

The Tower of Disappointment

Genesis 11:1-9

To continue our series through the bible, today is week 5, we will be talking about the **Tower of Babel**. It is in Genesis 11 if you have your bible. This story is only 9 verses long, but it holds great significant to why we have so many different languages and races. There are 6,500 spoken languages in the world today.¹ And most of these prime languages dates back to Genesis 11 when God destroyed the Tower of Babel.

Archaeologist claimed that they have **discovered the Tower of Babel**. According to v2, in the land of Shinar, modern day Iraq. Dr. Andrew George, professor at University of London discovered a stone tablet with the carvings of a huge ziggurat, *"After I was able to interpret the text and found that its account of the tower's construction is identical to the biblical story."*² *It honestly looks a lot like the picture Linh drew for us.

So what's so bad about this tower? Is it wrong to build tall skyscrapers? No, that's not the point of this story. Today I want to show you that this **tower** represents idols you are building up in your hearts. All of us, no matter who you are, are working towards some kind of kingdom. No matter what it is, wither its marriage, a family, a currier, a hobby, a relationship, a sport, a degree, a position, a tittle, we are all striving for some kind of Goal. but the bible says, *if you don't seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, than the **destination** you will arrive at, will always be **disappointment**.*

I have titled my message "The Tower of Disappointment" Because that's where these towers will lead us. I think you will find in this story an explanation for some of the broken towers in your life, and also the present Kingdom of God that is at hand.

*¹Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ²As people 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.*

Now, if you remember from last week, God told Noah in Gen 9 to *"be fruitful and increase in numbers and fill the earth."* Which was a command he gave Adam and Eve in the garden, *"be fruitful and increase in numbers and fill the earth."* But once again, humanity does the exact opposite of what God told them to do. Instead of **spreading out**, they disobeyed by **coming together**, because they wanted to do what's right in their own eyes.

V4 shows us the root of sin and the results of them.

⁴ 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; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

¹ <https://www.infoplease.com/askeds/how-many-spoken-languages>

² <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2017/may/new-evidence-bibles-tower-of-babel-was-real>

Now Their desires: for a city, for heaven, to be great, to stay together, are **not wrong**. It's **where they are looking** for them, that is wrong. Now, several thousand years later, people haven't changed. We still desire these same things:

- We want a city: we want security, we want a place to feel safe, friends to feel belong.
 - Isn't that why family is so important in our culture?
- We want heaven: That's why people try to do good deeds so that they feel like they are a good person, they go to religious events like Christmas and Easter so that they feel sufficient.
- We want our name to be known: we want to be associated with greatness and significance. Or become tik-tok famous.
- We want to do what we think is best: we want to rely on our own strength and stability to achieve greatness.

Again, belonging, security, significance, greatness—none of those things are wrong; it's where we look for them that is wrong. In the beginning God created us to be completely satisfied in him, and **once sin has entered** onto humanity, **God had to depart**. Leaving an empty void in our hearts, searching for earthly things to fill a God shape hole. And it has left so many of us **disappointed**.

I know you feel it, because I do, the feeling of yearning for something more. We taste it in the love of our parents, we long for it in the arms of a boyfriend, we feel it in the sunset and the endless ocean. I can't help but quote Moana because even Disney, the happiest place on earth, knows something is missing. Listen:

I've been staring at the edge of the water
Long as I can remember, never really knowing why
Every turn I take, every trail I track
Every path I make, every road leads back
To the place I know where I cannot go

Where I long to be
I know everybody on this island seems so happy, on this island
I'll be satisfied if I play along
But the voice inside sings a different song
What is wrong with me?

Even Moana can't lie to herself, she knows there must be something more that her heart longs for.

Jonathan Edwards, a theologian during the 17th century said, *"fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, and friends. These are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean."*³

It will change your life if you realize that **every tower you build in your life is an attempt to fill a gap that God had designed for himself**. And without him we search for him in different things like drugs, and romance, and sex, and material things, and money, and everything else. But how many times are you going to let those **idols disappoint you?**

Human sin has been the same since the fall of man, and we can learn a lot about ourselves, from studying the Citizens of Babel and what they tried to do.

³ Edwards, "The Christian Pilgrim," in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733, [Yale University Press, 1999], 437-438

5 Actions from the Citizens of Babel

1. Builds a city for self-security (v.4a)

They didn't trust that God would be their source of comfort and safety so they took it on themselves to establish their own place. Again having security isn't bad, it's just that when we seek self-security without God, it will lead to all kinds of unwanted **stress** and **anxiety**.

