

Babel and Pentecost

Tear down that Wall

By Bob Vincent

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Bible Text: Genesis 11:1-9; Leviticus 23:15-17
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Trinity Presbyterian Church
2623 N Robison Road
Texarkana, TX 75501

Website: www.rbvincent.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/rbvincent

Our scripture lesson today is taken from Genesis 11, beginning at verse 1.

Why do we have memorial days? Why do we have days of remembrance? And I'm reminded of a poem that was written for the British Empire in the wake of all those who had died in World War I, and that poem was set to music by a man named Gustav Holst, who took one of the themes from his suite of songs, *The Planets*, from Jupiter and adapted that music to the two stanzas of the hymn.

And it's sung this way, "I vow to thee my country." The first stanza deals with the British day of remembrance, which is corresponding to our Memorial Day. And so the question we ask, why are there memorial days? Why are there days of remembrance? And our scripture lesson begins in verse one of Genesis 11, page 15.

1 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2 As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. 3 They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 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 and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.' 5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. 6 The LORD said, 'If as one people speaking the same language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 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.

The word of the Lord.
“Thanks be to God.”

May we pray.

Lord, help me clearly, concisely, and practically to explain the implications of what happened there and the significance for it on this day, Pentecost Sunday. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, I want you to understand something: violence began, and bloodshed began right after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. I don't say right afterwards because we don't know how long it took, but the first murder took place in a homeschooled, home-churched, highly protected family. They weren't messing around with these folks out there. This was a highly protected family that was not being corrupted by all those filthy people out there that are trying to undermine our families (sarcasm).

That's very important and it illustrates a fundamental truth, from the moment that Adam and Eve sinned against God, when Eve reached out her hand to take that fruit and then she gave it to her husband, everything in our planet has gone cattywampus.

There was no death here before, no violence before. There was no domineering partner in a marriage. There was no putting down of a partner in a marriage. There was a radical equality in the marriage with the husband as a servant leader and the wife rejoicing in submitting to his servant leadership.

But in that environment, everything changed.

Death entered our planet and death traveled throughout the entire world so that the world we live in today is not the same as the world God created.

And sometime after that, it may have been centuries after that, the very first human being who was born with a sinful nature, Cain, ends up killing his own full-blooded brother, and that's when bloodshed begins on the planet.

And then as you read through the book of Genesis, you realize that before the flood, violence had filled the world, and so there was much murder, much killing, much violence—all these things—but there was one thing that was not true in the antediluvian world, the world before the flood, there was no such thing as a nation with a unique identity that aimed at genocidal extermination of another nation.

And that's important because as we look at what happens at the Tower of Babel, we see something very profound. You might want to follow along with me as we look there on page 15 at the bottom of the page.

And so the people there in Shinar said (in verse 4), “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens.” (Genesis 11:3-4)

Now this is an interesting concept because the Garden of Eden was on the top of a mountain, and all ancient people viewed the tops of the mountains as the dwelling place of the gods. That's how they viewed it. And so, what they're doing is, they are building what we would call a ziggurat that they might ascend to where the gods are.

Remember what Satan told Eve when he tempted her, “Ye shall be as gods”? (Genesis 3:5) And so the Tower of Babel is an attempt to go back to Eden **on my terms**. The Tower of Babel is an attempt with humankind united with its fist raised to God to imitate our first parents, Adam and Eve, because she reached in defiance of God to pull down that fruit (Genesis 3:6).

And so, what the Tower of Babel represents is united humankind, united humankind raising its fist to God, **determining on its terms** it will be as the gods because it will build a place to connect with the Garden of Eden, the dwelling of the gods (King Manasseh “worshipped all the host of the heavens (הַשָּׁמַיִם),” 2 Kings 21:3).

And that's what's there when it says:

Come, let us go down and confuse their language. (Genesis 11:7)

The word translated “confuse” is an interesting word. How many people have ever gone fishing? I have. Have you ever had an experience where you got the line all tangled up? That’s what this word in its root means (בלל *bālal*). It’s all tangled up; all confused; mixed up together. And you know that when you’ve got a small line—I mean it’s a rope, it’s bad enough, but if it’s a fishing line—you know what I finally did? Just took my knife and cut it because it’s hard to untangle. And what God did was to tangle their tongues. He tangled their tongues.

