Genesis 11:1-9 (9) That 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.

Today is the celebration of the day of Pentecost. You heard in our Epistle reading how the Lord sent his Holy Spirit and the phenomenal things that happened. How the disciples on that day were given the ability to speak in the languages of the people gathered, languages they did not know before, so that the message of Jesus as Lord and Savior could be proclaimed. Did you catch that? Pentecost, as some would have you believe, was not about the language speaking, not about the tongues of flame and not about the sound of the mighty rushing wind. Those things were done so that the people would gather, so that the people would understand something extraordinary was happening. Those things were done not so we could focus our lives on wind, flame and “tongues” but that we could focus our lives on the same thing the disciples focused on, namely, Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior from sin. The focus was Jesus!

I do kind of chuckle at those who make Pentecost all about the language speaking and getting the Holy Spirit. And note that I speak of “language speaking.” That’s what the word means, “language.” Without any doubts I believe that the disciples gathered here did nothing more that speak the languages of the people gathered there so that Jesus could be proclaimed. This was not some sort of “babbling” angel speak as is practiced in so many churches today. It was earthly languages of people so that people could hear and believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that forgiveness and eternal life is preached in his name.

If you want, you can ask yourself an interesting question or two. “If this text is all about “babbling angel languages” as proof of the Holy Spirit, then why, at the end, are the 3,000 people who came to faith simply baptized with water? Why not put tongues of fire on them? Why not let them speak in “tongues” or shake and quake or whatever else people like to promote today as proof of the Holy Spirit? Why are the new believers baptized and with that baptism promised the Holy Spirit and forgiveness of sins in Jesus name? That would have been wonderful proof of the importance of “tongues” and what not, but notice that is not what happens. What happens is that with baptism the Holy Spirit and faith is given rather quietly.

As I said, the wonders of Pentecost were to gather the people for that day. The wonders of Pentecost were so we would know that what Jesus promised, **“But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth,”** happened and thus the New Testament Church has now replaced the Old. No longer preaching law and shadows but rather preaching clear and beautiful gospel, Jesus lives and so will you!

But, of course, we have been preaching on Old Testament texts. Today is no exception. Our text today does indeed have a connection to Pentecost, not a big one, but nevertheless there is a connection. Let’s review for ourselves this wonderful history of man under the theme: **LESSONS OF BABEL. 1st. Listen to the Lord. 2nd. Not listening has consequences. 3rd. The Lord is still talking.**

I guess at this point it is important to get somewhat of a timeframe. As we look at what is said and described following the flood of the earth we think that perhaps this event occurs around 100 to 200 years later. In other words, mankind has had time to begin repopulating the world and time to contemplate the commands and directions of the Lord. Please remember that even 200 years after the flood, Noah and the people who rode that Ark to safety are still alive and no doubt are telling people all about God. They told people why God had devastated the world. They told of the depth of sin and disobedience that had aroused God’s judgment. They told people how God chose to save eight people and keep his promise of salvation and eternal life going. They told people of the gracious and loving Father who shared his wisdom that man no need perish any longer. No doubt they shared with people God’s directive for the world: **“Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.”** It was clear that God wanted people to fill the earth, that is, it is clear that God’s wants people to spread out all over his earth. And thus the problem that would arise.

Please note that we are told that at this time mankind speaks one common language. We don’t know what language that was, but nevertheless there was one common language for people. The problem it seems is that this one language of the people creates a barrier to the people following the directive of God to spread out. In other words, the people don’t want to listen to God. So even though we are told they do move “eastward” it is also clear that they are moving as a group. They are staying together. This staying together it seems, is also leading to or is perhaps caused by, a desire, a bent in the people to ignore the Lord and do their own thing.

We see that in a few of the statements of the people recorded for us. **“They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.”** I mention this statement because it shows the ingenuity of the people. They find a plain to live in and they want to settle there. When building materials are a bit scarce, they determine to make bricks. Just a reminder to us that mankind back then was intelligent, resourceful and skilled. Don’t buy into the evolution myth that back then humans just grunted a lot and drug their knuckles on the ground. In truth, they were quite inqenious.

