

Title: **"Through Many Tribulations": The Way of the Cross as the Way to the Kingdom**
Text: **Acts 14:19-28**

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



Big Idea

The Bible clearly teaches that the road to the kingdom of heaven passes through much suffering. Tribulations come even for Christians, especially for Christians. But why? And how do we get through it? That's what our text is all about!

1. The Inevitability of It

We don't come to Jesus to avoid suffering. We come to Jesus to get Jesus, even if suffering comes along with him. Paul wasn't derailed by suffering because he expected it. And he wants these new disciples (and us!) to have their expectations properly calibrated so they too can stay the course. God is with us in this. He has not abandoned us. Just because it's hard and it hurts doesn't mean he isn't here. This is the clear teaching all across Scripture (e.g. John 15:20; 16:33; Rom. 8:17; 1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12; 5:8-11)—that following Jesus is going to be hard, that it's going to cost us. Not just because people are going to hate us and persecute us. But also because the call on a Christian is the call to love others—and you can't really love others without laying down something of yourself.

2. The Reason for It

Reason #1: It Deepens Our Relationship

"When I am in the cellar of affliction, I look for the Lord's choicest wines."

Maybe life is so hard for you right now. It feels like everything is closed doors. I'm telling you, there's an open one. It feels like you're in the dark. But you're in his wine cellar. Looking back, I can honestly say the sweetest times I've ever had with Jesus have been in the midst of the hardest times of my life. But you have to locate that open door and go through it. You have to look for that choice wine, pull the cork, and sip. You have to rely on him. You have to commune with him.

Reason #2: It Refines Our Affections

"Jesus has always many who love His heavenly kingdom, but few who bear His cross. He has many who desire consolation, but few who care for trial. He finds many to share His table, but few to take part in His fasting. All desire to be happy with Him; few wish to suffer anything for Him. Many follow Him to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His passion. Many revere His miracles; few approach the shame of the Cross. Many love Him as long as they encounter no hardship; many praise and bless Him as long as they receive some comfort from Him. But if Jesus hides Himself and leaves them for a while, they fall either into complaints or into deep dejection. Those, on the contrary, who love Him for His own sake and not for any comfort of their own, bless Him in all trial and anguish of heart as well as in the bliss of consolation." - Thomas à Kempis

Reason #3: It Enhances Our Ministry

The Christian is to be a living sermon. We're not just telling people about the cross with our mouths, we're showing them with our lives, in the way we love them even to our own hurt (cf. Gal. 6:17; 2 Cor. 4:7-12).

3. The Way through It

Suggestion #1: Keep God in Front of You

Trying to get through suffering without the Word of God is like trying to get out of the backwoods without a map. The more effort you make, the more lost you get—the deeper into the woods you go.

Suggestion #2: Get People around You

Suggestion #3: Celebrate the Good



Reflection Questions

- In what ways are you suffering right now? Which of the three reasons from point 2 seems most significant to you personally and why? Which of the three suggestions from point 3 do you most need to act on? How can Jesus and the church help?!

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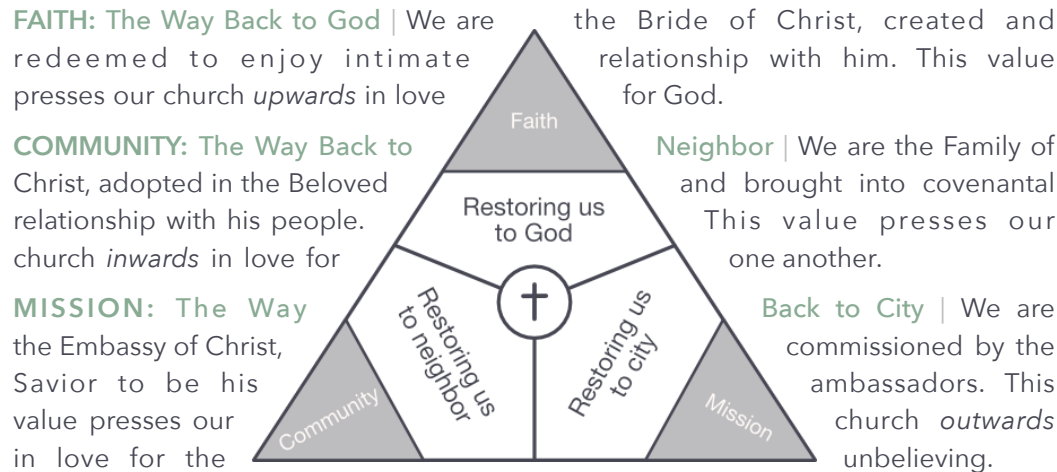


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Our Mission & Values

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



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

All Church Campout - Register Today!

We are excited to announce that we'll be hosting an All Church Campout at Mount Madonna County Park over the weekend of June 20-22! We have a huge group campsite all to ourselves and lots of options in the park for having fun together. Whether you love to camp or you'd rather still sleep in your own bed, we have something for everyone. Because the park is only a 45 minute drive from south San Jose, people can feel free to come and go as it works with their schedule and preference.

- **Option #1: Day-Use:** For those not wanting to camp but still wanting to participate, the Day-Use option is best. You can come in for the day, enjoy activities, meals, etc., and then head home to your warm bed while the rest of us "rough" it :).
- **Option #2: Camp:** This option is for those who want the full camping experience. We have the site for Friday and Saturday nights. You can choose to camp for one or both of these depending upon your availability and desire.

Scan the QR code below for more info and to find a link to sign up!

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

Sunday Prayer Walk - Today!

From the GO! Team - CityTeam and the Philippines!

Post-Missions Emphasis Week - What's Next?

Scan the QR code below for more info!

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