So, there they are and they’re building this tower, and over here this man says to another man, “Please hand me another brick,” and all of a sudden what he hears is, [unintelligible], and he says in response [unintelligible], and he said, “Are you making fun of me?” And he said [unintelligible]. And so, this is what’s happening, like a tangled-up fishing cord, like a tangled up knotted rope, their languages become confused and who did it? Almighty God did it. He rewired their brains instantly.

Can God rewire your brain and my brain? Can he heal someone who is mentally challenged? Can he heal someone who’s schizophrenic? Can he do it in a moment of time? He can. Because what God did at the Tower of Babel was in a moment of time, he rewired all their brains so that the people who were speaking the language of this one guy, they ended up going off together, and the ones of that language, off together.

And that’s when genocidal wars began because before that time, it was just husbands killing their wives and wives killing their husbands, but everybody was of the same culture, the same ethnicity, they didn’t have these divisions within humankind.

But from that point on, from the Tower of Babel on, we have had confusion and lining up of this group with that group.

Black lives matter, white lives matter, red lives matter, so on. We can go on. And they all matter, “Red and yellow, black and white,” they’re “precious in His sight.”

But from that point on, from the time of God's judging the Tower of Babel on, you have people groups siding over here against that group. "We're not like them." And what happens as a result of that confusion, is for the first time in the history of our planet, you have people groups attempting to eliminate, wipe out genocidally, other people groups.

That's why we've had memorial days from time immemorial. That's why we've had remembrance days far back in time as the Tower of Babel. It's because nation rises up against nation.

Does that mean that all war is wrong? No, it doesn't. Is it legitimate for a nation to defend itself against other nations? Yes, it is.

What happens when these violent hordes of barbarians come riding into your little town? They rape your wives and daughters, they kill you, and they kill your sons, and they take some small sons and daughters and women and make them slaves to go and work and do for others. This is the story of our race from the time of the Tower of Babel on because, "We don't speak the same way they do. I hear that accent. You hear that? They ain't one of us." Wow!

Do you know the people in North Louisiana sound different than the people in South Louisiana? When I first moved to Louisiana in 1975, I began to look for people who licked cats. What?

Well, in South Louisiana, the way the TH is pronounced, the word Catholic is pronounced Catlick, and so... I'm making a joke, but honestly, in South Louisiana, the word Catholic is pronounced Catlick. And so, what I'm getting at is you want to know where somebody's from in Louisiana, it's quite pronounced.

You've got New Orleans. They sound like they're from New Jersey or New York. Then you've got South Louisiana, and they have Catlicks. And then you come up to North Louisiana and they sound like people from Mississippi and Alabama and Texas. And in the middle where we've lived for now since 1975, a long time, it's the brackish water where all the cultures come together, but you can still spot, "Oh yeah, they must be down there from Laugh-a yette," not Lafayette, Laugh-a yette, and so on.

And that's the story of the human race. We choose according to our own identity, and that all begins at the Tower of Babel, and it leads to war and conflict and people identifying people as outsiders. "He's an outsider."

And people often wonder, "Where does he come from?" And they can't ever figure it out because I've lived in so many places, and I had a voice teacher who taught me how to sing, and therefore my accent has so many threads within it, I'm kind of like an amalgam of all the places I've lived.

But the point I'm making is the Tower of Babel is the beginning of genocidal wars, and we defend our nations because the result of not defending our nation is the weak among us are raped, murdered, sold into slavery, and that's the story of the human race from the Tower of Babel on, with one ethnic group rising against another.

And so, the name of the place is called Babel (בָּבֶל) because they both have that second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Beth (ב), but Beth with a dot in the middle (בּ) of it is pronounced like B, and when it doesn't have a dot (ב), it's pronounced like V. So Babel, Bavel, the Tower of the city of Babel.

