

Title: **Expectance, Entrance, and Embrace (Part 1)**

Text: **Acts 13:13-30**

Date: **February 16, 2025**

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Big Idea

When Paul gets a chance to preach in a local synagogue, he shows the people there (and us) how all the Old Testament stories of deliverance were incomplete and mere foreshadows of the full and final deliverance that's now come in Jesus. We must not look anywhere else!

1. Expectance (vv. 16-25)

Here Paul is outlining the flow of OT history as he prepares to show us how it all climaxes and culminates in the person and work of Jesus.

Mark #1: Divine Activity

God is the subject of nearly every verb in this section. The point is unmistakably plain: God is the primary actor in the history of redemption. He's the one who keeps the story going, and the plan unfolding, and the kingdom coming.

Mark #2: Human Insufficiency

In spite of all God is doing, you still get a sense—in every story, at every level—that it's not quite enough. There's something incomplete about it. It's not done. It's pointing forward, but it's not yet there. It's almost . . . but not quite.

The stories of all these magnificent figures in the OT highlighted by Paul here, they end with a thud, on a sour note, with a sense of let-down. Their legacies are left tainted and their bodies are put in the grave along with all those who've come before them. They're all stained by sin and subject to mortality and death.

Stage #1: Moses and the Exodus

Stage #2: Joshua and the Conquest

Stage #3: Judges and "the Cycle"

Stage #4: Kings and the Exile

Stage #5: John and the Preparation

Lesson #1: God Is Always On the Move

God is always on the move. And that's true, not just for these stories in the Bible and these big watershed moments in redemptive history. It's true for your life as well. He's up to good. Even now.

Lesson #2: God Is Never Late

Why doesn't God fix things right away? Why doesn't he send Jesus at the front end of all of this? We sure do want to know, don't we? We live in a microwave culture, where we want everything instantaneously. But that's not how God works. He takes his time, but he's never late. And it's important that we realize that. So many of our problems come from our unwillingness to wait on God and his timing.

Lesson #3: God Is Our Only Hope

In all of this OT history Paul recounts, he's driving at two fundamental points. Number one, man can't save himself. Number two, only God can. It's very interesting. These OT figures, at one and the same time, they both highlight our inability to save ourselves and foreshadow the only one who can—the divine deliverer who's coming in Jesus.

2a. Entrance (vv. 26-37)

Jesus is like these OT figures, but not like them at the same time. Where they all were stained by sin and subject to death, Jesus is not. His enemies looked for sin in him, but they couldn't find it. They put him in a tomb, but they couldn't keep him in it. He didn't die for his own sin, he died for ours. And he didn't die for good, he was in the tomb for three days before he was raised back up to life never to die again. This story doesn't end like all the others. It doesn't end in death. It ends in everlasting life. And, therefore, the deliverance he offers his people is not incomplete or partial or momentary like all the others. It's complete. It's full. It's forever!



Reflection Questions

- Which of the three lessons outlined above seem most relevant to you today and why?
- How are you doing at waiting on God's timing for things in your life? Where are you currently impatient and tempted to turn to other "gods" that will work on your timetable?

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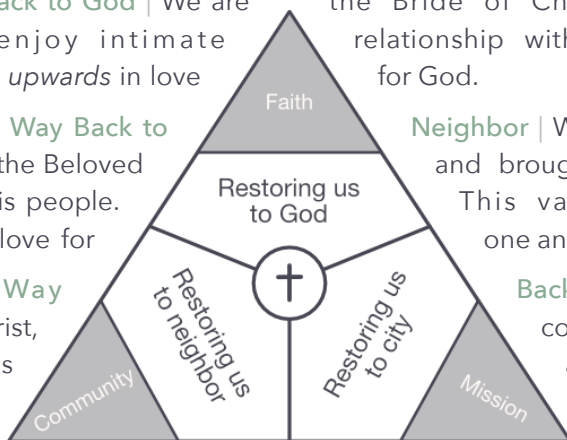
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Your Next Steps

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

Announcement Spotlight

STM (Short-Term Missions) Applications

Applications are now available for our two trips to Nicaragua (end of June - beginning of July) and the Philippines (end of November), both in partnership with Arms of Love! If you haven't already, we invite you to prayerfully consider the possibility of going. If interested, please complete the application by the trip application due date(s). The deadline for the Nicaragua application is the end of this month (February 24th).

Scan the QR code below to find a link to the application.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Bob Durstenfeld (bdurstenfeld@gmail.com) or Joey Wang (joeywang@mercyhillchurch.org).

All Church Prayer - Tonight!

All Church Campout - Save the Date!

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