Introduction

How many of you have heard of the game called Jenga? The game has fifty-four blocks that are built into a tower. Each player has to remove a block from the tower, and then put it on the top layer. When the tower falls down, the last person to successfully pull a block out and place it on top wins the game.

This morning we are going to look at another tower that was being built. In the account, the players were really excited about the tower they were building. It was going to be a big tall tower that reached the sky. The players were working hard to build the tower. They were working together as a team, having great unity. However, when one particular block was removed, the whole tower came down. The building was stopped. All the builders of this tower went their separate ways. What was the final block that was removed from the tower that caused it to all come down? It was the block of communication. When the communication was disrupted and confused, the building of the tower came to an immediate halt and the builders went their separate ways.

We are in the midst of a series called the essentials. The past few weeks we have been looking at essentials in relationships. We looked at offenses. When people get offended, there are many things that happen. Walls go up, tempers flare, trust is destroyed, the roots of bitterness begin to grow, the communication breaks down, and people frequently go their separate ways. Jesus said it was inevitable that offenses come. Therefore, we need to learn to prevent them when possible, and how to resolve them when they do occur.

Last week we looked at forgiveness. We saw that every sin is ultimately against God. Sin separates us from God. The result of sin is death. God knew that we would sin, and from the beginning He had a plan to restore our fellowship with Him. His plan was motivated and carried out in love. The plan required the shedding of innocent blood. Jesus was the Lamb of God, whose blood was shed, so that we could be forgiven. Our responsibility is to confess our sin and ask for forgiveness. When we do that, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He removes our sin as far as the east is from the west. Even though our sins are as scarlet, He makes them white as snow. He permanently deletes our sins. What a wonderful and loving Father we have who forgives us of all of our trespasses against Him.

Our sins against others cause hurt and separation. We saw that when we sin against someone else, we need to ask them for forgiveness. We need to go humbly and contritely, and ask for forgiveness. We must show sincerity in our request for forgiveness. We must also bring forth the fruit of repentance and make restitution when necessary.

We also saw that many of us struggle with receiving forgiveness. Other people and the enemy often remind us of our sins. We must stand on the promises given to us about forgiveness in the word of God. It is helpful to memorize some of those passages and stand on them when being accused.

Finally, we saw that we need to forgive those who sin against us. Jesus told Peter that he must forgive seventy times seven, or indefinitely. In the same way God forgives us, we need to forgive others. We need to forgive them, even if they don't ask for it. We do not want to be holding on to an offense. We need to be quick to let them go.

This morning we are looking at communication. It is an essential part of our relationship with God, and also with another. Without good communication, businesses cannot operate successfully. Without good communication, marriages will not stand. Without good communication, churches will not prosper. Good communication is one of the most essential things that we need.

To introduce our main text for today, I want to give a short review of what has led up to passage. One thousand six hundred and fifty six years after creation, wickedness was rampant on the earth, and it grieved the heart of God. Therefore, God decided to start over. He sent a flood and destroyed the earth and all it contained. He destroyed everyone except Noah, his family, and two of every kind of animal and creature that was on the earth. After the flood subsided, God charged Noah with the same charge He had given to Adam and Eve. They were to be fruitful and multiply, and fill th eearth. Therefore, Noah and his family began having children and re-populating the earth. God's plans and purpose had not changed. His charge to man had not changed. The institution of marriage has a purpose established by God, to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. It requires a man and a woman to fulfill God's plan for marriage. The perversion of God's definition and plan for marriage cannot reproduce and fulfill God's charge to us.

Genesis 1:28 "And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.""

Genesis 9:1 "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."

After leaving the ark, Noah and his family all stayed together as a community. In Genesis 11, we pick up the story with all of them journeying east to a plain in the land of Shinar. We will look at the results of good communication. Then, we will look at the impact bad or confused communication had. My desire is that we take away lots of practical applications for our own lives. Let's read our text today, which is Genesis 11:1-9.

(Gen 11:1-9) "Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. {2} And it came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. {3} And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. {4} And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." {5} And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. {6} And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. {7} "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." {8} So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. {9} Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth."

