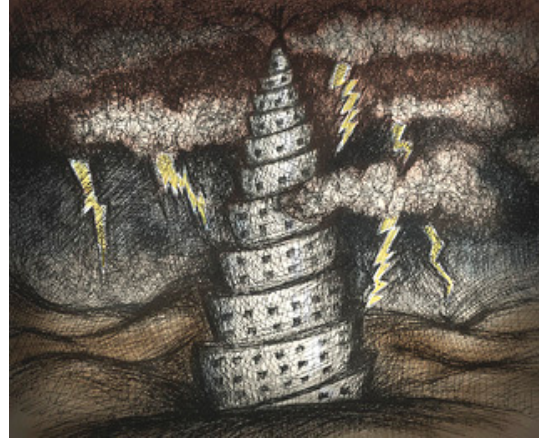


**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor A. Schultz
Pentecost May 19, 2013
Genesis 11:1-9**



Universal Language, Babel, Confusion

11.1 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ²It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³They 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. ⁴They 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." ⁵The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶The 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. ⁷Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Attitude! It's all about attitude. Not too many years ago there was a very gifted and famous rock 'n roller who wrote a song they play all the time – especially around Christmas. *Imagine!* Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us. Above us only sky. Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for. And no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace." That song writer said, "Christianity will end, it will disappear. I don't have to argue about that. I'm certain. Jesus was ok, but his subjects were too simple, today we are more famous than Him." Who knew this singer would step out onto the sidewalk outside his very expensive apartment and be shot 6 times. And then what? Then what? A very beautiful actress has been compared to "a candle in the wind." Does someone that rich and famous and beautiful and talented – know about Jesus? Billy Graham himself went to see her – to tell her face to face that Jesus loved her and died to take away all her sins. She told him, "I don't need your Jesus." A week later she was found dead in her apartment. And then what? Then what? As we sit here in Church – in the midst of a beautiful spring – meeting Jesus soon – does it seem likely? It is! Jesus could call us at any moment. The very practical question then becomes:

How Are You Building Your Life?

1. Are you building a monument to here and now?
2. Are you building for eternity in heaven?

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on—this Pentecost morning was written down by Moses in the book of beginnings. It's hard to imagine what life must have been like—not too long after Eve and Adam tasted the forbidden fruit. The LORD had created the world in a most wondrous way—flawless in every respect. When Adam and Eve fell into sin the LORD promised a Savior. The LORD also told them there would be painful consequences in this life—in this world—because of sin. ¹⁶ **To the woman he(God) said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."** ¹⁷ **To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."** Genesis 3:16-19 God's plan for people in this world from the beginning is spelled out in Genesis chapter 1. ²⁸ **God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."** Genesis 1:25 Fill the earth! Realize that babies are a blessing from God—not a painful and expensive burden. Realize that babies are a blessing that only God can give—in his time and in his way. That our Heavenly Father alone knows best—when to give children and when to take them home to Heaven. He does what he does—always and only because he loves us!

Fill the earth! That means spread out! Fill the earth! Have people all over the place! This is a big planet—and God wanted his people to make the best use of all of it. The LORD himself would bless his people everywhere—all the time! That was God's good and gracious plan. People—stubborn obstinate—insolent had other ideas! God's Word says, **11.1 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."** Let us **build for ourselves a city**—for our glory and for our benefit! Here is pride and here is selfishness! **Lets built a tower**—something really tall and impressive—the top reaching into the sky. Sound familiar? Like the towers people build still today—so high that again and again—you can go to the top and look down on the clouds—kind of like God—and so? Let us **make a name for ourselves**. Lets built things that are really big and last a really long time—kind of like King Herod—the Great who built that aquaduct—some 2,000 years ago—so massive and so strong—it's still here today for people to *ooh* and *aah*. Pretty impressive and so? Let's build this monument to ourselves—so that we won't be **scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth**. We can always come back—right here! It's just the opposite of what the LORD the Great I AM told them to do!

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."** Confusion—different language causes confusion. Sometimes—it's just kind of inconvenient. When we were doing mission work in the African nation of Togo—formerly French Togo Land—we stopped for breakfast—at what passed as a

restaurant—a home—with a sign out front that said very much to the point, “Food is ready!” We sat down at a little table—and tried to explain what we wanted to people who spoke French! I thought to myself—I can do this! I’d use the international language of gestures! I wanted something—very thin—round—very flat—rolled up. A crepe—and so—from people that were French? The waiter smiled! I smiled! Understand! Yeah, he did! It was only a few moments and he brought my plate—a slice of uncooked ham—very thin—in a circle—all rolled up! That’s ok. It just goes to show—when you don’t speak the same language—it’s difficult to understand.

