

**Pastor Kyle Mercer**  
What Are You Building?

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Series: Made to Multiply  
Genesis 11:1-9

**BIG IDEA - THE POWER AND POTENTIAL OF LANGUAGE,  
INNOVATION, AND UNITY**

Good morning, Two Cities Church. Whether you're down in Lexington or you're here, grab your Multiply journal and the Multiply card you got when you walked in. I'm going to visit that at the end of the service. We'll talk about exactly why we gave you that card again today.

Before we get into the text for today, I would be remiss not to talk about something that's on everyone's mind. I'm not talking about App football or Wake basketball. I'm talking about the election. Can you guys believe it's three days away? That means the next time we gather, we are going to have a new president-elect of the United States of America, whether it's Donald Trump or Kamala Harris.

Now, as soon as I start to talk about this, some of you may go, "Should pastors even talk about politics?" Here's the hard thing. One of my mentors told me this. He said, "As soon as you talk about politics or any sensitive issue, everyone in the room is not listening to learn; they're listening to see what side you're on."

People may ask, "Should pastors talk about politics? What about the separation between church and state?" Which doesn't show up in the Declaration of Independence or in the Constitution or in the Bill of Rights, but you knew that. That's actually a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists in Connecticut. The whole point of that phrase and idea was to protect the church from the state, not to protect the state from the church.

Now this is interesting. The way things go bad is when the state either persecutes the church or if the state wields the church for its own purposes. That's why that was written. So then you may say, "Well, should godly people, and maybe especially godly leaders, ever call out governments?" Well, I don't know how else to read the Bible. What is the

story of Moses and Pharaoh? What's the story of Elijah and Ahab? What's the story of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar? What's the story of Nathan the prophet personally confronting King David when he had a moral failure?

How about when we go to the New Testament and meet, according to Jesus, the greatest guy who ever lived, John the Baptist? What did he do? Confront Herod and get his head cut off because of it. How about the apostle Paul? He confronted many political leaders and even had a private, personal conversation with Governor Felix about his lack of self-control.

So, here's what has happened, guys. You may think (some of you are thinking this), "Is the church getting more political?" No. Politics is getting more theological. Politics is getting more spiritual. As soon as government got out of its lane and started to erase gender and redefine marriage and redefine abortion as women's healthcare rights, and then indoctrinate our children in the schools, politics became theological.

So, here's what we're saying three days from the election. Three phrases: *read your Bible*, *vote your conscience*, and *trust your God*. What we're asking you to do, what Christians have always done... Hopefully you're informed. You're informed about the parties and the platforms and the policies, but more importantly what the Bible says.

There's no such thing as a perfect candidate. People and personalities last four to eight years; policies can last a very long time. So, you're voting for a candidate whose policies are closer to divine design. There is no such thing as a perfect party or a perfect candidate. So, the first thing is read your Bible. It's like, "Okay. What candidate, what platform, and what party is more pro-life and promotes religious liberty and freedom of speech?"

Secondly, vote your conscience. Here's a civics 101 lesson. You weren't expecting this today. We live in a democracy, but it's actually better defined as a constitutional republic, which means the elected officials are representatives of the people. So, at the top of the org charts of the United States government are the voting American people. Amazing.

So you need to vote. Some of you go, "I'm not going to vote." That's still a political act. You can't escape it. Here's what's interesting. Last election, in 2020, supposedly (who knows how they count these things) 30 million Christians in America didn't vote in an election that some say was decided by 40,000 votes.

Okay. Read your Bible. Vote your conscience. Here's the fun one: trust God. This is a uniquely Christian thing. Look, guys. I promise you I'm going to be (I hope you will too) like a piece of cork in the ocean. You can't push me down. I'm jumping back up. I'm going to be the happiest, most joyful version of myself next week no matter what happens. Okay? Because we believe God is in control of those who are in control, and though I'm telling you to give a candidate a vote, I'm saying we can only give Jesus Christ our heart. Let's pray.

Lord, thank you for our church, and thank you for the opportunity to be a dual citizen of heaven and America, if we're Christians here in America. Thank you for the responsibility, the burden, the privilege, the honor to vote. Thank you for opportunities to know our Bibles, and thank you for opportunities to know policies and platforms.

Lord, we pray that people would do exactly that, that we would read our Bibles, vote our consciences, but most importantly and most uniquely Christian that we would trust you in the midst of all of it. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

All right. Enough about that. Does anyone else love to travel globally? I love to travel. I just love it. I love airports. I love being on planes. I love the whole experience. I especially love traveling internationally. I've been able to go all over Europe. I've been to China twice. That was kind of crazy. Last summer I was in Africa. The farthest I've ever felt away, though, was when I was in Mumbai, India.

