

Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21

To huddle, or not to huddle, that seems to be the question...

For those who follow football on television, there continues the back and forth discussion on whether teams with the ball should huddle together before each play in the game, or not huddle together. That is, after each play does the team rely on the huddle, or the signals from the sidelines?

Many sports have some kind of huddling as a part of their game, taking the form of a designated huddle, a time out, or even a commercial break. So, huddling seems to be a normal part of the life of many sports, and life in general, for that matter. And whether people tend to be loners and self-contained, or people who find energy in relationships with other people, gathering together is a needed thing.

Of course, one does not have to be an athlete to value “the huddle.”

Note the apostles on the day of Pentecost. They were huddled in our text for this morning from the second chapter of Acts, as they “were all together in one place.” Instead of going their separate ways after the Lord ascended into heaven, His charge to them was to stay in Jerusalem and wait for power from on high. And so they did.

And so do we. Note that we place a high priority of getting together each Lord’s Day to share our needs, concerns, and reminders of the call to us from Scripture. We set aside a time each week to come from the world and be together in person. And then this building becomes a church.

Many also “huddle” at **the family table** when the family gathers to eat. Parents work to have their children at the table to reinforce the bonds of sisters and brothers, which helps counteract a society that seeks its own loyalty. Families “huddle” and then they act most truly as a family.

Or, consider **the pioneers** who headed the American west in the 19th century. They found that literally circling the wagons afforded some protection against the proverbial Indians that attacked. It often worked...which is why they did it...to huddle for protection.

And then we often huddle together in other ways **that we think are for our own good.**

We will tend to live in places that promise a complimentary style of life to our liking, our politics and life biases. We look to shop, visit and live in areas that will not be uncomfortable. Our kind of people, that define more desirable places for schooling, recreation and property...with maybe a slight hint of circling the wagons.

But sometimes the last thing we need to do is huddle and stick together.

The men who landed on Omaha Beach on DDay, 75 years ago this past Thursday **were told to get off the beach as fast as they could**, to make it difficult for the powerful German defenses to kill them. Nevertheless, many of the soldiers would gather at beach obstacles with little protection, or the false protection of the sea wall in groups, only to find themselves easy targets, until some of those on the beach understood that they could either certainly die on the beach huddled up, or

they could die trying to win the day. Showing courage, the leaders scattered in direction of freedom. And others soon followed.

And in somewhat the same vein, people are being taught that the case of a mass shooter, the **police advise people to scatter**, and not huddle up. Echoes of Omaha beach perhaps, but sheer common sense.

Sometimes people need to scatter.

But not necessarily in order to foil tragic practices.

The builders of the tower of Babel got scattered, against their wishes. They were scattered because God saw that concentrated human power was not a good thing. One translation of the Hebrew text here reads “plot” instead of “propose to do.” Huddling to make a name for themselves was going to lead to evil...in this case a tower with their name on it. As Lord Acton succinctly put it: *Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.* So God created languages to make their huddle as an exercise in futility. **So they were scattered, for their own good, and for the world’s good.**

But scattering is not always a punishment, or simply a matter of safety. The earliest commands to humans was to **be fruitful and multiply.** From Genesis to Acts we get the idea that the people of God are to go into all the world, preaching, teaching, baptizing and so on. The people of God, who continue to be led by the Holy Spirit and God’s Word are to scatter as well, and **not stay in the Upper Room, or any room for that matter.** The Church is on the clock.

In fact, in a possible reverse of the Babel story, it is now the ability of the apostles in Acts from their “huddle” event, to have languages to reach others, leading us to reasonably conclude that those who heard “these men of Galilee” speaking in “their own native languages” **would be able to tell the story back home, as they huddled with their friends at their native lands.** And then those friends would huddle with their own friends...And so the cycle will go on...for the growth of the kingdom...story to story: **Huddle to scatter to Huddle to scatter to Huddle to scatter...**

So it only makes sense that any team cannot stay in the huddle the whole game, nor can the team stay scattered in the whole game either. The effectiveness of the team will be to know when they have to get together and when they have to scatter.

That is, if the team huddles without scattering the huddle is a waste of time, and if the teams scatters without huddling, the scattering is just confusion.

Think the church can take the hint?

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.