Turn with me, if you would, to the book of Acts, Acts 2, Acts 2, and I want you to look at Pentecost in a radically different light. This is on page 1,692, page 1,692 and it says, "When the day of Pentecost came."

What is the day of Pentecost? Well, we're going to come back to the day of Pentecost, but in order to understand what it is, you now want to leave a note there to come back there and turn to Leviticus 23, Leviticus 23.

So, what is the day of Pentecost, and it's identified very clearly, Leviticus 23, page 191 and beginning at verse 15. Leviticus 23, beginning at verse 15, page 191.

From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. (Leviticus 23:15)

Okay, seven full weeks. Turn the page, verse 16, "Count off 50 days." Count off 50 days.

And so, what you have there is the dual form (חֲמִשָּׁנִי) of the Hebrew verb *chamesh* (hāmēš חֲמִשָּׁנִי), which is 50, and in the Greek Septuagint, the word for 50 days is *pentekonte* (πεντήκοντα), *pentekonte* (pentēkonta), *pentekonte*. We get the word Pentecost (pentēkostē πεντηκοστή) from it.

Pentecost Sunday follows the Feast of First Fruits. It is called the Feast of Weeks, and it's always on Sunday. The Passover may occur on any number of days, but the Sabbath after the Passover marks where you begin to count until you come to the Lord's Day.

Now, I think this is very significant. Have you ever thought about why do we worship on Sunday? Because the Sabbath day is a distinctively Jewish day that is related very much to the burden of the law. And it was a burden.

Do you know that you could be executed under Old Testament law for picking up sticks on the Jewish Sabbath? Did you know that? Do you know that breaking the Sabbath carried a death penalty offense under God's law? (Numbers 15:32-36)

Now notice something very significant: you count from that Sabbath, 50 days, 50 days will always make it on Sunday. What day did Jesus rise from the dead on? On the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. And the Lord's Day, in effect, is the eighth day. It's the day of the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). It's a day of life.

You know that the Western church wears red on Pentecost, symbolizing the fire of God, and the Eastern church wears green because it symbolizes life, and both things are true. The fire of God comes in those flames of fire that lit on every believer on that 50th day from the time of the last of the Sabbath after the Passover.

So, Christians don't worship on the Sabbath.

You might go into Jewish synagogue if you want to do evangelistic work, and that's what you find in the New Testament. The apostles would go into Jewish synagogues on the Sabbath, which begins on Friday and ends on Saturday (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). But Christians, when they gather together as Christians, always worship on Sunday, the Lord's Day, the first day of the week and that's significant (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

Now he says here in verse 16:

Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:16)

He says in verse 17:

From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour. (Leviticus 23:17)

What? What's that doing there? Do you see what's there? What is the next statement? What is the next clause? Wait a minute! Made with what? What kind of flour? What kind of flour is it made of? Somebody tell me.

Made with yeast (chāmēts, חָמֵץ, Leviticus 23:17, *Cf.* Leviticus 7:13; Amos 4:5).

Which would you rather have, some nice soft bread made with yeast, so it rises, or some hard, crunchy stuff like matzah that's unleavened? I mean, when you really want to celebrate, you want a cake, right? You want something where the flour is rising and gets air in it because of yeast. You don't want to have a birthday cake made out of matzah. You know, isn't this rare?

Everywhere else you find it has to be unleavened. But why does Pentecost have leavened bread? Because leaven represents the joy of God. The yeast of God is the Holy Spirit who puts the air in the flour. The Holy Spirit is the one that puts his breath into us as we celebrate Pentecost, and today is Pentecost Sunday, and so he says that you offer this fine flour baked with yeast.

Now let's turn back to Acts 2. Acts 2. So, on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:1, page 1,692:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And they saw (Notice, these were not actually tongues

of fire) They saw **what seemed to be** tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each one of them. (Acts 2:1-3)

Think of all of the oppression that began in the Garden of Eden when Eve led her husband astray by reaching up in rebellion against God and his word and taking that fruit and then saying, “Here, you need to eat some of this.” (Genesis 3:6)

And what is the curse?

