

# The World is Divided

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## Sermon Synopsis

In the heart of ancient Rome, amidst the ruins of the Roman Forum, Dr. Billy Wilson a powerful message addressing the critical issues of division and immigration that grip our contemporary world. This is the setting for a profound sermon series titled 'For God So Loved the World,' where the timeless love of God for a fractured humanity is emphatically declared. The sermon, delivered with the weight of history as its backdrop, proclaims that God's love transcends all divisions, and He calls upon each one of us to be agents of healing in this fragmented world.

Drawing parallels between the historical divisions of the Roman Empire and today's global challenges, Dr. Wilson navigates through the complexities of immigration and societal divides, offering biblical insight and guidance. The sermon delves into the narratives of Babel and Pentecost, contrasting the confusion and division at Babel with the unity and clarity brought forth on the day of Pentecost through the Holy Spirit. This juxtaposition serves as a divine blueprint for healing a world that is more divided than ever before.

As the sermon unfolds, it becomes clear that the path to healing our divided world lies in the power of our words, the openness of our hearts, and the celebration of our diversity. Our words can either wound or heal – Proverbs, James, and other scriptures illustrate the profound impact of our speech. We are called to embrace others, mirroring the open arms of Jesus on the cross, and to delight in the diversity that God has created, pointing to the multicultural tapestry of Pentecost as evidence of God's design.

The sermon addresses the immigration dilemma with biblical wisdom, balancing the sovereign right of nations to protect their citizens with the commandment to love and embrace the stranger among us. Leviticus and Hebrews provide the scriptural foundation for a compassionate response

to the foreigner, challenging believers to navigate the tension between security and hospitality. We should find a dual approach that honors both the protection of peace within a nation and the godly treatment of immigrants.

Concluding with a personal and communal call to healing, Dr. Wilson invites us to transform our words into instruments of peace and to open their hearts to those different from themselves. It is a call to celebrate the rich diversity of humanity while fostering a community united by the love of Christ, because by God's love we can overcome the divisions of our world and bring restoration and unity to the brokenhearted.

## Sermon Highlights

- God's love transcends the divisions of our world, calling us to be agents of healing and unity in a landscape scarred by discord and separation.
- The contrast between the confusion at Babel and the supernatural unity at Pentecost exemplifies God's power to overcome division, illustrating how the Holy Spirit enables clarity, prayer-driven purpose, and Christ-centeredness.
- We are urged to harness the power of our words to build rather than destroy, taking heed of biblical wisdom to speak life and healing into the fractures of our society.
- Believers are encouraged to open their hearts and extend a wide embrace to others, reflecting Christ's love and hospitality to strangers and thereby fostering a spirit of inclusion and peace.
- Christians are called to delight in the diversity of God's creation, celebrating the unique qualities of every culture and language while affirming the unity and community found in Jesus Christ.

## Scripture Verses

### Genesis 11:1-9

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar.

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.'

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 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.'

'Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.'

So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 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.

### Acts 2:5-6

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 their own language being spoken.

### Acts 2:7-8

Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?'

### Acts 2:9-11

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!

### Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

### Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

### Proverbs 12:18

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

### James 3:9-11

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both freshwater and saltwater flow from the same spring?

### 1 Timothy 2:1-2

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

### Leviticus 19:33-34

When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

### Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

### John 19:19-20

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

## Quotes

- First of all I believe God calls us to watch our words. The entire world became divided and wounded because of words. And at Pentecost the world was blessed through words. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- So as we traverse this divided, confused world, God wants us to use our words to bring healing, not to pierce people, not to wound them more, but to bring healing to their heart. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- God loved our divided world enough to send his only begotten Son and to send the power of his spirit. Now because of that I believe that we as Christian believers are called to bring healing into our divided world. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- So which argument is correct? Should people be protected by their civil authorities or should we embrace the stranger and call them our brother and invite them into our family. Both are correct. In fact, God's Word has a double-edged sword and both of these principles need to be part of the discussion on immigration. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- We will never bring healing if we don't learn to delight in our diversity and how we're different, how God treasures those differences, and then most importantly, to celebrate our community. - Dr. Billy Wilson

# Bible Study

## Objectives

- Understand the Biblical perspective on division and unity in light of Babel and Pentecost
- Learn how to use words for healing in a divided world
- Discover the importance of embracing strangers and celebrating diversity as instructed in Scripture
- Formulate a practical approach to being a healer in a divided world

## Reading and Reflections

- Genesis 11:1-9 - Reflect on the origin of division at the Tower of Babel.
- Acts 2:5-11 - Ponder the unity brought by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.
- Proverbs 15:1; 10:11; 12:18 - Consider the power of words to bring life or incite conflict.
- James 3:9-11 - Assess the dichotomy of the tongue and its capacity for blessing and cursing.

## Key Observations

- Division is a result of human pride and disobedience to God's plan.
- The Holy Spirit brings clarity, unity, and reconciliation.
- Our words can either heal or wound others, reflecting our heart's posture.
- Embracing diversity and building community are central to God's vision for humanity.

