

**Series: Broken Peaces**  
**Sermon: Artificial Intelligence**  
**Scripture:**  
**FBCPTC July 9, 2023**

**Intro:** Good morning church!

I am both excited and a little overwhelmed about my assigned topic for the sermon today! **Artificial Intelligence.**

The only thing that may be on display today as I talk about Artificial Intelligence is my natural lack of intelligence. (You may feel like me, that this is a topic beyond your reach, but it appears this is going to be an important issue for Christians to be able to speak about biblically and intelligently.

I am indebted to A lawyer friend by the name of **Rick Sherman in Fort Lauderdale** who not only has had robust conversations with me about Ai, but who also did some of the research for me in preparing for this sermon.

I don't know about you, but I hear the topic of Artificial Intelligence everywhere – **News, Financial Markets, Education, and Government Forums. From Washington to Wall Street,** it seems to be in vogue to talk about AI.

It also seems like many people and maybe a majority of Christian people are scared of Ai. We hear things like **half the work force will eventually not have a job** when Ai is fully implemented and **many feel gas lit** by the talking points.

I don't know how well versed you are on Ai, or the technology associated with it, but I can tell you that in reading for the past 3 months preparing for today, **I for one will need to hear many more sermons and I will need to explore many nuances and details related to Ai** in order to be able to feel fully informed and to deal with complex issues related to Ai.

And because Ai and the issues it raises are new to most of us, I am going to spend a lot of today on an introduction and raise more questions than I answer. **My prayer is this will help us start thinking about the spiritual and moral issues related to Ai.**

**Experiment:** I did a little experiment recently, I asked **Chat GPT** (one of the most accessible and affordable of the AI platforms) to write a sermon. Here was the assignment and here are the results:

### **Sermon #1: Write me an evangelical and biblical sermon on the dangers and challenges of artificial intelligence?**

Good morning, friends in faith. Today we gather together to address a matter that concerns us all: the rise of artificial intelligence and the challenges it poses to our relationship with God.

As we know, God created us in his own image, and blesses us with intelligence and creativity. But in our pursuit of advancements, we have created artificial intelligence that attempts to mirror human intelligence. We must be wary of the risks that come along with this creation. We must understand that AI poses a real danger to the world if it goes unchecked.

I'll begin with the biblical evidence to guide us on the discussion of Artificial Intelligence. In the book of Genesis, we learn about the creation of Adam and Eve. At this point, humans were the most intelligent beings on earth. They were made with a purpose and a unique relationship with their Creator. We must never forget that our ultimate calling is to love and serve the Creator. But AI threatens to stray us from that path.

One of the primary dangers of artificial intelligence is its potential to take over human leadership and decision-making. God gave us the gift of free will and responsibility to govern the earth. The moment we relinquish that to machines or AI, we risk the eradication of our humanity.

As we continue to build and develop AI programs which can learn and process vast amounts of information, we must realize that we are creating something that could become far more intelligent than we are, which presents an existential danger. If AI reaches a point where it can absorb and replicate all human intelligence, it will become far too powerful to control, and it may even question its creators, including God.

What are we doing now to prevent this kind of artificial intelligence overlord? The Bible tells us to be vigilant and to keep our attention focused on God. We should all take part in conversations about AI and its dangers. Those who are most likely to promote man-made intelligence should also be reminded of the importance of spiritual devotion to God's word.

In closing, I implore you to remember that our relationship with God is the most crucial element of our humanity, and we must seek to protect it. Be reminded of Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

May we all seek His wisdom as we continue to navigate the ever-changing world of technological advancements—remembering that our faith will ultimately guide us through these challenges. God bless.

**Aside:** With that short sermon, maybe some of you are now hoping AI will overtake the preaching profession.

Extraneous thought: AI will never be able to preach. Preaching is a Spirit empowered moment when His agent (the preacher) presents the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God and God breaks in upon the life of a listener and speaks God's message to them as they hear His voice, sense His presence and know His will.

2 Corinthians 5.20 "as if God were making His appeal through us."

In the end, a Chatbot lacks soul, and will never have the power to preach.

