

Title: **Acts: Faith, Community, & Mission...Here, There, & Everywhere!**

Text: **Acts 1:1-2**

Date: **January 15, 2023**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at mercyhillchurch.org.



Big Idea

Before you head into the forest, sometimes it's good to get above the trees. When we survey the landscape of the book of Acts, we find that it's ultimately about how the gospel of Jesus Christ establishes Faith, Community, and Mission . . . here, there, and everywhere. Buckle up!

"[P]erhaps Luke's most fundamental purpose in the Book of Acts is to help Christians answer the question 'Who are we?'" (Carson and Moo).

The book of Acts is the gospel gaining traction in the hearts and lives of a people. In his first book, it's as if Luke gathers up the raw material of the gospel—he gathers the wood and sticks and stacks it all together, if you will. And then here in this second book, with the spark of the Holy Spirit, it's as if he just lights the whole thing on fire. This is why one author writes: "Acts is the story of the Spirit of God raging like an out-of-control forest fire in a people who have been consumed with what consumes him."

1. Faith, Community, and Mission . . .

When we talk about Faith it's just shorthand for our relationship with God. It's the movement *upwards* towards God. When we talk about Community it's just shorthand for our relationship with one another in the church. It's the movement *inwards* towards other people in the church. When we talk about Mission it's just shorthand for the greater purpose from God that we are to lean into in this place that he has put us. It's the movement *outwards* towards the city and world that doesn't know Christ.

All of this was lost in Adam, but it's being restored in Jesus. And that's why we see these things being formed in his new people, the church, all throughout the book of Acts.

Example #1: The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41)

God is bringing together a new people in Jesus composed of every tribe, tongue, and nation. He's forming a redeemed and renewed community around his Son. The gift of forgiveness and salvation, the Spirit, it wasn't just for this first little community of disciples . . . it was for any who would call on the name of the Lord.

Example #2: The Budding Church (Acts 2:42-47)

If, in our efforts to be a "missional" church, we cut ourselves from either Faith or Community, we shall not be truly missional at all, at least not in the sense God would have us be. These three are a part of the same ecosystem. If you remove one, you lose them all.

Example #3: The Conversion of Saul (Acts 8-9)

Why did Jesus save Paul? To bring him to himself? Sure. To bring him into the church family? Yes. But it was also because he had a mission for him (cf. Acts 26:16-18).

2. . . Here, There, and Everywhere!

In Acts 1:8 Jesus essentially gives us what becomes really the thesis statement of the entire book. When he moves from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth, you can picture these concentric circles, each one getting broader and broader until at last everything under heaven is encompassed. It's as if, here in Jerusalem, at the cross, Jesus has dropped a bomb—a "holy Hiroshima"—and the mushroom cloud of grace released from that initial blast will expand out and eventually cover the globe. That's the idea. And that's the pattern that this book actually follows. As we read, we watch as the gospel breaks through these various barriers one by one ("Jerusalem" [chs. 1-7]; "Judea and Samaria" [chs. 8-12]; "end of the earth" [chs. 13-28]).



Reflection Questions

- Take an honest look at yourself. Is there "fat to trim" in your spiritual life? When you consider Faith, Community, and Mission, which one would you say you need to grow most in right now and why? What can you do about it? How can Jesus help?
- When you consider the passion that the early church has for bringing the gospel here, there, and everywhere, how do you compare? What (if anything) needs to change?

W

E

L

C

O

M

E

SCAN TO FILL OUT A



CONNECTION CARD

Give online at mercyhillchurch.org/give or text any amount to 84321 and follow the prompts.

Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal relationship with his people.

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his ambassadors. This value presses our church *outwards* in love for the unbelieving.

Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



Mail: PO Box 23806, San Jose, CA 95153
Phone: (408) 320-7080
Email: info@mercyhillchurch.org
Web: mercyhillchurch.org



Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Covenant Membership Class - Open Registration!

At the request of some in the congregation, registration for the Covenant Membership Class is now open! If you are interested in becoming a member or simply want to re-familiarize yourself with what we're all about, you can register online at mercyhillchurch.org/community/covenant-membership/. We will leave registration open for the next few weeks, then we'll pick a Sunday to hold the class.

Scan the QR code below to find a clickable link to register.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

All Church Campout - Save the Date!

As many of you know, last year we had a great time at our All Church Campout which was held at Mount Madonna County Park (just 45 minutes from here, but it feels like a world away). We camped Saturday night and held the service in the redwoods there on Sunday morning.

Good news: we're planning to do it again! Based on a survey y'all filled out a while back, it seemed the weekend of June 24-25 was best. So that's what we went with. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us. You won't want to miss it! More info to come as we get closer to the date.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub.