

Title: **Continuing in the Grace of God**
Text: **Acts 13:42-43**
Date: **March 30, 2025**

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Big Idea

The Christian life doesn't just begin with grace, it continues in it. Paul and Barnabas urge the fledgling disciples in our text to "continue in the grace of God." They do so because they know, not only are we all prone to drift from it, but we are all daily in desperate need of it if we are to carry on with power and love to the end.

1. We Must Begin with Grace

We are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Why the law then? Why did God even give us the law if justification comes through faith in Jesus? What's the purpose of all these commandments and rules?

Purpose #1: The Law Is Not a *Mountain* for Me to Climb, But a *Muzzle* for My Mouth (Rom. 3:19-20)

Purpose #2: The Law Is Not a *Test* for Me to Pass, But a *Teacher* to Point Me to Christ (Gal. 3:21-24)

Purpose #3: The Law Is Not a *Rulebook* for Me to Follow, But a *Relationship* for Me to Find (John 5:39-40, 45-46)

The point of the law is to point to the Christ! Yes, it was meant to muzzle your mouth, so you see how broken and sinful you really are. Yes, it was meant to then also be your teacher, so that God's law would keep driving you back to God's promise of grace and mercy. But all of this was ultimately so that—when Jesus comes, when help arrives, when the fulfillment of all God's promises is here, when you see him—you come to him, you enter into relationship with him. That's the point.

2. We Must Continue in Grace

Reason #1: We Are Prone to Drift Off from It

There's a drift—away from grace, towards self-justification—even if you're inside the church and claiming Christ as your Lord and Savior. Your lips may move in one direction while your heart begins to move in another. So beware of "gospel drift."

Reason #2: We Are Truly Changed Only by It

This is such an important bit to get right about the Christian life. On the one hand, we are not justified by grace and therefore set free to go on living in sin. But, on the other hand, neither are we justified by grace and then left to try to sanctify ourselves by our works. We are not justified by grace and then perfected by our own strength. No! The source and means of our justification are the very same source and means of our sanctification. We are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and we are sanctified (or renewed in Christ's image) by the same (cf. Acts 20:32; Col. 1:3-6; 1 Thess. 2:13. 2 Tim. 2:1; Titus 2:11-14). Grace is the powerhouse of the Christian ethic. Interestingly enough, God's grace doesn't motivate our discarding of the law, but rather our fulfilling of it. The law isn't opposed to grace, but neither is grace opposed to the law. Jesus said that the fulfillment of all the law is love. And as we truly take in the love of God for us in Jesus we become more loving people ourselves.

3. So What Can We Do?

These folks were so moved by the word of God's grace and so aware of their desperate need for it that they were begging to hear more (v. 42). Are you? These folks were prepared to leave whatever else they had to leave so they could follow behind Paul and Barnabas and get more of the gospel from them (v. 43). Are you? If you want to continue in the grace of God you have to continue in the Word of God. Hear and believe. Fight for faith. Confront the places in your heart that are resistant to or doubtful of God's grace for you in Jesus. Preach the gospel to yourself every day. "Feed" on your justification. Take the gospel in deeper and it will satisfy you, free you, change you.



Reflection Questions

- In what ways are you personally prone to "gospel drift"?
- What steps can you take this week that might help you "continue in the grace of God"?

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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

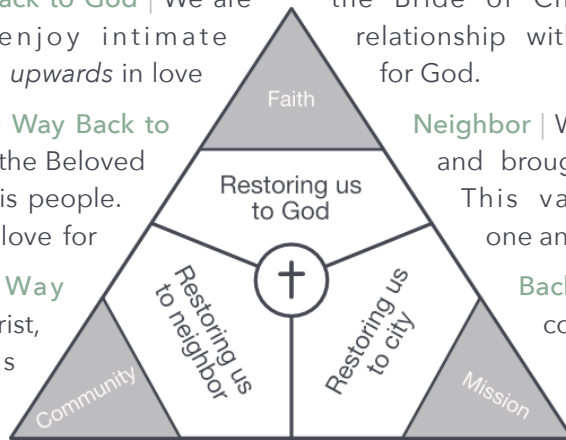
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

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!



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

Announcement Spotlight

Easter @ Mercy Hill!

Easter is coming soon and we have some exciting things planned!

- GOOD FRIDAY SUNSET SERVICE (FRIDAY 4/18)
- EASTER EGG HUNT & FAMILY FUN (SATURDAY 4/19)
- EASTER SERVICE (SUNDAY 4/20)
- EVER WONDERED? SPECIAL SERVICE (SUNDAY 4/27)

For more details on the items above, please scan the QR code below.

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

Post-Missions Emphasis Week - What's Next?

All Church Campout - Save the Date!

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