The amazing thing is—when there is judgment and discipline—through it all—the LORD looks out for his people. Even during the most difficult times—God is love—and he makes all things work together for good—for those who love God. Blessings come—not just even—but especially during the most difficult times. Do you know much about the Battle of the Bulge—when our front line—battle line bulged? It happened over Christmas. By 21 December the Germans had surrounded a place called Bastogne, and our 101st Airborne Division and the 10th Armored Division. Conditions inside the perimeter were tough—most of the medical supplies and medical personnel had been captured. Food was scarce, and artillery ammunition was restricted to 10 rounds per gun per day. The German commander, Lt. Gen. Heinrich Freiherr von Lüttwitz, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_bulge_-_cite_note-FOOTNOTEMarshall1988177-103 demanded Bastogne's surrender. Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, acting commander of the 101st, was told of the Nazi had sent a messenger with the demand we surrender. In frustration our formal response was a single word, "Nuts!" After a while—cooler heads said maybe we should send a better answer. No—they thought *nuts*—pretty much said it all. *Nuts!* What does that mean? The Germans didn’t get it. The Germans didn’t understand. They stopped and thought about it—and thought about it some more. Nuts! When the Germans finally attacked—it was a little here and a little there—at first successful—and then resisted and driven back. Help came through and the American soldiers were spared!

⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth. The LORD scattered people abroad—all over the face of the whole earth. There are people everywhere—some 7 billion people—in China and Russia—in Africa—in South America. Sometimes you hear people say there are too many people—that the earth is plagued by overpopulation. And yet—it has also been said—if you took all the people in the world—you could fit them in the United States—with each person having personal space approaching a city block—with the rest of the world to grow food! Stop and think about it! There is lots of food. There is lots of mal-nutrition—not because there isn’t enough food in the world. There is a lack of distribution—a lack of sharing. There is also lots of waste! If you have ever worked in a restaurant you know this for a fact. If you have ever worked in a store—you know this for a fact. If you have ever watched the food in your home—you know this for a fact! Many people have a garbage disposal built into their sink. Scrape the food into this sink—turn on the faucet—and grind up all the food we wash literally down the drain! Physical food is not the main point. Food for our faith—the sincere milk of the gospel—the bread of Life—is what this world is starving for! We need to share God’s Word! We need to send our sons and daughters and grandchildren to Lakeside and Luther Prep and Wisconsin Lutheran College and Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We need to pray for our leaders as they have assignment day—and a whole new batch of called workers go out into

Jesus' harvest field. What are we going to do with our life? Are we going to build monuments to our self? Are we going to spend our life gathering to ourselves—more and more things and stuff? Or are we going to dedicate ourselves anew this Pentecost Sunday—to share God's Word?

Attitude! It's all about attitude—attitude toward God! It happened some 8 years ago in a place called Campanias in Brazil. A bunch of young people stopped at a home to pick up a young lady for a night of partying. The fact is—the people in the car had already been having a good time—drinking and such. When they stopped to pick up this one more young lady—her mom was really worried. She said to her daughter in the hearing of all the party people, She said, "May God go with you and protect you!" And you know what the people in the car said? They didn't say, "God bless you, too!" No, they said, "If God's going to go with us—He's going to have to ride in the trunk—because we're already all in here!" You can imagine what happened! There was a terrible crash. The car was so smashed you couldn't tell what kind of car it was—all except the trunk. Those who study such things—the mechanics and physics of car crashes say it defies the laws of physics for the front of the car to be so mangled—and yet the trunk to be unharmed—to the point that literally inside the trunk was a case of eggs—and not a single egg was cracked! Remarkable? Not really—when you consider the whole circumstances. And what about the people fatally injured? Now what? Now what? By the grace of God—we know that Jesus died and rose again—to wash away our sins. By the grace of God—we can dedicate our lives anew—to share the Gospel! By the grace of God we can use all we have and all we are—to share Jesus' forgiving love! Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Pastor Anthony E. Schultz