

Title: **"You Are Out of Your Mind": The Mind-Blowing Provision of God in Prayer**
Text: **Acts 12:1-17**

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



Big Idea

The whole narrative in Acts 12 turns on a prayer meeting! As we consider this story together, we will learn a number of things about prayer: (1) It Starts with Need; (2) It's Passionately Persistent; (3) It's Cultivated in Community; (4) It Forms Deep Bonds; (5) It Helps You Sleep; (6) It Depends on His Faithfulness (More than Ours); and (7) It's All Because of Jesus!

Lesson #1: It Starts with Need

Prayer in its essence is a turning from self to God. It is an expression of humble dependence and reliance upon him. And what this means is that, before we can ever really come to pray, we must first come to see our great need and weakness. We must become utterly convinced of it, deep in our bones. That's the precursor to a prayerful saint. The irony is that those who are the greatest in prayer are only so because they see they are the least in everything else. You are most prayerful because you realize you are most helpless and desperate.

If you're struggling to pray these days, might I suggest: Your biggest problem likely isn't that you don't know enough about it, or that you don't have enough discipline, or that you don't have enough time in your schedule, or something like this. Your biggest problem is that you don't see how weak and needy you really are. Because if you did, if I did, we would pray!

Lesson #2: It's Passionately Persistent

Lesson #3: It's Cultivated in Community

If you want to grow in prayer, start here. If you try to get alone with God and it just feels like you get distracted or discouraged or you don't know what to do, start here. Get with other believers and pray. Learn from them. Be encouraged by them. Start with the prayer meeting tonight!

Lesson #4: It Forms Deep Bonds

If you are struggling to find community in this church, don't start with: "Who likes what I like? Who shares the same hobbies, or has the same taste in food, or likes the same movies, or occupies the same stage of life as me?" or whatever. Start with prayer. Get in community and pray together. Prayer forms deep bonds.

Lesson #5: It Helps You Sleep

There's an unburdening that happens in prayer. It's not that our burdens go away, it's that they're rolled off of us and onto the only One who can truly carry them: God (cf. 1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Lesson #6: It Depends on His Faithfulness (More than Ours)

It is true, your faith matters in prayer. But it is not the most decisive, the most ultimate thing. Prayer depends more on God's faithfulness than on ours. The answers to our prayers are not determined so much by the strength of our faith as by the strength of his grace. And that's so freeing. That's so liberating. Because I can be human. I can pray but still struggle and know that God will do what seems best to him and what's good for me.

Lesson #7: It's All Because of Jesus!

On that cross, it's as if the Father cuts off the line of communication with his Son so that he can open back up the line for us. He puts his Son on hold so that can start taking our calls, so that we can have relationship with him again, so that we can pray. In other words: prayer is a privilege purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Don't take it for granted. Don't trifle with it. Don't neglect it. Cherish it. Enjoy it. Give yourself to it.



Reflection Questions

- As you come to this new year and this Week of Prayer, how are you doing with God? Where are things going well? What needs to change?
- How has your prayer life been lately? Which of the seven lessons referenced this morning seemed most relevant to you and why?

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Our Mission & Values

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

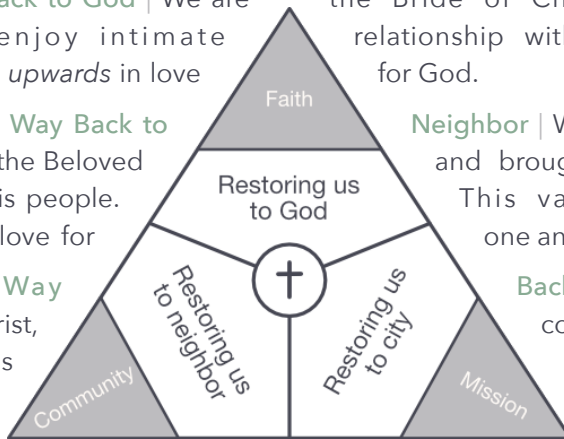
FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

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!



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

Mercy Hill's Week of Prayer - Starting Today!

The church is always called to be praying and seeking God together, but sometimes it is good to set aside special time to do so. That's what we have made a habit of doing during the first week of every new year. This year the first Sunday in January is the 5th, so our Week of Prayer will span from January 5th to the 12th. We hope you'll dive into this with us!

For more information, feel free to contact us at
info@mercyhillchurch.org.

All Church Hangout - Today!

All Church Prayer - Today!

Perspectives - Class Registration

Covenant Membership - Date Decided

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