1. The Results of Good Communication

At Murchison Drilling Schools, where I work, one of the topics that we teach is communication. We teach that Good Communications is the key to successful drilling operations. We talk about the different forms of communication, and how to improve the communication in drilling operations. When there is good communication, teamwork is possible. Everybody can work together on the established goals and plans. Problems are eliminated or minimized. There are less accidents. Work relationships between the different parties involved are better. The operations run more efficiently, lowering the cost of the well. Good communication is the key to successful drilling operations.

Notice in our passage that they had great communication. Noah and his family all used the same language and the same words. It says the whole earth used the same language and the same words. The whole earth means everyone on the face of the earth. This includes Noah and his sons and their wives, and any of their children or grandchildren. Some scholars guess there may have been several hundred families by this time. The KJV phrases this a little better: "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech" The word used for one is echad which means oneness or unity. It is also the same word used to describe marriage. In Genesis 2:24 when a man leaves his parents and cleaves to his wife, they become one flesh. It is the word echad which means united or one. It comes from the root word achad which means to unify, to collect or to go one way or other.

(Gen 11:1) "Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.

(KJV Genesis 11:1) "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech."

The actual rendering of the one language is one lip. The significance is that it comes from one mouth. It is as if one person was saying everything. There can be no question as to what the meaning was because it was from his own lips, from his own mouth. When you play the gossip game and everyone sits in a circle and the leader whispers something to the person on his left. Each person repeats what the first person has said to the person on his left. Then, the last person says out loud what he has heard. Then, the first person says out loud what he said to initiate it. You will see that there has been a break down. You have to go back to the first person's mouth to see what was really said.

A month ago I sent a team to Mexico to teach a well control class. We discovered some interesting things about the Spanish language. Many of the technical terms are different in the various dialects of Spanish. There are four different words for a drilling bit. The standardized tests that were given come out of Scotland. They used the Spanish from Spain. The Mexicans taking the test could not understand the questions on the test because it was a different dialect of Spanish. Consequently, only one person out of ten passed the test. Even though it was the same language, it was not from one lip. To be successful, there must be common communication.

When I met Karen in college, she talked so quickly it was hard to catch everything. She also used words like "please", which had a different meaning to me. "Please" in the south means a polite way of asking for something. "Please" in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Karen grew up, means that she didn't understand what you said and to repeat it again. It is the same language, but not of the same lips. A key to successful building is effective communication where people understand one another.

I grew up overseas in the country of Iran. We had people from all over the world working for the

National Iranian Oil Company. There were many British people there who spoke a very different English than I was accustomed to. Their words are very different. When they ask for fish and chips, they are really asking for fish and fries. You might live in an apartment in the States, but it would be a flat to an Englishman. A flat to us is what I had a few years ago along I-40. It was an experience changing a tire with trucks and cars whizzing by you. The English use windscreen instead of windshield. They serve biscuits with their tea in the afternoon. Their biscuits are our cookies. If an Englishman speaks about his garden, you might think he was speaking about his vegetable patch. You would be wrong. They call their yard their garden. We all speak English, but our words are not the same. Noah and his descendants all had the same language and used the same words. Successful building requires common communication.

It is not just the different cultures that have different words and expressions. Often there is a communication gap between generations. A young person may say that this car was really bad. In my generation, I would stay away from a bad car. But the young person did not mean that it was a horrible car. A bad car is a really cool car.

My children and wife were texting long before I began to text. Even though we all speak English, I did not know the language on these texts. I would see LMHO and I was clueless. I would ask one of my children and they would say, "Dad, that means laughing my head off." Some of the expressions were easy, like TY, which means thank you. My point is that we sometimes struggle in our communication between generations.

To build the East Mountain Vineyard, we will need to have common communication. We will have to understand one another. We have to get to the point where our words are like they have come from one lip. This will take a lot of work. **Good communication takes time and effort.** It requires good listening. It requires asking clarifying questions. It requires putting things in writing. It requires many different communication skills and mediums. In today's world we have email, text messaging, cellular phones, faxes, and all kinds of communication tools. We have to work hard at communicating with one another. We have to be willing to use many different types of communication to reach the unchurched and the unbelievers also. To build successfully, common communication is essential.