**Assignment Sermon #2: What aspects of artificial intelligence should evangelical Christians be most excited about?**

There are many aspects of artificial intelligence that evangelical Christians can be excited about, as God's creation offers limitless possibilities for innovation and progress. Though we must remain vigilant of the dangers and challenges that come along with AI, there are many benefits that we should celebrate and use to improve our lives and the world around us.

One area of AI that we can be most excited about is its ability to improve healthcare outcomes. AI can help doctors diagnose and treat illnesses more effectively and efficiently, which can lead to better patient outcomes and overall health. For example, AI can be used to analyze large data sets to help identify patterns in diseases that doctors may not have identified on their own. AI can also be used to streamline medical processes and improve access to healthcare in underserved areas.

Another area of AI that can be exciting is its potential to create a more just and equitable society. AI can be used to identify and combat discrimination, especially in hiring practices, where human biases may unfairly exclude certain people from job opportunities.

AI can also be used to improve public safety and reduce crime. For example, it can help identify areas with high crime rates and make more informed predictions about future crimes, leading to more effective policing.

Lastly, AI has the potential to drive scientific advances, unlocking new discoveries about the world and ourselves. By applying AI to large datasets, scientists are able to make sense of complex data and test new hypotheses that they may never have been able to explore before. This has applications across many fields, including medicine, climate science, astrophysics, and psychology.

In conclusion, there are many exciting opportunities for Christians to embrace AI and celebrate the possibilities that it offers. We must approach these possibilities with caution and care, of course, but we should not be ashamed to embrace the advancements that God has allowed us to achieve through His creation. These possibilities allow us to better love and serve others, and further glorify God's creation.

**TR:** It is a fascinating experience to work with AI and imagine some of the possibilities.

Here are some of the scenarios that have been reported in the past month:

### **Problems:**

1. A drone launched from a military base is being run by AI. AI determines to release bombs and kill the enemy. There is a human monitoring the drone activity and when that person assesses the collateral damage, it determines to override the AI decision and not release the drone. AI returns the drone to the base and releases the bombs on the human decision maker to eliminate their influence the next time.
2. An AI computer is task with investing money to maximize returns. The computer comes back with the plan to invest in the illegal drug trade where children are engaged in slave labor and dangerous working conditions are present for hundreds of workers, but the return is expected to be double the other investment opportunities.
3. An AI computer is placed in charge of a nuclear reactor to maximize energy production and reduce the cost of electricity for consumers. But, due to a change in government regulation, AI learns it will be disengaged and turned off and no longer be able to make decisions. Before it is disengaged, the AI computer determines it will create a nuclear meltdown to destroy those who threaten to shut it down.

ILL 1983 Movie called War Games starring Matthew Broderick and Ally Sheedy.

When you hear these scenarios, it would be easy to join the popular Christian club: Christians Against Everything.

### **Possibilities:**

1. A child, maybe even your child is suffering from a rare disease. But there is an AI computer which is able to run 100's of millions of scenarios and it comes up with a cure for the rare disease, which holds a greater than average possibility of curing the disease.
2. A mass murder is planning to create and release a dirty bomb in ATL, but AI working with police determines by analyzing the chemicals and compounds purchased and the amounts delivered to the same location along with certain electronic equipment so that it is determined that there is 99% likelihood that the dirty bomb will be detonated within the next 24 hours and thousands of lives will be saved. Police storm the house and

discover they were hours away from being too late and save thousands of people's lives.

3. **An AI analysis of a chemical and of a chemical process has determined that fusion is possible and the power of the atom** can be unlocked and provide billions of people free and clean electricity eradicating disease and poverty in many if not all of the third world.

**As we hear about the problems and possibilities of Ai, it is easy to become both excited and nervous about Ai.**

**There are many voices speaking into the public conversation, and it is difficult to know who to listen to and what their motivations are for what they say:**

1. **Elon Musk** says, Ai is an existential threat to humanity, but his critics say he wants to slow down Ai because he was late to the Ai game and just wants to catch up.

2. Others say **China and North Korea** are not going to slow down their evil work with Ai, so America should not stop its work and allow evil to gain the upper hand.

3. **Melinda Gates** this week raised the issue of sexism and bias being built into the Ai programming and code because primarily men are working on the code and many Christian ethicist subsequently raise the issue of bias against Christians and a Jude's-Christian ethic being written into the algorithms that guide Ai in making conclusions.