## Personal Reflections

- Am I cautious with my words to build others up and not cause harm?
- Do I actively seek to understand and embrace those who are different from me?
- How am I contributing to the unity of believers in my community?
- In what practical ways can I show love to the stranger or immigrant among us?

## Lessons for Daily Life

- Cultivate a language of healing and encouragement in our daily interactions.
- Practice hospitality and welcome those who are different with an open heart.
- Be an advocate for both protection of our communities and the embracing of the stranger, in line with biblical teachings.
- Find joy in the rich tapestry of cultures and languages that God has created.

## Practical Applications

- Commit to learning and using phrases in different languages to connect with others.
- Invite individuals from different backgrounds to share a meal and exchange stories.
- Participate in community events that celebrate cultural diversity.
- Volunteer with local organizations that assist immigrants and refugees.

## Challenges for the Week

- Identify and eradicate any speech that can cause division or harm.
- Reach out to someone from a different cultural or ethnic background and learn about their experiences.
- Share the message of God's love for a divided world with at least three people.
- Reflect each day on how you've shown Christ's love to those around you.

## Further Study

- Study the role of language in the Bible and its significance from Babel to Revelation.
- Research the current global migrant crisis and the Christian response.
- Delve deeper into Scriptural teachings on the sovereignty of nations and the treatment of foreigners.
- Examine the life of Jesus and his encounters with those from different cultures and walks of life.

## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, in Your divine wisdom, You have called us to be ambassadors of Your grace in a world rife with division. We ask for Your Spirit to guide our words that they may bring healing rather than hurt. Open our hearts to embrace those who come from lands and cultures unlike our own, recognizing them as brothers and sisters created in Your image. Help us to rejoice in the diversity that reflects Your creativity and to forge a community bound by Your love. May we, Your church, be a beacon of unity, shining Your light in the darkest places of strife and separation. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who tore down the walls of hostility, we pray. Amen.

# Daily Devotionals

## Day 1

### Scripture Verse

Genesis 11:1-9 (NIV): 'Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 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." But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 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. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 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.'

### Reflection

In the heart of the ancient tale of Babel, we find humanity's quest for unity, marred by pride and self-aggrandizement. The Lord's intervention, scattering people across the earth, was not merely an act of judgment but also of mercy. By disrupting the singular focus on human achievement, God opened the path for diversity, which is the bedrock of creativity and innovation. Consider the world today, with its myriad languages, cultures, and perspectives. It is this very diversity that drives us toward new discoveries and enriches our lives with a tapestry of experiences. Our challenge, then, is not to lament the divisions but to embrace the differences as a divine gift, seeking to understand and learn from one another. Through this, we can find unity not in uniformity but in the harmonious coexistence of our distinct voices. Reflect on your own life: Are there areas where you have sought to make a name for yourself at the expense of others? How can you celebrate the diversity around you and foster unity in your community?

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the diversity of Your creation. Guide me to embrace the differences that surround me, to learn from them, and to find unity in Your love. Help me to build bridges where there is division and to foster understanding where there is confusion. Amen.

## Day 2

### Scripture Verse

Acts 2:5-11 (NIV): '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 their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 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!"'

### Reflection

The day of Pentecost marked a pivotal moment in history, a reversal of Babel's confusion, as the Holy Spirit united people from diverse backgrounds through a miraculous understanding of languages. This event teaches us that God's intent is not to erase our differences but to transcend them through His Spirit. It encourages us to look beyond the barriers of language and culture, to see the common thread of humanity that the Spirit weaves among us. In our daily encounters, let us strive to be instruments of God's peace, bringing unity through understanding and empathy. Reflect on your interactions with those from different cultures. How can you demonstrate the love and unity of the Spirit in these relationships? How can you be a living testimony to the wonders of God, transcending language and culture to touch the hearts of all people?

### Prayer

Lord of all nations, pour out Your Spirit upon me, that I may be a vessel of Your unifying love. Break down the walls that divide us and teach me to communicate Your wonders across the barriers of language and culture. In Your grace, unite us as one people under Your sovereign hand. Amen.

## Day 3

### Scripture Verse

Proverbs 15:1 (NIV): 'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.'

### Reflection

The power of our words cannot be underestimated. They have the potential to build up or to break down, to heal or to wound. In the wisdom of Proverbs, we are reminded of the transformative power of gentleness. A gentle answer is not weakness; it is a deliberate choice to respond with grace, to diffuse conflict, and to foster peace. As we walk through a world often marked by harshness and division, let us choose to be peacemakers with our words. Reflect on recent conversations. Have your words been a source of healing or hurt? How can you cultivate a spirit of gentleness in your speech, that your words may turn away wrath and bring peace?

### Prayer

Gracious God, grant me the wisdom to speak words that heal, not harm. May my speech be seasoned with grace, reflecting Your love and peace. In every conversation, let me be an ambassador of reconciliation, turning away wrath with gentle answers. Amen.

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