One of the hardest parts of communication is not the words. Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of Silent Messages, and a frequently quoted expert said that only 7% is our vocal content. He did considerable research and found that 7% of a message is conveyed with the words, 38% through certain vocal elements, and 55% through nonverbal elements (facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc). Subtracting the 7% for actual vocal content leaves one with the 93% statistic. The significance of this is that most communication is nonverbal. In fact, nonverbal behavior is the most crucial aspect of communication. **Good communication requires an understanding of non-verbal communication.** For us to have great communication, we must learn to watch the non-verbal cues. We have to observe the body language. We have to observe the facial expressions. We have to actively participate as listeners. We have to listen to the tones and accents on the words. If someone asks me to clarify my position on an issue, I may respond with "Really." If I say it normally, really means that I am confirming what I said. If I say really with the second syllable going up, it is a question. Are you really asking me to clarify what I said earlier? Do you not know me better than that? Really can have two different meanings.

In addition to the these things, there are emotional and other human factors. When a man asks his

wife where she bought the steak, she may respond by saying, "What's wrong with it?" The man may say, "Nothing. This is really a good piece of meat. I was just wondering where you bought it." He is asking objectively, and she is answering out of her emotions. It is not just the words that have meaning. We must understand who we are talking to, and how they will take what we are saying. A man may be better off qualifying his question. "Honey, this is a really good, tender steak. Where did you buy this?"

So, Noah and his relatives had good communication. Let's take a look at the results of their good communication. First, **good communication helps promote a common vision.** There are several things that tell us that. In verse two, it says, "it came about as they journeyed east..." The word for journeyed is "naca" which means to pull up tent pins. In order for us to make a journey we have to be willing to pull out the things that would hold us down in our lives. They must have had a common and compelling vision that they were willing to pull up tent pins in order to build this tower. People ask me to do things all the time. I am very guarded about what I commit myself to doing. It would have to be very compelling for me to stop what I am doing and pull up my tent pegs.

(Gen 11:2) "And it came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

A vision needs to be something that you are willing to pull up your tent pins for. There is something inside of you that is beckoning you to do it. You are compelled to leave things behind and go for it. The vision is bigger than you are. Vision will move people. People will follow a vision. We have to give people vision and purpose, and it must be a compelling purpose.

Solomon wrote that without vision people perish. The actual meaning is that without vision people will live unrestrained. Vision helps people live a focused and disciplined life. As a young man, I had vision; I was going to play professional golf. While other people in high school were doing drugs, and living unrestrained and undisciplined lives, I was very focused on preparing myself to play on the PGA Tour. I spent my week-ends practicing or exercising. I credit having vision for keeping me out of a lot of the troubles that teenagers go through.

Communication is important for giving direction. They said, "Come, let us build a city..." They spoke their vision. James says our words are a rudder. They are a bit in our mouths that steer the entire body. Their vision was to build a city for themselves with a tower that would reach into heaven. They wanted to make a name for themselves. They wanted a place of safety. They wanted to make a secure place to keep from being scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.

(Gen 11:4) "And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

(James 3:3-4) "Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they may obey us, we direct their entire body as well. {4} Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder, wherever the inclination of the pilot desires."

Unfortunately the vision that they had was not in line with the instructions that God had given them. He told them to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Their vision was to build a tower and stay right where they were at. It is important to have our vision line up with God's vision. We are given a piece of the internal communication that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had. God said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." To stop the vision, God had to stop the communication. Without good communication, it was going to be impossible for them to accomplish their vision.

(Gen 11:6-7) "And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. {7} "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

Today, churches have all kinds of mission statements. God has clearly outlined His purposes and plans for the church. It can be found in Matthew 28:18-20. He said to "go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." It is known as the Great Commandment. If we want to see God's hand of favor and blessing on our works, we must get them in line with His plans and purposes. We do not want God to have to go to extraordinary means to stop what we are doing. We want His blessing on our works. Then, we must be willing to pull up our tent pegs and pursue that vision.

(Matt 28:18-20) "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.""