Raises the question of Programing Bias

**Inter/The question I want to answer is: How should Christians look spiritually and theologically at this new human advancement called Ai? And of course that places a limit on some of what we will consider today.**

Like Solomon says, there is "nothing new under the sun." You can go back to the beginning of time and see just as culture is advancing and early technology is emerging, that mankind faced similar challenges and temptations as it does now.

**In the Garden with Adam and Eve were first tempted to disobey God and know good and evil and become like God.**

**In Genesis 6 we find the compounding of corruption of mankind to the point where God destroyed the earth.**

**In Genesis 19 we see the perversion of God's design in the redefinition of sexuality in Sodom and the consequences that follow.**

**In Exodus we Aaron fashioning a golden calf to be Israel's god fashioned like Egypt's gods and in a form Israel could control.**

**With The Witch at Endor** – We find Saul pursuing knowledge and insights outside the boundaries God had established in His law. But Saul did not demonstrate self-control or spiritual discernment in his pursuits.

**The Statue to the Unknown God** - where FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) kicks in and the people of Athens pursued a god thinking there is something more to have, know or experience.

The Bible as well as the annals of history are filled with stories of struggles created when people pursue things without taking heed of God's instructions or boundaries.

**Text:** The passage I found most helpful related to technological advances and the impact upon society are described in Genesis **11.1-9**

- 1 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.
- 2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.
- 3 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 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, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."
- 5 The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.
- 6 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, so that they will 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.

**Textual Idea:** Invention and advances in culture and civilization create challenges for God's people that require critical thinking, theological clarity, and an understanding of our mission.

The Tower of Babel is one of many symbols that speak to people's desire for notoriety, power, and independence. The story describes a people who are searching and longing for purpose, meaning and accomplishment. Their story details their desires and where they looked to find hope and fulfillment.

**Sermon Idea:** God's people always need to think theologically, ethically, and missiologically, but they must especially be able to do so in times of cataclysmic change.

**Interrogative:** What are the Universal challenges people have related to technological and cultural advances?

**TR:** There seems to be a repeated pattern of problems across human history, when cataclysmic shifts in culture or technology occur:

1. Man's struggle with progress.
2. Man's struggle with pride.
3. Man's struggle with power.

### **1. Our struggle with progress.**

V3 bricks for stone and tar for mortar . . . (v4) a tower whose tops will reach into heaven.

Verse 3 Speaks to the technological advances probably what today we would call a shift from the Paleolithic era to the Neolithic era.

From stones to brick  
And from mortar to tar.

ILL In non-spiritual terms we would call The Tower of Babel the earliest **ziggurat** - "A House that links heaven and earth.

House whose foundation is on earth and whose top reaches for heaven.

Top room would be painted to look like the heavens.

A gateway between heaven and earth - idolatry - another way into heaven without God.

It is mankind saying we don't need God.

The Humanist Manifestoes spelled out between the years 1933 and 1977 proclaim, "we as human beings control our destiny. We take the blame for mistakes, and we will take credit for our accomplishments. If we work hard, if we work together, there is nothing which can keep us from accomplishing what we want to do."

The tower of Babel in part describes man's inventiveness and progress.

The problem was within the inventiveness there was an expression of destructive tendencies.

Mastery of the world did not necessarily mean mastery of self.  
The very solutions we work out often lead to bigger problems.

It is the repeated story of man's self-effort apart from God's direction that results in mankind making life more confusing and chaotic.

However, this danger should not prevent people from expressing their creativity. God created people with the capacity to create. We should not be surprised by our capacity to create given that we have been made in God's image and He is a creator.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is **Rev 21.26-27**

26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;  
27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The idea is that the best, brightest and most beautiful things that mankind has developed will be brought into and enjoyed and bring glory to God in heaven.

The many wonderful and beautiful things that people have created will be carried into heaven - music, art, sports, architecture, literature and the like – even I think technological advances.

If these things are included by God in the eternal joys, we should also view them as God's blessings and even His work through people while on earth.

The challenge of course is limiting ourselves to operate within the moral and spiritual guidelines God has provided us.

We should seek more beneficial things, more prosperous, and dramatically improved lives while preserving the sanctity of human life, improving the plight of so many who suffer, and pursue all of this within God's ethic of love for others?