- Isn't that why **insurance is a trillion dollar** industry in America?
 - Nothing wrong with insurance (even though for my family it has been an obstacle) but you get the idea that people have total dependency on insurance to remove **any danger from their lives**.
 - **Ex:** I read online that for \$118/yr you can get alien insurance—so if you get abducted by aliens, your family gets 500 thousands, if you get eaten they get 3 million. ⁴

Security is a big deal, and **if it's not in the Lord, it will go out of control**.

Our security in the Lord comes with a warranty of perfect peace and protection for life.⁵ So that we can say with confidence, (Heb. 13:6) "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" I have the God of the universe on my side, looking after me.

That's why we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done" it's not my kingdom, my city that I am desiring, but yours.

2. Aim to reach heaven through self-sufficiency (v.4b)

In the garden, Adam and Eve had the full presence of God, but because of sin, they have been cast out of Eden and now humanity has been trying to get back since. This tower was there way of working back up to heaven. These people believe that the closer they are to the sky the holier they become. But again, they are trying to reach righteousness and holiness without God. They are depending on their self-sufficiency. Their own **strength**, and their own **power**, and their own **will**.

- Isn't that way people try to be so religious? Because it makes them feel like a good person before God and others.
- That's why we have non-Christian friends that say, "I don't curse, I don't smoke, I don't do bad things, I'm a good person." Thinking that their tower of good deeds will get them to heaven. **But these are just towers of disappointment**.
- **Religion says**, "look at what I did for God". **faith says**, "look at what JESUS HAS DONE FOR ME."
- This Tower of Babel is just another fig leaf to cover up their **insufficiency**. But this time it's with bricks and tar.
- Have you realized that Christianity is the only belief where instead of us working up to righteousness, righteousness became flesh, and dwell among us.
- V3 said that they bake brick instead of using stone, Christ says, "I am the corner stone that the builders rejected." (Matt.21:42) You don't have to build anything, or present anything, but to receive. And instead of tar for glue, Jesus says, "I will lift you up, and hold you together through my own blood."
- Jesus has established his kingdom and he invites you to be it's people.

⁴<https://www.thebalance.com/alien-abduction-insurance-4160014>

⁵ <https://www.intothelight.org/encouragement/securityinjesus.asp>

3. Brought fame for self-significance (v.4c)

The people wanted to make a name for themselves. They want to do it in **their own way**, by **their own strength**, and so that they **get the glory**. They wanted to become famous.

Have you realized how selfish sin is, sin is all about you.

Here is an easy way to remember the center of S.I.N. is “I”

- It's all about what I want, so I get the glory, I get the attention, I get the praise.
- That's why people often say that the root of sin is **Pride**.
- It's a heart that says “**I will**” and not “**God's will**”
- When Isaiah described the fall of Satan, Satan sounds a lot like the citizens of Babel; **“You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly... I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’”** Isaiah 14:13-14
- What made Satan so evil was not because he murdered puppies and drank their blood, but because his heart says “**I will**” instead of “**God's will**”.

Do you have a prideful heart?

For just a minute, will you put away “how moral” of a person you are, or “how religious,” you feel, and ask yourself, at the core of your heart, is it “**God's will**,” or “**your will**”?

Deep down all of us wants to be special and valued and loved at least to one person. That's why we search for it in romance. We want to be significant. We want to matter.

Im going to say it again, these things are not wrong! **Your just investing in the wrong tower!**

4. Embracing rebellion because of self-stability (v.4d)

The people didn't want to obey God and **spread out**, but they wanted **to stay put**.

If you notice, God always pushes his people to look outward, to multiply, toward sending and giving. Sinful man always looks inward, toward building his tower for his security and his glory. This is all part of **not trusting in God, but relying on our own strength and stability**, like the citizens of Babel.

Lets see how this short story ends;

7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” 8 So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 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.

Theres a play on words: The word “**Babel**” in Hebrew sounds really similar to “**balal**”, which means “**confuse or rubbish**”⁶ God destroyed their tower overnight by causing miscumination. The curse was a language barrier. Now they have no choice but to scatter.