Another result of good communication was unity. Notice that the Lord said they are one people with one language. When people are united in their purpose and vision, nothing is impossible for them. The early church saw tremendous results because they were of one mind and had one purpose. If we are going to be of one mind, we must work hard at our communication. A few weeks ago I mentioned that the early church was being upset by people who were trying to put people back under the law. They insisted that people get circumcised, celebrate the various feasts of Israel, and other elements of the Law. Therefore, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the elders and apostles in Jerusalem. Luke records that after much debate they became of one mind. Then, they communicated the matter to all the churches. The early church was committed to unity, and they were willing to discuss, debate, and resolve the issues they were facing. Then, they were committed to communicating those decisions to all the churches so that everyone would be on the same page. Good communication was essential to unity. **Good communication results in unity.**

(Acts 15:6-25) "The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. {7} After there had been much debate... {24} "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls, {25} it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,"

2. The Result of Bad Communication

We have seen the results of good communication. Let's take a look at some of the results of bad communication. In verse seven, God said, "let Us go down there and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." The word for confuse is balal, which means to mingle, mix, or confuse. (Strong's H1101a). In verse nine, they named the place Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth. The root word of Babel is balal. (Strong's H894) Babel means a place of confusion. **Bad communication results in confusion.**

(Gen 11:7-9) "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." {8} So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. {9} Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth."

God tells us in 1 Corinthians 14 that He is not a God of confusion, but of peace. Therefore, He gave instructions to us how to avoid confusion. He is a God of order, and He wants things done properly and in an orderly manner.

- (1 Cor 14:33) "for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."
- (1 Cor 14:40) "But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."

Here are some of the principles about communication that the Lord gave us through Paul. First, communication must be understood by all. If someone is publicly speaking in a tongue, he must interpret so that everyone can understand. Otherwise, he must remain silent. Paul said that he would rather speak five words with his mind than ten thousand words in a tongue. It is not the volume of words that we speak, but it is the amount of words that can be understood that is important. Our focus in communication should be giving understanding to others so that they can be edified.

(1 Cor 14:19) "however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue."

Do you focus on giving understanding and being understood? When others are speaking, do you give undivided attention to them so that you can understand what they are saying? Do you ask clarifying questions to make sure that you have understood. Do you use "drive-through" communication to make sure you have heard correctly? The term, "drive-through" comes from our fast food chains. When you give your order, the order taker will repeat your order back to you to make sure that he has got the order correctly. For us, we can share with the other person what we have heard. It helps to rephrase it in our own words. **Bad communication is not understood by others.** Good communication focuses on understanding.

Another principle of communication that God gives so that we do not have confusion is to speak one at a time. Paul said, "but if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted." **Bad communication interrupts others.** Good communication does not interrupt others.

(1 Cor 14:30-31) "But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. {31} For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;"

A few weeks ago I spoke on offenses. I told you about five pages of ways that men offend their wives. One of those ways was to interrupt our wives while they are speaking. I was guilty of that. I think we are all guilty of that. It is something that we must constantly work on. Sometimes I think Karen is done and I start talking, only to find out that she was not done; she was just catching her breath.

Once in a while I will watch a few minutes of Hannity on Fox News. I like Sean Hannity, but I do not like his show. People are constantly interrupting one another. They do not allow the other person to finish what they are saying. It is irritating, rude, and confusing when two or three people are all trying to get their point across at the same time. Paul tells us not to do that because God is not a God of confusion.

Solomon put it another way. He said that a fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind. **Bad communication is one-way.** A fool is selfish. He only has himself in mind. He is not interested in other people, and what they have to say. I have been foolish many times, because I have not listened for understanding. I have been too pre-occupied with revealing my own mind. Communication requires both parties to participate.

(Pro 18:2) "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind."

At EMVC we work hard at communicating. We give announcements so that people know what is going on. Unfortunately, there are many people who show up late for the service and miss the communication. I encourage everyone to arrive for church services at least fifteen minutes early. That gives you an opportunity to fellowship with others. It is less distracting to others when you come in during announcements or worship. Finally, it allows you to hear the announcements. We also put the announcements in the bulletins. Greg works hard at getting all the information about what is going on in our bulletins. We work hard at communication because we know that bad communication causes frustrations and people scatter.

James tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. Too often I have been quick to speak and slow to listen. I have got things twisted around. How about you? Do you interrupt other people? Are you quick to listen and slow to speak, or do you have it backwards? Do you find yourself thinking about your next statement while the other person is talking? Listening is more than just letting someone speak.