I still am amazed at technology, that I could get on an airplane in Newark, New Jersey, and 15-1/2 hours later be in Mumbai, India, which is completely overwhelming. Everything tastes different. Everything smells different. Everything looks different. They drive like crazy over there. In India, there's this thing called a *rickshaw*. Google this later. It is a golf cart on three wheels. That's very dangerous, and they're everywhere.

Here's the other thing. Whenever you're a pastor and you go to India and you meet all of these Indian Christians... I didn't know this. I know this now. They ask you to preach every time you come even though you're not ready. They're like, "Would you like to preach?" You're like, "Uh, okay. Yeah."

Then, all of the Indian people... You know, we say "Yes" like *this*. We nod in agreement like *this*. They do this kind of side-to-side head tilt, which looks a lot like how we shake our head to indicate disagreement. So, I'm preaching, and I'm thinking it's going well, and they're shaking their heads. I had to get used to it. Why am I telling that story? If you open up your Bibles to Genesis, chapter 10, we're going to see the creation of the nations, the creation of languages, the creation of people groups.

This is neat. There is no other world religion that answers the question...*How did we get the nations?* How did we get different people groups, tribes, ethnicities, and languages? Genesis, chapter 10, answers that. I'm going to show you. We're going to skim Genesis 10, and we're going to end up in Genesis 11.

Here's what I want you to know. In the book of Genesis there are a bunch of genealogies. Well, that makes sense. There's the root word there...*Genesis, genealogies*, book of beginnings. If you look in your Bible, in Genesis, chapters 4 and 5, there's a genealogy; then chapter 10 is a whole genealogy; then chapter 11, which we'll focus on today, is the story of the Tower of Babel; and then there's another genealogy.

If you're reading your Bible for the first time, you're like, "Why is the Hebrew phone book in my Bible? What are all of these names?" Listen. God is telling us how we went from names... Here's what you're going to see in the genealogies. You're going to go from names to tribes to nations. I'll show you this. This is going to make a lot more sense in a few minutes.

Look with me at verse 1. ***"These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth."*** By the way, as the Bible progresses, we don't follow the two other brothers' lines; we only follow Shem's line. He's the godly line. The rest of the Old Testament is following the line of Shem. It says, ***"Sons were born to them after the flood."***

So far, if you read the genealogies, it's all names. In chapter 10, we move from names to tribes or clans. I'll explain this. Read these with me. ***"Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth..."*** Now we get to tribes. ***"...and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Gergashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites."*** The parasites, the electrolytes, and the termites. They're all there. (I'm seeing if you're paying attention.)

Here's what's important. Verse 18: ***"Afterward the clans [tribes] of the Canaanites dispersed."*** So, you go from names to clans, but then drop down to the last verse. Chapter 10, verse 32: ***"These are the clans..."*** I didn't read them all to you, but there are even more. ***"...of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies..."*** Here it is, the first time this phrase ever shows up in the Bible. ***"...in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood."***

Okay. Let me explain what happened. You had individuals, Adam and Eve. Individuals create families. For the beginning of the Bible, you basically have some families. Then families eventually turn into tribalism. By the way, here's where we're going to go. You have three options in life to organize yourself (you're not going to believe how relevant this sermon is): *tribalism*, *globalism*, or *nationalism*.

It starts out in tribalism. I guess tribalism works, supposedly, until you have like 150 people. Then it doesn't work anymore. When you think tribes and clans, think large extended families. The problem with tribalism is it leads to factions and fighting. Sadly, as a nation, we are descending somehow and devolving back into tribalism. I mean, social media... There are a lot of good things we could say about it, but it has made us unbelievably tribal.

Tribalism always leads to anarchy. So what they do... And I'll show you this. This isn't a sermon on globalism, but it's very interesting that the first attempt at globalism is Genesis, chapter 11. It happens very early. You have one language, one government, one religion, and one economic system. It's the first attempt at globalism.

Globalism always leads to tyranny. You can remember this. Tribalism always leads to anarchy and globalism always leads to tyranny. You cannot read the story of Genesis, chapter 11, and not come to this conclusion. God doesn't want globalism. Why is that? Listen. This is so deep. God creates nationalism. God creates the nations. Why? To suppress sin.

