

March 10, 2024
The fourth Sunday in Lent
Pastor Matt Duerr

“God’s Narrative:Go”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. God's narrative, the Bible. It's what we're looking at. Then we see that at the very beginning, God is Creator. He created man. He gave man free choice. Man chose to sin. Sin brought death, but sin also gave birth to more sin, and more sin, and more sin.

And we saw last week that God judges sin. He floods the earth. A new start for mankind is given. But also, a message that God does hold us accountable, and He will judge us. A message we are to pass on to our children and to show them that, you know, when we look at archaeology and stuff, geology, it supports the flood. This is real and Judgment Day is real.

It is in the next chapter, Chapter 9, that we read of the rainbow in the sky and the covenant of God saying ‘I'll never flood out the earth and kill all mankind by floodwaters again.’ Of course, we have Judgment Day to come where it will be done with fire.

Chapter 10, is the genealogies of Noah’s sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. And then we come to Chapter 11, where things get a little more exciting again. Welcome to the Plain of Shinar, which, by the way, we believe is in modern day Iraq. God records, ‘now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as the people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.’ And now listen carefully. They said, (really focus) ‘Come let us.’ Oh, that's never good when we look at us or me. Come, let us make bricks. Come, let us build, wait for it... *ourselves* a city. Come, let us build a tower with its top in the heavens. Come let us make a name for, you got it, ourselves lest... now here's their reasoning. We will be dispersed over the face of the earth.

They are being directly insubordinate to what God had told Noah and his sons, to go and multiply. Be fruitful, fill the earth. Instead, the people are embracing self, in the form of society. There's a little spiritual mathematical

equation here that uses no numbers, just letters. The letter I. I + I equals = We. Oh. And why does mankind like to do that? Because mankind sees power in numbers. It's a way of saying, 'together we've got this. And it's another way of saying, 'Hey God, back off. We don't need you anymore, we're in control here now.'

Why a tower with its top in the heavens? Well, they gave their first reason, to make a name for ourselves, which again, we must contrast with Scripture. Whatever you do, in name, or in word or deed do, all to the glory of God. They're doing it for their glory, not for the glory of God. Secondly, lest we be dispersed. They knew exactly what God wanted them to do, and they didn't want to do it. They don't trust God. They want to stay together. Because together, we can do anything. And why in the heavens, the top in the heavens? God, He flooded us out once, well, this time if He tries to flood us out, He's going to have to flood Himself out because we're going to build that tower all the way up to His own home.

Were they really that devious or bad? Well, God continues His narrative. Behold, they are one people, and they all have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose will be impossible for them. Really? Yeah. In fact, I'd like you to consider a more recent history of people working together.

People working together harness the power of the atom, which can be great because nuclear fission can provide us with a boatload of electricity with very little pollution. However, it also can be used to make nuclear bombs and just decimate mankind. And why this last week we heard Putin from Russia talking about using nuclear weapons in Ukraine if the United States and NATO gets too involved? We made something that at the beginning was good and it's now become something kind of bad.

Or consider the development of rockets. They've taken man to the moon. We're looking at them taking us to Mars. They put satellites up in space so that we can use cell phones anywhere and we can get all sorts of shows on TV through satellite connections and all of that kind of stuff. And those same rockets deliver the nuclear bombs. And when we find out how we can shoot them out of the sky, we make cruise missiles or cruise rockets that evade and

travel close to the ground, and you know we can't shoot them down. But when we get to the point where we can shoot down those, then there's hypersonic missiles that go faster than the missiles that you're shooting them down with.

Or maybe we should look at just Kodak. Photography. Family memories. And pornography. Now we've got AI pornography. I feel so sorry for poor Taylor Swift, who evidently now there's AI generated, artificial intelligence generated photographs of her doing all sorts of despicable stuff, and none of it is real. That's man.

Even if we go back to something as simple as man developed the Pony Express for better communication. Which led to snail mail, which led to telegraphs, which led to telephone, which led to cell phones, which led to Twitter or X, which is formally called Twitter and Facebook. And are used to just tear people apart through social media.

We even take a look at medicine. Man working together we get antibiotics. They're good, antidepressants are good, and medications to suppress a person's gender identity. And well, Fentanyl so that people can do drugs and kill themselves while getting high.

Or even in that world of medicine, surgeries. Think of how far we've come since, like the Civil War. You know, go to Gettysburg. Take a look at the medical equipment that doctors used at Gettysburg and compare that to today. Amazing. We went from having to cut limbs off to replacing joints within those limbs. Open heart surgery. Transplants of organs. And the mutilation of young bodies as we get them to conform to their new mindset of gender identity.

Do you notice a progression? Every one of those things started out good and they ended up becoming bad. God understands this and God understood it. And He understands it much better than us. So, what was His response when He saw mankind working together to build a tower, which in itself doesn't look all that bad? He says let us go down there and confuse their language that they may not understand one another's speech.

First, is "let us." It's in the plural. He didn't say "I will." It's Us, It's Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity working together. And they did. And we did. We were dispersed and given different languages and so people of like language found each other and dispersed throughout the world. Much like

in the past sermons, a quick nutshell summary. Working together, sinful mankind can do almost anything. Unfortunately, man is sinful, and we tend to make good and turn it to bad. The Tower of Babel is a massive warning to us when it comes to the words “our, we, and society.” We tend to mess things up.

The Tower of Babel though, also has great encouragement for us, especially us right here right now. In Jackson, Valley Springs, and Lodi and in the surrounding communities together with God, we can do anything. In fact, I want you to think about that. We are told to go and make disciples of all nations. How well has that command “go” worked out in the Bible? Well, God tell, told Moses, ‘Go down to Pharaoh and tell Pharaoh, let my people go.’ How'd that turn out? God delivered His people out of Egypt. Then He said to the people of Israel, ‘hey, go down into the Red Sea. I've parted it for you. Don't worry about those walls of water, go. Trust me, go through the wilderness. Go to the Promised Land. How did that turn out? He delivered them through the Red Sea. He gave them the law out in the wilderness. Yet they sputtered around out there because as they were working together, they turned against God, But eventually, God took them to the Promised Land and what did He say there? ‘Go up against Jericho, but don't take weapons of war with you. Go and March around the city. I'll take the walls down for you.’ He did.

Then He told His disciples. “Go make disciples of all nations.” We're here today because they went, they followed God. This is the longest lasting example of God working through His people working together. And it is the one example of God working through us for the sake of salvation of His creation.

Unless of course, like the people of Babel, we don't listen, and we don't follow His command to go. And we instead focus on ourselves and say, no, Lord, we'd rather just stay right here and do it our way.

May we here in 2024 take heed and take heart. God has said go. We must go. But we don't go alone. We go together, and we go with Him. In His Name, Amen.