You see the curse operating throughout the entire Old Testament from that point on. Exploitation. By and large, civilizations from that point on have made wives virtual slaves. Think about it. From that point on, the curse that was visited on Adam (Genesis 3:17-19), different from the curse that’s visited on Eve (Genesis 3:16), and throughout human civilization.

What civilization of all the civilizations of humanity lifted up women? Christianity. Why did Christianity lift up women? Because Christianity is the undoing of the curse of Adam’s sin, and it’s the undoing of the curse that God visited on the human race at the Tower of Babel.

And so, notice here what happens is that everyone there is filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now I want to focus on that gift of tongues for a moment without getting off into some controversy where we might disagree with Baptists, on the one hand, or Assemblies of God on the other, or who knows who else. We’re not going to deal with that.

But what we’re going to deal with is the significance of speaking in tongues **that day**. And so here we go. As we see, as we go on down, verse 5, page 1,692:

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews **from every nation under heaven**. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. (Acts 2:5-6)

Each one heard them speaking in his own language. Now think about it for a moment. This is how they describe it.

Utterly amazed (verse 7), they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that **each of us hears them in his own native language?**” (Acts 2:7-8)

And I have a theory I’ll share with you in a moment. And they name them out:

“Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” (Acts 2:9-12)

Now I want you to see something here. This is just amazing. What is amazing is that this is the mirror opposite of the Tower of Babel, and if you really reflect on the structure in Greek, perhaps the miracle is done in the ears of the hearers (ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις).

I don’t know, because what happens is all of these people are speaking in a language unknown to them, and if you had a tape recorder, you might have heard some things, but we didn’t have tape recorders then. And so, they’re all speaking, and yet the people are hearing each one in his or her own language. The Romans were hearing Latin. The Arabs were hearing Arabic. The Medes were hearing Farsi, and so on. Each one is hearing in his own language the glorious wonders of God.

And so, they ask what this means, and Peter stands up to explain to them what it means and let’s look at that for a moment. He says:

Peter stood up with the Eleven. (I thought they were the 12. Well, Judas hung himself and was buried. And he says):

“Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose.” (Acts 2:14-15)

Can you just imagine what was going on? Were these people sad? The Holy Spirit had just been poured out on the church.

For the very first time in the history of the people of God, the Holy Spirit who had been poured out on this individual and that individual, people like David (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 23:2), people like Samson (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14), people like some of the prophetesses such as Deborah (Judges 4:4ff.) and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22), but it was rare.

The people of God as a whole had never had the Holy Spirit poured out on them.

And so, he says:

These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! (Acts 2:15)

I mean, can you imagine that suddenly this group of people streams out of the Upper Room where they'd been staying, and they're in the street and they're probably dancing a little bit and they're just shouting praises to God, and they're shouting praises to God in languages they don't understand and they're very, very happy.

And you know what people in our sad world think? If you're really happy, you must be drinking. You realize that? Our world looks at people who are happy—we're so sad, you know—and they think, "He must be drinking. What's he got?" (Cf. Ephesians 5:18)

And so, they look at them and that's the accusation obviously, and he says, "It's only nine in the morning" (Acts 2:15).

Now look at verse 16. This is very important.

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel (Notice it so carefully), "I will pour out my Spirit on **all people**. Your **sons and daughters** will prophesy, your **young men** will see visions, your **old men** will dream dreams. Even on my servants, **both men and women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy." (Acts 2:16-18; Joel 2:28-29)

Do you see what's happening here? What's happening here is the reverse of the Tower of Babel. What's happening here is that God is treating men and women alike, old people and young people alike. In other words, **there is a tremendous unity given to the human race on the day of Pentecost, the 50th day.**

(And by the way, today, because it was Memorial Day weekend in 1973, the Presbytery, the Midwest Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Psalm singers, came to Wichita, Kansas, and laid their hands on me, ordaining me by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). So today is a 50th year for me.)

It's a 50th day for the church from the Sabbath after the Passover.

