

IN THE BEGINNING: GOD

Community Group Lesson 3: "Lifting the Curse"

1. In both the sermon and the companion video at FBC this week, we listed 4 different aspects of the outward movement of sin and brokenness: Personal (Genesis 3), Relational (Genesis 4) societal (Genesis 6), and systemic (Genesis 11). Take some time together as a group and work to list out the ways you see these different manifestations of brokenness are in play today.
 - Personal: Where are people causing harm to themselves in our world?
 - Relational: Where do you see relationships that are broken?
 - Societal: What are the ways in which our society has embraced or normalized destructive behaviors?
 - Systemic: Where in the world have people organized themselves in ways that are destructive or outside of God's good plan for the world?
2. Now. Go back through your list and ask: how are you seeing God's empowered people (Christians) at work in these areas? Where have you witnessed freedom from addiction, or a healed relationship, or a positive change in society? Take some time to think through the ways you see God at work through his people lifting the curses of Genesis 3-11.

Where can God's empowered people do more?

Are there ways in which God's well-intentioned people have missed the point or made matters worse? How can we remedy that?

3. Have someone read Genesis 11:1-9 aloud.

How did the people use their advancements in technology and shared language? Do you see parallels in our world today?

The people were afraid of “being scattered?” Why would that be an issue for them?

Why is it seemingly a problem for God that they have a “shared language?” Isn't that supposed to be a good thing?

4. Some food for thought:

The Theologian Miroslav Volf has pointed out that “scattering” was always in some sense a part of God’s original plan for humanity... after all the goal was for them to “be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:27).”

For Volf a part of the goal in the building of the tower in Genesis 11 is to unify people as a rejection of losing a singular identity, in essence “suppressing or ignoring human diversity in order to advance their own imperial agenda.” Clearly, this has been a problem for humans ever since—one only needs to think of Nazi Germany or certain forms of communism as more recent examples of Babel-style “tower building” in this sense.

Do you agree with this interpretation of Genesis 11?

Can you think of other recent examples of humans suppressing or ignoring diversity in order to advance an agenda?

If we take Volf’s line of thought further, one of the surprising lessons from Babel is that the scattering of people and the mixing of their languages are not necessarily a “curse,” but are actually a form of God’s grace, and therefore something to be embraced. Ever notice how in the Acts 2 narrative that the people don’t all start speaking or hearing the *same language*, but they hear God’s message in *their own language* (Acts 2:7-11)? Apparently, God embraces diversity of language and culture, and that diversity is a feature of God’s redemptive plan going forward.

Where in our community do we find cultural or language obstacles between ourselves and others?

Are we working to find ways of crossing these barriers with the good news? If not, how can we do so?