

Title: **Devoted: Becoming the Church Christ Has Redeemed Us to Be (Pt 2)**
Text: **Acts 2:42-47**
Date: **August 20, 2023**

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Big Idea

Our fellowship with Jesus establishes and sustains our fellowship with one another. His radical generosity towards us is to be reflected in the radical generosity of our own community. As the watching world looks in and sees such things in the church, they can't help but see him in our midst as well!

The church is that blessed assembly that exists in the *presence* of God, as the *people* of God, for the *purpose* of God. It's what we were created to be from the beginning in Adam. And it's what we're now being redeemed to be once more in Christ.

Core Value #2: Community

We read in v. 42 that these early Christians weren't just devoted to those "upward" activities of spending time in God's Word, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and praying. We see here that they also "devoted themselves to . . . the fellowship . . ." There's a community forming. And there's a profound togetherness where there once would have been isolation and division: "And all who believed were together . . ." (v. 44).

Luke gives us the term "fellowship" in v. 44. But then he unpacks it with what he goes on to say about this early community down in vv. 44-46. This fellowship we're talking about, it's not just hanging out for a few hours on a Sunday or an occasional night of the week and then going our separate ways. It's this profound sharing of our lives with each other. These early Christians are sharing their *stuff*, their *tables*, and their *hearts*.

A lot of times, what sets us up for loneliness even in the church is we approach relationships primarily with a view to what we can get. We want everyone else to share with us but we're not all that interested in sharing with them. Everyone wants the benefits of a good relationship, but no one wants to give radically of themselves to get it!

Before we are called to show radical generosity towards one another we are called to receive the radical generosity of Jesus towards us in grace. We can go and share our stuff with others . . . because Jesus first shares his stuff with us (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). We can go and share our table with others . . . because Jesus first shares his table with us. We can go and share our hearts and our lives with others . . . because Jesus first shared his heart and life with us, even unto death (cf. John 15:12-13). We can have deep and meaningful fellowship with one another because we have fellowship with God through Christ (cf. 1 John 1:3)!

Core Value #3: Mission

Because our radical generosity is ultimately enabled by our radically generous God, when those outside the church see that in us, they come to truly see something of him. Mark Dever puts it this way: *"Christian proclamation might make the gospel audible, but Christians living together in local congregations make the gospel visible. The church is the gospel-made-visible."*

"The church upholds the truth by embodying it. The life of the church is meant to make the gospel plausible, and the church won't be an effective communicator of the truth if it isn't an effective community."

. . . Many tasks before the church are urgent and essential—defending the faith's rationality and goodness against attacks, learning to articulate the gospel in various subcultures, caring for the poor and needy in society, bringing the gospel to unreached groups and regions of the world. But nothing can be more urgent or essential than attending to what Jesus says in John 13:35. Arguments can change minds, but the beauty of Christ's love shown among us will turn heads like nothing else" (Sam Allberry).



Reflection Questions

- Looking back at your own journey towards Jesus, how did the church community around you influence you either for good or for bad? In what ways did the church make Jesus more attractive? In what ways did they detract from his beauty?
- In what ways can you lean in towards community and the call to radical generosity this week, month, year?

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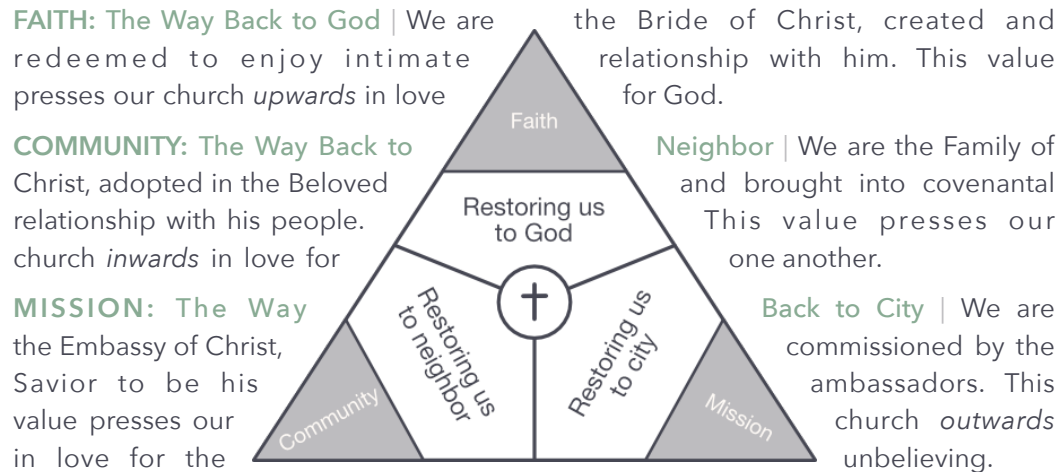


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Our Mission & Values

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

Congregational Singing - Today!

Warm up your vocals, because today we're trying something new!

As many of you know, at Mercy Hill we are still looking for a Director of Musical Worship. While we wait on God for this, we are trying our best to develop teams and rhythms with those currently in our church.

As such, today Jolie Huang will be leading us in musical worship on the keyboard. There is, however, one little detail you must make note of: we will not have someone on stage "leading" us vocally with a mic. Instead, what we'll be doing is what's often referred to as "congregational singing." This is where the primary voice(s) is not that of the worship leader but of the church—you, us! Another way to think about it: on these "congregational singing" Sundays, you are the worship leader! So don't be shy. Let's sing to the Lord together!

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

SVA Forum: Did Jesus Really Exist?

Many people, both religious and non-religious, believe Jesus was a real person, but is this a safe assumption? What reasons do we have to doubt or believe that he really existed (or really exists)?

On Saturday, August 26th beginning at 3:30pm, Nick will be dialoguing with the former president of Atheists of Silicon Valley at an event put on by the Silicon Valley Areopagus Forum. You won't want to miss it!

Please scan the QR code below to find more info and a place to RSVP!

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

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