**Dispersed**

**Genesis 11:1-9**

Pentecost – 06.05.2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the first chapter of Genesis we read:

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen. 1:26-28)

By the time we get to chapter 11, our text for this morning, the flood has already happened. Mankind was wiped from the face of the earth because of their vile evil – except for eight, so only those who are descendants of Noah remain on the earth. You would think that the story of this incredible flood which wiped out all life would have been memory passed on to them. They should have known not to be disobedient to God.

They all had one language. They all had God’s command to be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.

In fact, coming off the ark, God had repeated that command to Noah and his sons, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” This is God's desire for mankind, those created in His image – fallen though that image may be because of sinfulness. God does not change the task He has for them.

However, by the time we get to the events of our text, Noah’s descendants are being disobedient. They are settling in one spot with their new goal of NOT being scattered – in direct disobedience to God's command.

Furthermore, they want to make a name for themselves. God's name is not that which they desire to give their highest honor, they want the glory for themselves.

It is this desire for their own name, and their lack of desire to put God first which God wants to bring to an end. Our text declares it this way:

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (vv. 5-8)

God personally intervenes in the ongoings of mankind. When speaks Trinitarian-ly, “Let Us” go down. He states that nothing will be impossible for them. He is not declaring that they will be capable of the impossible. His concern is that if they join together in their sinfully arrogant pride to do this evil by acting against His will, then there will be no limit to the levels of their rebellion against Him.

God's action of confusing their language and causing them to scatter is an act of grace. His division of their language is an act to drive them from one another so that they do not continue in this act of willful disobedience.

Did you hear their sinfulness? It began with boastful arrogance, “Let us do this! Let us do that!” Their desire was to make a name for themselves, not for the glory of God's name. Their desire was to willfully go against God's will, to cast aside His word, and do their own thing.

God comes down to scatter them! He does this out of His grace and mercy! He does this so they do not further sin against Him.

Today we celebrate Pentecost! We see those of many different languages being brought together for a purpose. What is that purpose? They are gathered together that there might be one language. Now this is not a language like English, French, Greek, German, or any other that is spoken today. It is that they may be one in the Word of God.

How did God create in the beginning? Except for Adam into whom He breathed His own breath of life, He spoke all into existence. The Word of God spoke things into existence. Language is God's creative act, for He is the Word. It is the breath of God, the Spirit of God, which that Word of God speaks out – and it is that Spirit which is the breath of life given to man.

Arriving at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descends with power upon the disciples of the Word of God made flesh. People hear the sound made in the sending of His Spirit in this miraculous way. The disciples of Christ are led out by the Spirit to go out and speak. Multitudes of people, all who speak in different tongues, came together at this strange sound, and heard the disciples.

And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” (vv. 7-11)

Christ is the unity of all people! This One is the Word of God which brings together. Having had the opportunity to hear the gospel in a number of different languages, I have not always understood the words. It has always been the same Word of God made flesh who is declared to be the one who died and rose again.

The mighty works of God are the works of Christ. This should be the only language that unifies us. It has nothing to do with different tongues; English, French, German, Latvian, Russian, or some Nigerian dialect. It is the Word of God in human flesh which is the language we are to speak. It is Christ crucified that gathers us together from all the ends of the earth, and draws us to God.

It is not something we do on our own. In fact, our flesh fights against this gathering together. We would rather do it our way, proclaim it according to our understanding. Remember how they said it in Babel, “Let us” – so we echo their sinfulness as our very own, “Let us” do it as we desire. Let us do our own thing.

Christ draws us to Himself by the work of His Spirit in Word and Sacrament.

We are united to the Word of God through His miracle of baptism – by water and the Word. United to Christ – to the Word made flesh – we are united to his death and resurrection, and brought together with one another as one body in Christ.

Now, we devote ourselves to the apostles teaching, doing so in the fellowship – we gather together – and in the breaking of bread, and prayer. The body of Christ gathers together to hear the word of Christ, to eat the very body of the Word made flesh, to drink His holy precious blood, and to join our voices together as one – united in our prayers to Him alone who can do all things.

Dearly beloved of God, this is what Pentecost is all about. It is God's gathering us together by His Spirit's work. That work is always done where the Word of God, that is Jesus Christ, is present.

It is that One word which unites us all – Christ Jesus – the word made flesh which unites us. And while that Gospel of Christ may be spoken in different tongues, it is God's Word.

As we gather to hear that word, to be strengthened in that word, by the work of God's spirit, we pray the Spirit would raise our voices to speak that Word to others. We pray God's Spirit fill us to be bold and faithful witnesses, proclaiming Christ to all those around us.

Thanks be to God who has brought us together and made us one in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.