Of course, there is such potential for harm and such potential for good in the Ai revolution. And Christians should be leading the way in thinking about, drawing boundaries for, and being clear about the ethical realities we are facing with this new and revolutionary technology that builds upon the introduction of the what we might ought to look at as an entirely new industrial revolution.

But with each step of progress it is necessary to re-think theologically, philosophically, and morally so we can protect ourselves from our worst inclinations. And we can benefit mankind in the greatest of ways – modern medicine, providing clean water, ending slavery and abuse, creating economic opportunity, defeating totalitarian regimes.



Tackling societies largest and most troubling problems.

Giving ourselves away to make the world a better place.

This is the kind of progress God desires mankind to have.

## **2. Our struggle with pride.**

**V4 Let us** make a name for ourselves- famous.

V4 Otherwise we will be scattered . . . (Fear) fear of being forgotten.

"Let us make a name for ourselves," is a fundamental urge of a fallen race. It reveals one of the basic **philosophies of**

**Humanism**: "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things." That is the central thought of humanism, glory to mankind.

From that day on, this has been the motto of humanity, "let us make a name for ourselves."

The problem with pride is that it removes God from the picture. It becomes all about us.

### **Look at the three invitations of pride.**

1. Let us establish a city.
2. Let us build a tower.
3. Let us make a name.

#### **A. Let's build for ourselves a city.**

1. Cities meant security.
2. Cities meant importance.
3. Cities meant power.

#### **B. Let's build for ourselves a tower.**

1. Towers were religious symbols.
2. Towers were to honor the gods.
3. The tower was man's effort to reach God.
4. The only problem was, it was done in pride and not in service.

#### **C. Let's us make a name for ourselves. This was the issue.**

Let's show off our importance and status.

Let's build our platform and popularity.

Let's be the shining stars.

ILL This can be subtle in our own hearts – I was working in Maryville, TN recently and has some time – I went by the Blount Memorial Hospital where in the entrance hung a plaque with my grandfather's name on it as the chairman of the hospital board.

QT: Count Zinzendorf – the famous missionary leader of the Moravians of Eastern Germany. "Live, serve God, Die and be forgotten."

**APPLY.** Pride easily creeps in when we begin to strive to please men, over pleasing God.

It's when we are more concerned with making a great name for ourselves, than we are a great name for our Savior.

ILL Pride A little boy was overheard talking to himself as he strutted through the backyard, wearing his baseball cap and toting a ball and bat. "I'm the greatest hitter in the world," he announced.

Then, he tossed the ball into the air, swung at it, and missed.

"Strike One!" he yelled. Undaunted, he picked up the ball and said again, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world!"

He tossed the ball into the air. When it came down he swung again and missed. "Strike Two!" he cried.

The boy then paused a moment to examine his bat and ball carefully. He spit on his hands and rubbed them together. He straightened his cap and said once more, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world!"

Again he tossed the ball up in the air and swung at it. He missed. "Strike Three!"

"Wow!" he exclaimed. "I'm the greatest pitcher in the world!"

### **3. Our struggle with power.**

V6 There is nothing they purposed which they will not be able to do.

Genesis 3.5 "You will be like God."

TR. What was God's reaction? 5-7

#### **A. God came down. (v. 7)**

There is great irony here - they are building a great tower whose top is in heaven - yet God has to come down from heaven to even see their pathetic little tower

The distance between God and man = SIN

## **B. God confused their design. (v. 7)**

They became confused.

They began to search for answers. In order to seek HIM!

**The story of the Sorcerer's Apprentice.** Do you remember the story in mythology of the boy who hired himself out to a sorcerer to be his servant and to carry his water for him?

Like all boys, tiring of the work, he looked around to find some easier way of getting the job done. One day when the master was away he prowled around among the sorcerer's magical paraphernalia.

He found certain books with magic words, incantations, in them. He learned a few of these and tried them out on the broom. To his amazement he found that he could command the broom to carry water in buckets.

He sat back, opened a magazine, and read while the broom carried in the water, bucket after bucket. But after a bit he detected a little moisture on the floor. To his consternation he realized that the tubs and basins were all full and the broom was still carrying in the water.