So, what happens? It's a universal thing. God takes women, God takes men, God takes babies, even perhaps someone like Iona. You know that John the Baptist became full of the Holy Spirit when he was in his mother's womb? (Luke 1:41-44)

So, Pentecost means a very new beginning. You realize what the world was like before Pentecost?

Now God worked among the people of Israel, but among the other nations, what were they like?

What were the Druids like? What was Celtic Britain like before St. Patrick came—and St. Patrick came in the power of the Holy Spirit—what was it like? People killed their children. They made blood sacrifices to appease the gods, the gods who live up there. They made blood sacrifices, even their own children. I think of one of the most brutal things that happened was when there was a conflict and the king of Moab is being defeated by Edom and Israel and Judah, and he takes his firstborn son and he takes him up on the wall and he kills him and slaughters him as a sacrifice to Chemosh (כְּמוֹשׁ) (2 Kings 3:27), who is analogous to Molech (מֹלֶךְ), because the pagan gods, the demons (1 Corinthians 10:20), they want the blood of your children (Cf. Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10; Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; 1 Kings 11:4-10; 18:28; 2 Kings 3:26-27; 16:3; 17:17-18; 21:6, 16; 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Psalm 106:37-38; Isaiah 37:5; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:4-7; 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21; 20:26, 31; 23:37-39; Micah 6:7).

They want you to slaughter your children. They want you to give blood sacrifices. They want you to take away the lives of your little ones, because Satan and his demons love human blood sacrifice. Kill your babies for your own prosperity.

And what happens at Pentecost?

Pentecost is an intrusion of the living Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, through the Holy Spirit, giving us a new humanity, a humanity that is devoted, not to what? Lifting up the sword, carnal sword, in war, but lifting up “the sword of the Spirit, the word of God” (Ephesians 6:10-17).

The weapons of our warfare, according to 2 Corinthians 10:4, are not carnal, they’re mighty through God:

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of down of fortresses, strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:4)

In other words, this is what Pentecost Sunday is about and this is why it’s so significant. Pentecost Sunday is about doing away with the need ever again to have a Memorial Day, a day of remembering the dead who died in battle.

It’s about a new way of warfare. The new way of warfare is not about going out and killing your enemies; the new way of warfare, with a new humanity that has begun on the day of Pentecost, is about going out to your enemies and being willing to die for the faith.

See, that’s what God calls us to. He calls us to go into all the world and preach the good news, and there’s some places if you go, you’re going to be killed. Wow! Think about the five missionaries who were killed by the Auca Indians. And think about what happened. What happened was the widows determined to go back and win those people to Christ. Are you kidding me? You know, the book *Through Gates of Splendor* tells that story and people think, “Well, they’re crazy.”

(Back in April 2023, I had the privilege of being with Valerie Shepherd and her husband. She was 10 months old when her mother and Rachel Saint, the widow of Nate Saint, traveled back to live among the Huaorani people who had killed their husbands, so that they could lead them to Christ.)

Well, I want to tell you, a person who's full of the Spirit of God looks crazy to other people because they're willing to die for the faith. Not just a stubborn, "Ah, you're not going to do this to me!" but for a willingness, willing to lay down their lives, to have their own blood shed so that people will hear the good news. Because God's will for humanity, undoing the curse at the tower of Babel, is that every nation and tribe and tongue throughout all the world, Revelation 7:9. (I'm on a committee of the General Assembly of our denomination that's entitled that, The Revelation 7:9 Team, and it's so that every nation and tribe and tongue and people would come to know the Lord and come into his church.

Let me say this one last thing before I address those who are listening on the internet. What is it?

The church of Jesus Christ doesn't look like our communities in most of our places, and our denomination recognized that, and so we're studying how can we make the church reflect our communities because the church of Christ in the first three centuries of Christianity was a church that was truly "Catholic," catholic (from καθολικός, catholic, meaning according to the whole, κατά, a marker of space, with ὅλος, complete in extent, whole, entire), that is universal.

People came from all cultures, all tongues, all tribes, and they came together in their little underground churches. You want to have the greatest contrast between the Lord Jesus Christ and Muhammad, it's this:

Jesus never killed his enemies, Jesus let his enemies kill him. And in the first three centuries of Christianity, Christians never killed their enemies. What they did was let their enemies kill them. Contrast that with Muhammad.