(James 1:19-20) "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

Being quick to listen means that we give the other person our undivided attention. It means we mute the TV while they speak. It may mean that we turn the TV off completely. Being quick to listen means that we give the person our eye contact. It means that we respond to them with nods and facial expressions. It means that we respond with comments and questions. Being quick to listen may require us to take notes. I take notes at all of the meetings that I am in, and then I write them up. Then, I ask the recipients of the notes to correct or add anything that I have missed. Being quick to

listen means that we do not fold our arms with disinterest, or look at our clock with impatience. Being quick to listen means that we patiently listen to the other person and focus on understanding what they are saying.

Not only does bad communication cause confusion, but our passage tells us that the people scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. **Bad communication scatters people.**

(Gen 11:7-8) "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." {8} So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city."

Bad communication stops forward <u>progress</u>. Notice that when the speech was confused, they stopped building the city. It does not matter if it is a marriage, family, business, government, or church. A breakdown in communication will stop progress from being made. Sometimes these two work hand in hand. One time I heard a lady say, "this church is not going anywhere." She and her husband left the church that day. When they did not see any progress, they scattered. People like to have a sense of accomplishment. Testimonies on Sunday morning are wonderful because they show people how God is moving. They get to see and hear of progress in the kingdom.

I mentioned that good communication takes time and effort. Time is a critical issue for many of us. **Bad communication can be a result of being too** <u>busy</u>. Living in the East Mountains simply adds to already busy schedule. Most of us commute twenty to forty minutes each way to work. By the time a person works a 40+ hour week, commutes, and is involved in children's activities, there is not a lot of extra time available. We used to do children's activities one season a year so that we could be free the remaining part of the year. Churches must be sensitive about people's time demands so that they have time for one another. It is really important to make fellowship a priority.

When I was a prison chaplain, I met Carl Wright. He was the architect that designed the clubhouse at Sugarloaf, where the Bell South Atlanta Classic was played. Due to some unfortunate circumstances where he was accused of child molestation by his foster children, he was sent to prison, which is where I began to minister to him. Before his arrest, he was extremely busy with his career. However, in jail, he and his wife began to talk on the telephone every night from 9:30 to 10:30. The pay phones in jail are for collect calls only and local calls are \$2.50 for 1 minute or 60 minutes. They use their full 60 minutes every night. This helped their communication so much that they decided to set aside the same time to talk when he gets out. They want that hour to talk, share and pray with one another like they are doing right now.

Like Carl, we have to set aside time from our busy schedules for relationships. We will not have time for everyone. Jesus did not invest Himself in the multitudes. He invested Himself in twelve men, and in particular, Peter, James, and John. We cannot have everyone as our best friend. We must choose who we invest our time with. The key is we must find ways to spend time together. There are no short cuts to spending time together.

The great thing about small groups is that you have a few people that you can build relationally with. Through sharing meals, sharing your lives, studying God's word, worshiping together, and praying together, meaningful relationships can be built. Make a commitment to faithfully participate in one of our small groups. Currently, we have four Life Groups to choose from.

If you want to develop a relationship with someone, be proactive. Take initiative. Give some thought to how you can spend time with the person. Be committed to faithfully reaching out to the person.

Conclusion

Our text began by their words, "come, let us build..." We don't want to build a tower for ourselves. We want to build what the Lord has commanded and commissioned us to build. We want to come together for the purposes of God. We do not want the communication block to bring down the whole tower. We want to work hard at our communication in our families. We want to work hard at our communication among church members. As a Leadership Team, we want to work hard to communicate with all of you.

When God shows us things in our lives that negatively affect our communication, we want to change those areas. If we have been impatient and selfish in our communication, we want to repent. If we have not been good listeners, we want to develop good listening skills. If there are walls that have been put up because of offenses, we want to resolve those issues, and restore the lines of communication.

We want to come together, united, as one body, speaking one language and using the same words. We want to come united in our communication. We want to come united in our hearts with the same purpose, to build His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. We want to work through any differences and divisions, and uproot any roots of bitterness. We want to be of one mind, striving together for the gospel.

I would like us to close this morning by joining hands and praying together. I have asked Pastor Donald if he would lead us in a closing prayer.

Let's pray.

EMVC Essentials for Relationships - Communication 8/2/15

EMVC Essentials for Relationships - Communication 8/2/15