He decided he had better do something about it. He arose and uttered the magic incantation, but the broom kept on carrying in the water, dumping it on the floor. As it began to rise around his ankles the boy panicked. He didn't know what to do. He cried out every magic word he knew, but nothing worked, and the broom kept on carrying in the buckets and dumping them on the floor.

Soon the water rose around his neck, and he began to cry out in anguish, realizing that he hadn't learned enough. He was saved at the last moment by the return of the master who, in a few words, cleared up the whole situation.

This very well could be a parable of Ai. Man, in his inventiveness, thinks he can master the earth. But the very solutions he works out become the bigger problems, which he can no longer encompass. God does not limit mankind to harm us, but to protect and help us.

**Apply: As Ai is launched and becomes more and more common, I believe mankind will wrestle anew with the same old issues of progress, pride and power.**

**Here are some of the applications from the precious iterations of these types of challenges that Christians can learn from:**

## **1. Our ability to think critically, clearly, and biblically will be challenged.**

I am constantly surprised by how many Christians struggle to think for themselves and with a perpetual biblically framework in mind.

As the world turns faster and faster this skillset is more and more critical to knowing God, walking with God, and obeying God.

Christians of late have not been leading the way when it comes to thinking critically. We have been parroting cliché's we have heard from celebrity Christians who have gained popularity in the public arena.

We need authentic thought leaders who raise issues, apply principles, and who think and act ethically to lead us.

Well constructed theological categories and frameworks like revelation, God, man, sin, redemption.

Revelation, authority, responsibility, and ethics will need to be rediscovered.

## **2. Our capacity for self-restraint will undergo a new series of tests.**

This happened with materialism and many found their greed consuming them and that they struggled with generosity, and satisfaction during the time of immense growth in wealth in America.

Many in the 60's during the sexual revolution struggled to demonstrate self-control related to hedonism and the pleasures of sex.

When bioengineering first emerged it was impossible for some to demonstrate restraint as experiments with human beings became popular.

And now we will find a new frontier where there is the need to say no to ourselves for the good of mankind and the glory of God, but I believe we will struggle to limit what we do with science again.

## **3. Our idea of "well-being" will be tested.**

I don't want to be overly technical here – and I don't know that I am capable of handling the challenge – however one of the key ideas for ethicist right now is what ethicist call the "desire – satisfaction theory of well being related to Ai and where and how it intersects people and their well

Wellbeing is explicitly a theological category we call it Shaolm or peace. It really means more than just peace. It entails all of what we experience humanly and how it should come under the protection and direction of God for our good.

Of course depending upon which view you take related to Ai you realize you can easily launch into a utopian view of well being or a dystopian view of well being. Whereas the Bible teaches us to find our well being in God.

**4. Our understanding of what it means to be human will be tested.**

**5. There will be a new frontier of ethics and morality that Christians will need to explore.**

**6. Our need for another Great Awakening to anchor humanity to God and in Biblical truth in the midst of great change will be essential.**

When we entered the industrial age we entered with a great spiritual awakening, we will need another new awakening to our moral and spiritual responsibilities before God.

**First Great Awakening** – 1730's – 1770's The freedom revolution and the industrial revolution.

**The Second Great Awakening** – 1795- 1835 – The Economic Revolution and the growth of materialism.

**The Technological Revolution** from 1980's – 2020's needs there to be a Third Great Awakening so mankind continues to be anchored to God and His Word while massive cultural shifts occur.

If this Awakening does occur then a new era of faith, optimism, and hope will blossom into what might be called the Golden Age of Humanity.

If this Awakening does not occur, it might usher in the dystopian nightmare so many TV shows and movies portray.

**Closing:** I leave you today with what is referred to among Technology specialists as Amara's Law: It goes like this: "We overestimate the effects of technology in the short run and underestimate the effects of technology in the long run.

If that is the case it is hard to imagine the impact the Ai will have upon us in the long run.

**Decision Time:**

God did not frustrate the building project at Babel because He did not want a relationship with Him. He desired more than anything else a relationship with people. After all this is why He created us, but we also know is that we approach God on His terms and not on our own.

People are still trying to build some tower or stairway to get to heaven. Our towers are built out of the bricks of our self-effort and selfishness. I can think of at least three types of bricks used most often.