I wrote my doctorate studying this. Muhammad was a violent man. Muhammad practiced the brutal warfare that humankind has practiced since the Tower of Babel, where a caravan from another tribe is going through, and so they had raiding parties that went out from Medina, because Muhammad was forced to leave. And so, they began to take up arms. They killed the men unless they converted to Islam. They took the women and the children as slaves. And as long as they gave 20 percent to the Muslim people, to the Muslim nation, the Muslim *Umma*, they kept the rest. And that's why Islam spread so incredibly fast.

Muhammad dies and within a short time of his death, it takes over the entire Arabian Peninsula, and it eventually spreads across North Africa, and it eventually spreads up into Eastern Europe. And a hundred years after the death of Muhammad (AD 632, 11 AH), the advance of Islam into Europe was stopped at the Battle of Tours (AD 732).

Wow! But it was all “by swords loud clashing and roll of stirring drums.” (Cf. “Lead on, O King Eternal”)

But God’s kingdom is a “Pentecostal” kingdom. And if it’s a Pentecostal kingdom, it means it’s a kingdom of peace. It’s a kingdom of loving your neighbor. It’s a kingdom of laying down our lives.

And I’ll tell you this one quick story. There’s a young man who worked for me briefly in our church and then withdrew. He was the son of a doctor and his mom’s still alive, and he decided to withdraw from Louisiana Tech and enroll in Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, where he met a young woman.

They married, and they felt God was calling them to the mission field. And so, they went to Taiwan, and they’re studying the language, and his name is Will Brown, and he was attempting to preach in Mandarin Chinese, which is the language of Taiwan, Formosa, of the people that came and escaped with Chiang Kai-shek in the Kuomintang.

Anyhow, he had trouble. He had trouble. He could speak it like I can speak Spanish. You know, if I got a phrase book, I learn things like “*Agua en botella, no hielo, gracias, señor,*” and “*¿Dónde está el baño?*” But beyond that, I have to have a phrase book, and that’s how he was speaking when he was speaking to people who were in the church in Taiwan.

And then one day he went back in a backroom, and he cried out to God. He said, “O God, I want to preach in the language of the Chinese people I’ve been called to minister to.” He sought out the Lord. And then when he went out to speak, he was able, all that he had studied, he could finally speak fluently without hesitation in the power of God in Mandarin Chinese.

God’s still doing things like that today because **world missions is really the conquest of the nations by the kingdom of God**, and I want to say to anyone watching this on the internet:

Have you experienced the power of God? What is it? What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The baptism of the Holy Spirit, which every real Christian has received (1 Corinthians 12:13), is not the same as being filled with the Spirit.

We can be filled with the Holy Spirit today, this morning, and then driving away from here, somebody pulls out in front of us, and some old words come out of our mouths, rooted in the days of our non-Christianity, and we say something horrible. And so, it's like getting a nail in your tire.

So, what do you do?

As a Christian, you need to ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit every day, every morning, every moment, so that your life is characterized by being dominated by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, just as someone who is dominated by alcohol, his whole life, his speech, his patterns, even how he walks, demonstrate that he's full of alcohol (Ephesians 5:18, note the present tense in Greek, πληροῦσθε, present middle imperative of πληρόω. Note how New Testament believers are filled with the Holy Spirit more than once: Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9). That's what God wants for you today and perhaps you're listening, and you might want to join in this prayer with me as I close out the service.

Holy Spirit, you are the Lord and giver of life. You proceed from the Father, through the Son, to everyone who calls on your name and wants your power and presence in their lives.

Lord, would you right now fill me and, Lord, everyone that's praying with me—pray that way.

Lord, would you right now fill me so with your presence that when people see me, I might even smell like Christ in a certain figurative way, that I would remind them of Jesus, gentle Jesus, who laid down his life, who made himself a doormat so that we can enter heaven, because he shed his blood to wash our sins. Fill me, O Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.