Is it a good thing that there are a bunch of languages and people groups and nations that are worried about each other and are always watching and cannot easily communicate with each other to do evil? Yes. Do you want the whole world to look like North Korea? No, you don't. So, God in his grace... We wouldn't know this unless the Bible told us.

They attempted to do globalism. Maybe they said it was about climate change. Maybe they said it was for world peace. We don't know. There are a lot of reasons, because we have to have a big problem to solve. That's why we all have to come together. God says, "Actually, that's not good." Nationalism is for peace and prosperity.

Now, I'll show you this. Acts 17: ***"And he made from one man every nation..."*** That's actually not a reference to Adam; it's a reference to Noah. ***"...of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries..."*** Nations need boundaries and borders. ***"...of their dwelling place..."***

Look. This is the other reason God created the nations. We don't fully understand it. We're not God. Look at the verse. ***"...that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him."*** Today we see how the nations were created, and we see it by looking at the story of the Tower of Babel.

Here's where we're going today. We're going to see the power and potential of humanity. I mean, it's only nine verses. I'm going to read it to you. Basically, in this passage, God looks down on humanity and goes, "Honestly, I'm impressed." You'll see this. I'm paraphrasing, but he's like, "I'm honestly impressed. I'm impressed at this city, and I'm impressed at this tower. Nothing will be impossible for them if they keep doing this."

So, on our final Sunday together in this *Made to Multiply* series, we're going to learn three great lessons of good things the people who were building the Tower of Babel did, and then the two sins that undermined it and corrupted everything they were doing. So, three good things and two sins. Let's read the story first. Genesis 11:1-9. ***"Now the whole earth had one language and the same words."*** The last verse of chapter 10 says we get to nationalism. We get to God creating nations, but it happens first with an attempt at globalism.

***"And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said,***

***'Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.'***

***And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do.'*** God sees their human potential, but not for good.

***"And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth."***

Okay. You know the story. Three great things they did, but they did them with bad motives. You can do the right thing with the wrong motive. This is where we're going to spend the majority of our time today. We're going to see the power and potential of *language*, the power and potential of *innovation*, and the power and potential of *unity*.

First, if you go to verse 1, it says they had the same language and the same words. Now, we know from Genesis, chapter 1, that the first thing we see God doing is speaking, and then we're made in his image, so it would be the right thing to think that maybe the main thing we do, being made in God's image, is we speak. We have the ability for meaningful communication with other people.

Now, do you notice in verse 1 it says, "One language and the same words"? That means they had the same vocabulary and the same dictionary. What is always happening in a culture over time, for various reasons...sometimes intentionally, sometimes words change their meaning...is sometimes we find ourselves having the same vocabulary...

Have you ever been fighting with your aunt or uncle and been like, "We're talking about the same things, but we're *not* talking about the same things"? We have the same vocabulary, but we don't have the same dictionary. Have you noticed the word *marriage* has a new definition, the word *diversity* has a new definition, and the word *tolerance* has a new definition?

God looks down. Look at what he says in verse 6. ***"And the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do.'"*** So, I want to talk about language, because I want to harness it for good. By the way, what we're trying to do is what these people did out of fear we're going to do out of faith, what these people did for themselves we're going to do for God, and what these people did by staying we're going to do by going.

I want to talk about the power of language. Words create worlds. Your words have the ability to create life. Mark Twain said he could live off of one compliment for two weeks. Isn't that true? Can't you still sometimes think about...? Someone said something nice to you weeks or months ago and you still think about it.

With our words, we have the ability to encourage someone who's discouraged or depressed. It's amazing. Someone could be really suffering, and your words and the way you would come alongside them... You could unbelievably comfort them. People are lost, and they need direction in life, and, unbelievably so, you could use your words to bring counsel and direction. You could use your words to inspire somebody to be more than they are.

I asked a second ago if you remember when somebody said something good about you. Maybe some of you couldn't think of something, but I guarantee all of us could think about when somebody, maybe our ex-whatever, maybe our dad, said something negative about us. I still remember when the girl I liked in fourth grade told me I had a big nose. I still remember it. I'm over it...mostly.

Our words have the ability to beat people up and break them down. We can insult somebody. We can belittle somebody. We can criticize somebody. We can manipulate a situation. Okay. Here's the principle for us: *if you don't like your world, change your words*. So, if you're like, "I don't like the world of my marriage," then change your words *in* your marriage.

The quickest way to change your world is to change your words. "I don't like the world of my marriage." Well, then try this on. Try changing the words *in* your marriage. I read this week (and I think this is true) that the average person thinks and says 90 percent of the exact same things every day. No wonder our lives aren't changing. We have to think God's thoughts after him.

