

Title: **Dancing in the “Dissonance”**
Text: **Acts 8:1-8**
Date: **May 12, 2024**

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Big Idea

In our text, and often in our lives, hard stuff is placed right alongside the good stuff. And we’re left trying to make sense of it. Is God against us in one situation and for us in another? There’s a dissonance we hear and feel. But when once we see how the two come together in the Christian life, we find, not only can we discern the music and the harmony of it all, we can actually learn to dance to it!

1. Hearing the Dissonance

When I first read these eight verses in Acts 8, what I heard sounded to me like dissonance. Did you notice it? You’ve got those notes ringing out there in vv. 4-8, and it’s a sound of triumph and joy. But it doesn’t play well at all with the notes that came just before in vv. 1-3, where it’s the sound of sorrow and death. There seems, at first at least, to be a dissonance here. And it makes you wonder: Is God like that little kid at the piano just pounding his hands away at the keys making an awful racket in the world? Or is he making music, is he writing a song, is he playing something we can even learn to dance to, however confusing it may be sometimes?

Layer #1: Social Dissonance

Layer #2: Missional Dissonance

Layer #3: Physical Dissonance

Layer #4: Emotional Dissonance

Layer #5: Spiritual Dissonance

2. Learning to Dance

If we’re going to learn to dance, even in the apparent dissonance of all this, we’ve got to be sure of at least two things so far as God and his dealings with us are concerned. And both of them can be observed here in our text . . .

Observation #1: Complementarity

By Complementarity I mean we need to see that both sides of this text, however contradictory they may seem to us at first, are actually together part of the normal Christian life. The hard stuff and the good stuff. It’s all a part of the whole package of following Jesus—after all, he is the crucified and resurrected One (cf. Mark 10:29-30; John 16:33).

Observation #2: Chronology

By Chronology I mean to say that the first side of this text doesn’t just properly stand alongside the second, it actually *leads into* the second. There’s a sequence, an order, a progression here. We are supposed to gather from this story not just that hard stuff and good stuff are both a part of the normal Christian life. We’re supposed to see, I think—surprisingly, shockingly—that the hard stuff is actually what God often uses to get us to the good stuff (cf. Acts 1:8; 8:1; 11:19-21). Trials and tribulations are God’s taxicabs. They’re one of the ways he picks us up and takes us where he wants us to go. And believe it or not, though the ride itself may be dreadfully uncomfortable, the destination is always good. All the stuff that comes in the second half of this text—the favor, the success, the miracles and healing, the joy—it comes on the backend of all the hard stuff. He uses the hard to get us to the good. That’s how it works.



Reflection Questions

- Which side of the dissonance most resonated with you? Are you going through a season marked more by hardship or by God’s blessing? Or has there been a strange mix of both?
- When trials come, what is your typical response? How might this text and sermon help you slow down and let God’s “taxi-cab” take you where he wants you to go?

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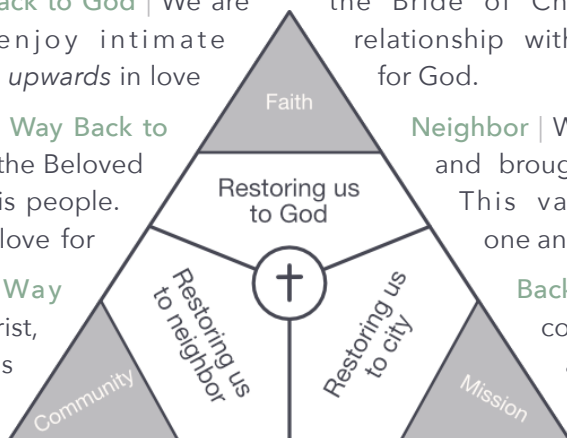
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal This value presses our one another.

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the

Back to City | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* 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!



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

Announcement Spotlight

Happy Mother's Day!

Mothers of Mercy Hill, please be sure to grab a rose after the service before leaving today. We pray you receive it as just a small sign of our appreciation for what you do all the year long. You are loved!

Upcoming Members' Meeting!

Covenant members, please save the date for our next Members' Meeting to be held after the service on Sunday, May 19th (lunch provided). More details and a form to RSVP has been emailed directly to you. Be sure to RSVP ASAP!

If you are not a covenant member at Mercy Hill but are interested in learning more, please visit our covenant membership page online.

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

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