



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH?

Scripture: Genesis 11:1-9 Our Scripture reading this morning is about the Tower of Babel where God confused the language of the people so that they would spread throughout the world.

This event took place just after the flood and it is said that the sons and daughters of Noah established the first known cultures of the world.

They all spoke the same language which made it easier for them to have a purpose. There is nothing wrong with a common language – it is not evil nor does it cause evil. It actually facilitates and leads to unity.

And isn't that what God wants – so why would He confuse them?

In ancient times it was believed that deities dwelt in high places, so the people associated the gods with hills and mountains. Their purpose was to build a tower which they believed would bring them closer to heaven.

This tower measured 90m high X 90m wide and was the very first tower ever built.

Why did they do this? Because they rejected God's command and blessing in Genesis 9:7 where God said: "be fruitful and multiply, spread out and populate the earth."

They were using God's gift of language to promote disobedience and unbelief. They didn't want to be scattered. They wanted power, prestige and to choose their own destiny.

They could not conceive of blessings and security coming as a result of dispersion, even though God commanded it.

How can this help us determine the purpose of our Church? For this month we will be exploring how to be God's church on purpose.

The Babylonians did not begin without counting the cost. They anticipated the obstacles and were determined to overcome them. They resolved to build the city despite the difficulties.

They achieved this using 4 specific strategies: Unity; Singleness of purpose; Visionary Planning and Hard work.

Have you ever heard the phrase – you did that on purpose! We often hear this from children when they are arguing. But I want us to put that phrase in a more positive light.

We have entered a New Year. Instead of simply sitting back and letting things happen or not happen – I believe that we should be God's church on purpose.

You might be thinking – are we up to the task? Are we willing to pay the price in order to accomplish God's will for this congregation and this site on purpose?

Philippians 3:13-14 says: "forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

1. Unity: one people.

Unity does not mean that you agree on everything. Where people are involved, you are never going to agree on everything. I am sure you don't agree with every sermon you hear from me.

Unity in the church was so important to Jesus that He prayed specifically for that right before He was betrayed with a kiss.

John 17:20-21 says: *I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent me.*

Pauls writes in Ephesians 4:3: *make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

We are blessed here when it comes to unity. We are not a perfect church by any means, but we are a church that gets along.

The Babylonians were going to be successful because **they had learned to work together.**

2. Singleness of Purpose: speaking the same language.

What is our purpose as God's church? What was Jesus' purpose?

Jesus did a lot of things – raised the dead; healed the sick and performed miracles. His purpose was stated even before He was born.

Matthew 1:21 states: *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.*

While we cannot save anyone, our purpose as God's church is to lead people to the One who can save them. Our responsibility is to evangelize the lost.

The Babylonians were going to succeed because **they were focused on a single purpose.**

3. Visionary Planning:

I wonder what happened when the first guy said: Hey, I think we ought to build a tower up to the heavens. I wonder if anyone laughed.

We need some dreamers. What dreams can you dream for this congregation?

Proverbs 29:18 says: where there is no vision, the people perish.

We have a problem though – because we do not have enough room in this chapel to hold 100 people comfortably – that is a great problem to have.

What does God want us to do so we can reach more people for Him?

I believe that we often think too small. There is a quote that says: what the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.

Our purpose is to lead people to Christ.

How are we going to accomplish that as God's church? How are we going to accomplish this in 2021?

The Babylonians were going to be successful in building their tower because **they had a plan.**

4. Hard Work to do

While great things are accomplished through the power of God, He still wants us to dedicate ourselves to the work. We have undertaken hard work in our Outreach programs but there is still a lot of work to do.

Quote: A preacher visited a church and noticed they had published a manual on church growth. It wasn't very thick but it did get his attention. When he opened it up he read: get to work!

We all need to get involved.

Matthew 9:37 states Jesus saying: the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

We need to have the NIKE mentality toward doing God's work. The slogan for NIKE is "Just do it". It invites people to take control of their lives, to break out of the dullness of the mundane and achieve. It's a rallying cry of motivation and to action. For the Christian it is a sound principle. The wise writer of Ecclesiastes warns of the folly of being over-cautious: ***"whoever watches the wind will not plant, whoever looks at the clouds will not reap."***

Conclusion:

God wants to bless your life and He wants to bless this congregation.

Too many times we think too small – we carry a spoon when we need a shovel.

Illustration: a man by the name of Wilkinson said: so many times we go to the river of God with a little teacup and bend down to this massive river of God thinking this is our little cup of blessings and we just scoop up a little blessing.

His encouragement is: "why don't you jump in? It is a great concept. Have you been sitting on the riverbank forever with your little teacup?"

If you have wisdom and knowledge you would go back and get a little bit bigger cup every time. I am up to a 1litre jug, scooping up my blessings. Why don't I jump in?

Because it's like someone said: "You need to find out where God is going then you need to go in that same direction. If there is a river of God, get in there. Jump in. Get your clothes wet. You don't have to know where the river is going – just jump in and it will take you there. But we are often afraid to get our spiritual clothes all wet.

What is it that holds your life together?

How tragic that the Babylonians of old found their security in a city and put their hope in fired bricks and tar.

What is frightening is that many churches have fallen into the same trap as the world. Although creating programs are great, they can often be used as a substitute for living faith and devotion and power. In many churches God could have died 50 years ago and they would still not know it.

The Word of God and not the works of our hands is the only thing worthy of our faith.