By the way, the first person you need to start saying new words to is yourself. To quote the late, great Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, too many people are listening to themselves instead of preaching to themselves. Here's how this works. Language breaks into three categories. We know this. Follow this. Language breaks into *symbols*, *stories*, and *slogans*. That's how culture gets created, because at the center of culture is language.

*Symbols* are visualized vocabulary. Symbols are so powerful that you spent 50 more dollars to have the Patagonia thing on your shirt, because if it didn't have it, it would be worth \$30 less even if it was the same material. You can't have Columbia. It's not 2004. I see some of you dads out here have Columbia. That's all right.

They're so powerful. This is branding. They're so powerful that even when I mention the symbols of today they can quiet a room...the transgender flag, the MAGA hat, the Black Lives Matter fist. Symbols are so powerful. This is why we're having a conversation about

flags and monuments. What are we talking about? We're talking about symbols, which represent language, which represents stories.

So, there are symbols and there are *stories*. Of course, our nation is confused because we're fighting about the story of our nation. I mean, this is deep, guys. And then *slogans*. I mean, I still don't know what to do with all of those yard signs. It's like an ancient secular creed. You've seen them. I don't even know what they say. "Water is life." "People are human." You know what I'm saying? You've almost wrecked your car trying to read them. No one knows what they say.

What I want you to know is it's exactly how you try to create culture. This is it. You change symbols, you change stories, and you change slogans. I can't solve the problem of our nation, but I can tell you how it works in the church. We have one symbol. What unites Christians is the symbol of the cross of Jesus Christ. It didn't take Christians long to go, "What is going to be the main symbol?" Well, it's going to be about what Jesus Christ has done, not about what we're going to do.

It's about that death has been defeated and forgiveness has been extended in Christ. We have one story, guys. It's the story of God pursuing us, that he made us on purpose for a purpose, that we're sinful by nature and choice, that God sent his only Son after us to live, die, and rise, and that through repentance and faith we can have a relationship.

Listen. We have to tell a better story than our culture. Here's the story of our culture. It's not good. "You are the product of time and chance." That's not super encouraging. I don't know how nothing created everything and the impersonal created the personal, but okay. On top of that, "You're here for no reason." I'm also not encouraged by that. "But don't worry. When you die, you disappear." I'm not encouraged by that either.

We wonder why there's this mental health crisis when that's the story we're telling people. Then, our slogan is the Scriptures. What unites us is a book. What unites us is passages of Scriptures and truths about God. So, first, I just want to tell you we're going to need to harness the power of language in symbols, stories, and slogans as we multiply.

Secondly, the power of innovation. Look with me at verse 3. "***And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks...'***" Now, up until this point they didn't have bricks; they just had stones. With stones you could only build something so wide and so tall, but now they have bricks. "***...and burn them thoroughly.***" So, they have a new method with which they make them.

***"And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar."*** It was like a very ancient form of asphalt. "***Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.'***"



So, I want to talk about technology and innovation. I don't think I've ever done this. I want to give us a theology of technology. First of all, if you've been following the story of Genesis, you see that innovation is the obvious outcome of the call to subdue and have dominion.

Adam and Eve are called. "Hey, we want you to subdue, and we want you to have dominion." Basically, here's what you're doing. You're harnessing the raw materials of creation for human flourishing. So, let me give you the purpose of technology, because you have your iPhone and we have the Internet and all that.

The purpose of technology from a biblical worldview is to alleviate human suffering and accelerate human flourishing. I mean, aren't you grateful for anesthesia? Every mom in here is like, "The epidural is God's grace to humanity." This is really important. Think about this. None of us would want to live even 200 years ago.

The flushing toilet is the greatest invention in human history. From what I've read, literally, there is nothing...there's no other medical procedure...there's nothing that has done more for human health than the flushing toilet. Air conditioning, Internet access, airplanes that can take us across our nation in five hours... It's unbelievable, but here's the thing. All the technology can be used for good, but technology can also be used equally for bad.

The most classic example is the Internet. I mean, there's probably no tool that's used more effectively to bring the gospel into different languages and reach unreached people groups in different places than the Internet, but it would take me the rest of the sermon to name all of the evil things that are done by the Internet, not least of which is sinful men organizing sex trafficking units to do sex trafficking across the world.