Next we read, **“Then 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 is a most telling statement. These ingenious people are planning a city, a big city. These people are planning a tower, a big and tall tower that reaches to the heavens. Notice that they want to do this to make a name for themselves. Notice they want to do this in order to not be scattered over the face of the earth. They are thinking about themselves. They are thinking of their name, their glory, their future, and their legacy. But notice that they are also thinking to disobey, to be contrary to the command of God. They don’t want to listen to God!

Well, at least we can say, “Hey, nothing new there!” Mankind does not want to hear or heed the Lord God. Yep, mankind is still sinful. Maybe, because they knew God’s promise to never destroy the world again they just thought that there was nothing God could do to them. How wrong they would be. And because of what happens here, the world is going to be changed forever.

Please note how our text speaks “anthropomorphically.” That means that Scripture describes God in human terms because that is how man can best grasp God. Trust me, God does not have to come down to see. God does not have to conference to determine what He will do. Yet these phrases are there so we can understand that God does not act rashly or without judgment and insight. God acts with care and concern for mankind. What God sees and understands is that if they can act as one, one of the first things they will do is reject and disobey God. God wants to delay this problem.

Thus God confuses their language. This confusion of language scatters the people, scatters them based on their language. In one simple instance God puts into place and action all the languages of the world that have ever been. In this one action God has established races, ethnicities, tribes and nationalities. All that is today, is the direct result of this moment in the history of the world. From these scatterings came the races of mankind. As people separated the three great races came to be: Africans, Occidentals and Orientals. I will tell you that I think these three are directly linked to the three families of Shem, Ham and Japheth. As they moved and separated various genetic traits began to be dominant in this group and that. One family of mankind and yet before long they would be different in appearance. Differences that have caused needless strife and wars because the sinful nature of man decided that different is somehow evil or bad.

By the way, it is not until modern times and especially in today’s electronic age that we find foremost in the world that great idea to abandon God and his truth. The push in today’s world is to reject any and all ideas of the true God. Mind you, not ideas of gods that mankind likes. Spiritualism, work righteousness, mysticism and the like are all okay. But today there is the push to reject and abandon the true God and his loving grace.

And that’s where the point of Pentecost comes in. On the day of Pentecost God is demonstrating a wonderful and unique truth. God wants all mankind, who really is one mankind to grasp and understand the gift of His Savior and the gift of eternal life prepared and won in Jesus. After God sent his Son through the family of Abraham, descendants of Shem, God wants everyone to grasp what he has done for us. He has brought to all eternal life and salvation in Jesus.

That’s the reason for the wonderful gift of speaking in languages on Pentecost. It was human languages, attested to by the long list of who and what people were gathered that day. On that day, God wanted us to grasp that His message is to go to everyone. God wants all mankind saved and brought to the glorious gift of heaven. God wants everyone to know about Jesus and what He has done.

It’s true, this message will start in Jerusalem and from there work its way to the entire world just as Jesus commanded his disciples. Jesus commanded, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”** And do you know what the heart of the commands of Jesus are about? That you believe He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world! That you grasp that in His name and by his grace you have the gift of the forgiveness of sins and with that the joy of eternal life in heaven with him. This message is for all. This message is the heart and core of our Christian faith.

Let us, as God’s children and heirs of eternal life strive to reach out to our fellow souls in all the world with this precious and life changing message of Jesus. Lord, help us to continue preaching and teaching the name of Jesus until once again we are all gathered together with You as your unified people. Let us help the world remember that you are still talking, still telling us about your love and grace. You do this through your Holy Word, the Bible. Spread your message through us. Let us be your voice and the hope of souls. Lead us to speak your love and compassion and the name of Jesus as Lord and Savior for all. Amen.