- I want you guys to see, that this judgement upon Babel was God's mercy.
- He wanted them to taste the rubbish of their sins. And every time they look back at Babel, they are reminded of their **disappointment**. Because God wanted them to know, this is not the way back to heaven.
- So let me ask: **What are the broken towers in your life?** Where have you tasted disappointment? A broken relationship? An addiction? Humiliation, bad grades, Getting caught cheating or stealing?
- What if you learned to look at those towers of disappointments in your life as defining moments where God says **TURN BACK TO ME!**

⁶ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/894.htm>

From this point on, the Tower of Babel will become a symble of rebellion against God. Of people rising up by their **power** and **strength**, and **glory**, building their own towers to become their own gods.

- Later a group of people will, once again, rise up and build a city called **Babylon**. They will become a huge kingdom in the OT that stands against God's people and destroying the city of Jerusalem.
- Then **In Revelation**, it says that there will arise a **new 'Babylon'**, and in the end times, people will come together to stand against God.
 - (I understand revelations can be a confusing book for a lot of us. We get lost in all the horns and trumpets, and dragans, but good thing you guys got me, I'll guild you through it really quick, please stay with me so no one gets... left behind...)
 - **Revolution** describes 2 big empiers, the **wicked city of Babylon** and the **new city of Jerusalem**. One looks like distruction and chaos, and the other resembloes a new Eden.
 - At the final battle, after Jesus comes back, the angel says, **"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons... For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality"** (Revelation 18:2-3 esv)

And that's what it's going to be like **in the last days**, Babylon is going to be distroyed once in for all. **This represents the full resalt of our sins, but it begins here in the heart of Babel.**

Genesis Ch11 ends with God cursing the people and made them scatter across the earth, this leads us to the last action of the citizens of Babel.

5. Left longing for a selfless Savior (Gen.12:1)

Ch.12 starts with God building his own tower.

But he starts in a very odd palce, he chose a weak, old, frail, sterile, insignificant man name **Abram**. To show that this new tower will NOT be built by our own strength. But by His strength through our weaknesses.

- **God says to Abram,**
"Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, ... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen.12:1-3)

God completely reverse every action that the people did.

Later God changed Abram's name to Abraham, means "*the father of many*". And bless him saying, "*17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.*"

That offspring was promised in Eden, **that offspring was Jesus, our Selfless Savior.**

God did all the work from beginning to the end!

- While we coudn't live a perfect life, **God sent Jesus to do it in our place.**
- While we can't pay for our sins, **God accepted the blood of Jesus to pay the price.**
- While we can't rise from the grave, **God brought Jesus back to life, and defeted the power of death on our behalf.**
- **Salvation, from start to finish, is the work of God!**
- What man was unable to **accomplish in his strength**, God accomplishes **by his Spirit**.

We get a glimpse of God restoring the curse of Babel in Acts 2

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire... came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them... When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because mỗi người nghe các tín nói, của chính nước mình.

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Here God's promise to reverse Babel is beginning to be fulfilled!

- And so we fast-forward through the whole Bible to the very last

book: Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

There are one of two towers being built in your life, **Your tower**, or **God's Kingdom**. You can only be working on one of the two. **Whose Kingdom are you building?**

- Are you doing his will, or your own?
- Are you building your kingdom, or living out his?
- Are you directing all praise back up to God, or keeping it on you?

Because you are created by God, you desire for him. You want to be **secure**. You want to **belong**. You want to have a **home**. To have **beauty** and **significance**. To be connected to **greatness**. **That's why ALL THESE THINGS ARE FOUND IN JESUS!**

Liten to one of my favorite psalms this week, Psalms 8:4

"What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor."

Do you know how much and how often God thinks of you?

- He cares for me deeply. had his angels watch over me 24/7.
- When it feels like I was walking through the valley of darkness his light was there.
- Not one hair falls from my head without his knowing! (And that's a lot of hair.)
- When I showed **no interest** in him; when I outright **rejected him** and told him to leave me alone, **he kept chasing me**.
- While I felt like **garbage**, he crowned me with **glory**
- While I felt **shameful** he gave me **honor**
- And his love is **richer, and deeper, and lasts longer** than anyone!
- The **arms you search for** in romance are his arms.
- Are you trying to be **special to someone?** You are to him.
- Are you **trying to matter?** You matter to him.
- And the **fullness you yearn for** is in his presence.

You either partner in the kingdom of God or continue building your tower of Babel. Which will it be?

Invitation

Is God trying to get your attention?

Maybe a **tower of disappointment** has been revealed in your life recently?

Maybe you thought **God was punishing you!**

Do you see that what He has done is **mercy?**

He's showing you that apart from him is disappointment, and in him is life and satisfaction.