Here's the whole idea. You cannot have technological progress without moral and spiritual progress. The problem was not the innovation; it was that their hearts weren't ready for that technology, and then they used it for themselves in sinful purposes instead of God.

Every parent knows this. We may disagree on what age. Probably none of us will agree perfectly, but everybody has to agree, "There has to be an age and a time when it's probably not appropriate for my kid to have something as powerful as a phone." People can agree to disagree or whatever. Parents come to different times. "Okay. Now Junior is ready."

You're always asking this as a parent. You ask this with yourself, but more with your kids a lot of times. You'll be like, "Okay. Something like YouTube." I'll make something up. "My kid is 9. Should he or she be able to be on YouTube?" Then you're like, "Hold on. What would be the good of YouTube? What's all the bad on YouTube?" This is the calculus we're always doing.

Here's the thing. There's a third purpose for technology biblically. I told you two of them, to alleviate human suffering and to accelerate human flourishing. The third purpose, which is connected to those, is to get the mission of Christ to as many people as possible through new forms of technology.

Now, here's the thing about Christians. Christians have always been slow... We're like the slowest people about this. We always are the slowest people to adopt technology. This is why churches are stuck in the past all the time. I had to figure this out. I had to think about this for a long time. I was like, "Why are Christians so slow to accept technology when we were given the command to subdue and have dominion?"

I think it's because for Bible-believing, Jesus-loving, evangelical Christians, our faith is about something that doesn't change. The most important things don't change. God solved our biggest problems. We're worried about progressivism and all of these different things, so we just have to... But listen. Even think about the apostle Paul for a second.

The apostle Paul used the technology of his day to get the gospel to many people. He couldn't email and text and tweet, so he wrote letters. That was the highest form of technology of that day, and he used it. Paul used the Roman road system. You can't study Rome without studying the story of the Roman road system and how revolutionary it was for travel. You go, "Yeah, that's exactly how Paul got there. He used the Roman road system."

If you study his missionary journeys, you realize Paul took the exact same routes of the postal service of his day, because it was the most effective and efficient way to go. Then you go, "Wait a second. Paul went to the marketplace and to the Areopagus," which were the social media platforms of his day, because he wanted to go where there was a free marketplace of ideas and people wanted to learn and see things. He wanted to get on that platform and use it to influence.

For example, we now know the average American (this won't surprise you) spends 18 hours a week on social media. Now, we could be upset about it. "Oh, you're wasting your time." Then you think to yourself, "Oh, man. I was on there for 18 hours too." So, we could complain about it or we could go into those environments and disciple people in them.

Guys, if you read church history... This is why I get excited about technology, if we can use it rightly. Almost every time there's a massive explosion in church planting and world missions, it's on the other end of innovation. If you're from a certain kind of tradition of Christianity, everybody gets really excited about Martin Luther. "Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. We wouldn't be where we are today without Martin Luther."

The Protestant Reformation was just as much about Martin Luther as it was the printing press. They happened at the exact same time, because all of a sudden we could get

materials in people's languages, which we could never do before, into their hands. People go, "Billy Graham. Unbelievable. I can't believe Billy. Billy was amazing." Well, Billy had something no one else ever had until he was here...sound amplification and stadiums.

Even what we're doing right now... I mean, it's only recently that you can have 4K video, high-speed Internet, and livestreaming. It has only been the last 10 or 15 years that churches could even try to be one church in two locations like we are here and in Lexington. So, we're going to need to embrace the right use of language and the right use of technology.

Thirdly, the power of unity itself. Let me show you this. Let's go back to verse 6. ***"And the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.'"***

Okay. This is the language of unity. I want to talk about unity. I'm not talking about unity because we have division in this church. By the way, this is the nice thing about preaching through books of the Bible. I'm not dealing with this because it's an issue; I'm dealing with this because it's in the Bible.

Outside of moral failures, there is nothing that will destroy churches more than divisive people. Titus 3:10 says, "If there's a divisive person, warn them once, then again, then have nothing to do with them." I want to talk about unity. Unity is so hard to come by. Every time you see unity, you should be amazed by it. Like, "How did it happen?"

It's like poverty. Poverty is so easy to explain. Wealth is very hard to explain. Disunity, division, factions, fighting... I mean, that's so easy to explain. Unity... I mean, how is unity going in *your* life? How is unity in *your* home? It's very hard. You have to have shared vision and values. That's number one. You have to have relationship so there can be trust and forgiveness, because you'll mess it up.

There needs to be leadership. There needs to be a point person. On top of that, there needs to be effective communication. It's like, "Good luck." Unity is so hard to find, yet we find parts of it. Like, we'll be unified about certain things. We'll be unified about a sports team. During a certain season there's unity.

What we learn in this story is that ungodly people who are unified can be more powerful than godly people who are divided. Let me say that one more time. Ungodly people who are unified can often be more powerful than godly people who are divided. Sometimes we'll see sinful unity. Right? Not all unity is good.

Think of the Ku Klux Klan. Extreme example, but the Ku Klux Klan was a group whose unity was over the sin of racism. Today, we will have marches and parades where people

will come together to be unified for things God says are wrong and sinful...redefining abortion as women's rights, pride parades...all that kind of stuff.

So, what I want to talk to us about is how to have unity as a church, because if we're going to multiply, which is where we're headed at the end of this service... If we're going to multiply, we're going to need to have unity. Let me give you the four types of unity we need: *theological*, *philosophical*, *relational*, and *missional*. I want to give you these because... One of my mentors says nobody evaluates things when they're going well. We only evaluate things when they're broken.

When something bad happens, everyone is like, "Stop! We need to look. Why didn't this work?" and then everyone evaluates it, but when things are going well, people often have no idea why they're going well. We have so much peace and unity in this church, and I want to tell you why. Why is it going well? Because we have these four types of unity.

*Theological unity* basically says, "We believe the same things about the most important things." Christians do not believe the same things about everything. That would stifle your personality.

Christians believe the same things about the most important things, like God made us on purpose for a purpose; that every person is sinful by nature and choice; that the Bible is God's written-down Word and is totally truthful; that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God who died in our place for our sins; that to become a Christian you need to repent of your sins and place your faith consciously in Jesus Christ; that after this life there are only two options, heaven and hell, and everybody spends eternity somewhere. I just gave you five to seven of the most basic, foundational beliefs.

Just so you know, that's what unites Christians over all the world, but as a church, you need more unity than just theological unity. *Philosophical unity* is why you have denominations or even why, within denominations, you have different churches. Listen. This is important. Follow this for a second. The most important thing about any church is what every church has in common...the preaching of the Word, the worship of the one and true God, the sacraments...all that.

But why people go to churches is because of what is different about them, and that is their philosophy. Your philosophy is what you want to do with your theology. All we ever do... When you come to the Weekender for Friday night and Saturday morning, all we're doing for six hours over those two days is basically telling you...well, our theology but more our philosophy of ministry.

"This is why we do multiple services." We don't apologize for that. We say, "Hey, we're a church *of* Community Groups not *with* Community Groups." We have a high-commitment culture, and we ask people to serve one, attend one. I get up here every six weeks and go, "Hey, guys, we're the church for anybody, but we're not the church for everybody."

Here's what I'm trying to say. We know exactly how we're doing things, and we hope *you* know how we're doing things yet you love the way we're doing things, because so many churches fight over their philosophies, and it's a bunch of sideways energy.

Third is *relational unity*. Relational unity just means if we're going to multiply, you're going to need to see this church, or whatever church you're a part of (maybe you're visiting for today)... For our church, you have to view Two Cities Church as your first and primary Christian community. You can't be friends with everybody in this church. I know that. It means you are actively pursuing relationships in this church, most likely through your serving team, your Community Group, and your DNA Group, the smaller settings we have.

Fourth is *missional unity*. Missional unity means we're trying to do the same thing together. We have the same end zone. We have the same scorecard. We have the same bull's-eye. A lot of times, churches will shoot a bunch of arrows, and then wherever the arrows land, they draw a bull's-eye. "That's what we were trying to do." I don't think so.

What we want to do is say, "Here's our bull's-eye. We want to make disciples and mobilize them for mission in an environment of prayer and worship. We want to care for people's felt needs, but we care about their forever needs. We want to see people meet Jesus and be made into his disciples."

Guys, it's so powerful. If we can have the same language, rightly use innovation, and be unified, I think we're going to be able to multiply, but we have to avoid (I haven't mentioned them yet) the two sins underneath the tower. Let me show you these. We'll do these quickly, then we'll be done. They show up in one verse. If you just go to verse 4, this is where we'll spend the rest of our time. The two sins. We get the motives behind the tower and the city.

***"Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city...'"*** Interesting. They use the same language for building a city as God does for creating creation. "Let us do this." ***"...and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves..."*** Okay. They said the quiet part out loud. So, we have the first motive, which is the motive or sin of *self-promotion*. Here's the second one. ***"...lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."*** The sin of *self-preservation*. I know those are big words.

What they were doing was not wrong. Why they were doing it was wrong. There was nothing wrong with having good language, being unified, and being innovative and building something, but it was why they did it. Maybe we could simplify it this way: the sin of self-promotion is the desire to look good and be liked.

Isn't it amazing how simple things can be? Is that really what's holding you back in life? Maybe. "Could it be that simple, Kyle? Could literally the thing that is hindering me from doing what God has asked me to do in multiplying my life be as silly as I want other

people to like me?" Yes! The second one is the sin of self-preservation, which you could simply say is the desire to stay where you are and be safe. Let's try to take each of these.

First, the sin of *self-promotion*. What's interesting is they're building this tower, and they're doing this to make a name for themselves. By the way, we read these stories and have what C.S. Lewis calls *chronological snobbery*. We're like, "Oh, these silly people, building these high towers to things they worship." This is what we still do.

In almost every city you will ever go to, the tallest building is whatever that city worships. For a very, very long time it was the steeple in the church. Think in our own city. For a long time, what was the tallest building? The Reynolds building. Very interesting. Then it changed. In the 90s it became the Wachovia building. What we worshiped went from tobacco to banking. Still, if you go to major world cities, the tallest buildings will usually be the finance buildings.

What's interesting about the building they built is... You can see this in the original language. The language of the mortar and the brick... Here's what they're literally building. They're building a waterproof tower. Think with me for a second. This is why you have to read the Bible in order. Why would you build a waterproof tower? Because there was just a flood. Oh.

Wait a second. Here's where we're going with this. "But wait. God told you he wouldn't flood the earth again. Oh, you're building something because you don't believe God's promises." Bingo. "Or you're building something and using technology to try to save yourself," which is what all of the tech giants out in Silicon Valley are doing. "If we could just figure this out, we could all live forever."

What's interesting is they build this tower up to heaven. Now, tradition tells us, from what we can tell, that it was probably 30 stories and 300 feet tall, roughly. At the time, it was the tallest building ever built, but I want you to see what God says in verse 5. You have to see this. This is the first use of irony in the Bible. Look at this.

***"And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built."*** I love it. They're like, "God, we built this really big tower." God is like, "Hold on. I've got to get off my throne. Hold on a second. I'm squinting. I'm stooping. I see it. It's way over... Yeah." That's what he's saying.

Here's what God is saying to you: The tower you're trying to build for yourself is too small. The tower of the American dream is too small. The tower of "If I could just get married and have kids" is too small. The tower of education and career is too small. The interesting thing... And you know this too. I really have had to learn this through experience, as I have especially been able to, in the last decade of my life, spend time with very successful people.

I spend time with a lot of people, but I'm saying as I've spent time with very successful people, what I've realized is they've built a tower and are not very happy with it. You'd be surprised, because you have to know a person to talk to them like that. You look at them and think, "Oh, it's great." It's not as great as you think, and they're not as happy as you think they are.

So, God comes down, and he says, "Your tower is too small." In other words, "I have bigger plans for your life and better plans for your life and global purposes for your life, and you're just focused on yourself."

Let's talk about the second sin, the sin of *self-preservation*. Again, let me read it. It's the end of verse 4, the second reason they do this. It says, "**...lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.**" Could it be that the reason you're not going to multiply like you could or that God is not using you like he could...? Could it be as simple, genuinely, as "I care too much about what other people think, and I'm obsessed with being safe and staying where I am"? I think it's right. It's so true.

Think about it with me for a second. God is calling them... In Genesis 1:28, our theme verse, it says God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth." Then in Genesis 9, when Noah and his sons and the wives get off the ark, God says to him, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth," but instead of filling the earth they stay where they are.

I think there are at least two ways we do this together. The two areas where we try to have self-preservation is with community and with money. Every Community Group has to decide eventually if they are going to multiply. Is their Community Group going to lose some people to start a new group? I'm not saying it's easy. I'm just saying every group has to ask that question. Well, what do *we* want? What's best for our group is that the 14 of us stay together. Or do we do what's best for new people and other people who aren't yet here?

This is why in certain churches there's a temptation for deeper and deeper and deeper discipleship and Bible studies. We're not against deeper discipleship and more Bible studies, but what I've often found is the people who want deeper discipleship and more Bible studies also have no lost friends. Every church, if it's not careful, becomes some version of a holy huddle. We continually have internal conversations and debates, and we completely forget the lost world.

And then money. Could another reason we're not as effective as we could be as a church be that we're not as generous as we could be? To quote C.S. Lewis, the only safe rule with generosity is to give more than you think you could spare.

So, here's what happens, guys. They build this tower. They have great language, they have great innovation, they have great unity, but at the end their motive is wrong. Let me

encourage you. If today you have the wrong motive, you can change it. A buddy of mine was leading a church, and they had a prayer night.

He talked to one of his friends and asked, "Are you coming to the prayer night?" The guy said, "No, I'm not coming to the prayer night." He said, "Why?" He said, "Because if I came, I'd only come because you asked me to, and I'd only come so other people would see me there." He goes, "Change your motive. You could come to the prayer night, and you could change your motive for why you come."

Some of you are building something. You're building the right thing; you're doing it for the wrong motive. You need to change. You know the right motive. Let me show you how this ends in verse 5. I've read it to you before, but this is so amazing. This is so uniquely Christian. I want you to see this. Read verse 5 with me one more time. ***"And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built."***

In our pride, humanity tries to build something to heaven, and in God's humility (this is the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ), God comes down to us because we can't go to him. In fact, in *this* story God comes down to see the problem, but years later, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God comes down to solve the problem.

Aren't we so glad that Jesus was not about self-promotion and self-preservation? He didn't stay where he was and where he was safe, but he left. The Bible says he did the opposite of self-promotion. He humbled himself even to the point of death, death on the cross. Then something really unique happens. I want to show you Acts, chapter 2. After Jesus dies and rises, it says...

***"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."***

Pentecost is the reversal of the Tower of Babel. Look here. ***"Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language."*** Unbelievable.

So, God disperses the nations, then he brings them back together. The moment he brings them back together is after Jesus Christ has died and risen from the dead, and he sends his Holy Spirit. For the first time since the Tower of Babel, the people of God once again speak the same language, though from every different nation. The first language they speak is the language of heaven.



Let me take us to one other place to show the final place of the nations. In Revelation 7, it says, "***After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude...***" The reason we're multiplying is because one day we want to see a great multitude. "***...that no one could number, from every nation...***" Somehow, your nationality is so important you appear to keep it in heaven. Unbelievable.

***"...every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages..."*** Why? Because God is way too glorious to be just worshiped in one language or by one skin color, by one nation. "***...standing before...***" Look. No longer around a tower but around the throne. "***...and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'***" That's the picture that should create passion for us in the present.

Guys, when you came in, we gave you this Multiply card. This is the culmination of the *Made to Multiply* series but just the beginning of our initiative. Here's what we're going to do. If you think about this story, we're asking you to give language to what you want to multiply. Language is so powerful that we're going to give you a few minutes for you to think about how you want to say it.

I've been thinking about this for a while. Like, how do I want to say what I want to multiply? It was such a great act of grace for me to think about this. I'll tell you what mine is. I wrote down (I did this last service), "I want to multiply intimacy in my marriage and investment in my kids." Well, that's what I'm doing over the next 14 months. I needed the clarity. I needed the language. I needed to write it down. I needed to drop it in the bucket. I needed to tell you guys, "This is what I'm doing." It's the power of language.

Secondly, it's going to be the power of unity, because we're not doing 3,000 different things as a church. We're doing one thing. We're unified to multiply. This is not man's idea. We're wrapping ourselves around the first and fundamental command of Scripture to multiply, and we're going to do it together.

In just a minute, I'm going to pray for you, and then you're going to see a video, a powerful video of how people in our church are already multiplying. Then you're going to have a chance, as Donovan and his team lead us, to write down how you're going to multiply, and then we're going to drop it in the bucket together as a way to say, "God, I'm giving this to you. You've got to bless this for this to happen." Let's pray.

Lord, thank you for the men and women in here. We just want to take a moment. We have to do a couple of different things. Some of us just need to confess that we've been building the wrong tower completely, and we need to tear it down or ask you to tear it down or leave it.

Others of us are building the right thing for the wrong reasons. We're building our career or we're building our family, whatever it is, but we're not doing it for the right reasons.

The great thing is we can, by the power of the Spirit, change our motivations. I pray you would change people's motives, that their motive would be the glory of God and good of others.

Lord, I pray against the spirit of self-promotion and self-preservation. Would you help us? Whatever we're going to write down, it means, to do this effectively, we're going to have to care what *you* think more than what other people think. For many of us, Lord, you might be calling us just like you called Abraham into an adventure with you, Lord. You're calling us to leave, to know without going, Lord. I pray you would bless it as we do this together. In Jesus' name, amen.