

Title: **Our Risen and Ascendant King (Part 1): Precepts**
Text: **Acts 1:1-11**
Date: **January 22, 2023**

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Big Idea

All authority has been given to Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. And, as our risen and ascendant King, he issues commands. He commands us to go and be his witnesses among the nations. But, before that, he commands us to wait.

1. That He Commands

I think in our modern culture we've put a spin on Jesus that isn't true to who he really is, to what we see of him even in this verse (v. 2). We tend to think that Jesus is too meek and mild to command anybody. He's off somewhere with the little children petting sheep. He's washing feet. He's handing out snacks. He's giving free hugs. But he certainly wouldn't dare boss people around or issue commands. He's too "nice." We tend to think that sort of thing is reserved for the God of the Old Testament.

We act as if the Bible presents the sort of bad-cop/good-cop dynamic you see on TV. God the Father, in the Old Testament, he's the bad cop. He's mean. He's always writing down commandments, lighting fires, turning people to sulfur and salt, bringing down judgement and all this. But Jesus, God the Son, in the New Testament, he's the good cop. He comes in all gentle and lowly. He doesn't raise his voice or command anyone.

But when we look closely, that's not what we see in the Scriptures at all. In fact, it seems to me, if anything, Jesus actually demands more of us—he takes the commandments of his Father and drives them even deeper. In a sense, he's even more severe.

2. What He Commands

Jesus' last command isn't: "Go and do!" It's: "Stay and wait!" (cf. v. 4). Oh how this order is unbelievably significant! Getting it right is critical

to the Christian life. We've got to be brought to the end of ourselves before he can begin to make us something new.

I recognize there are some differences between what's happening in our text and where we are now. For one thing, we're not apostles. For another thing, we live in the days after Pentecost and the initial outpouring of the Spirit. But, nevertheless, I do think that the principle at bottom is still the same: we can't run off ahead of Jesus; we can't fulfill the law without his Spirit; and we certainly can't fulfill the Great Commission without his Spirit. We can't save ourselves. And we can't save anyone else. We need him through and through. And so we still, in that sense then, need to stay and wait for him.

Therefore, trying to apply this, I wanted to give us three steps we can take to encourage this waiting upon him that leads to going out with him and in his power.

Step #1: Pray (cf. Acts 1:14; 4:31)

We don't run off ahead of Jesus, we cry out to him. We don't try to fix ourselves or our situation, we cry out to him. We don't try to convert the nations or our neighbors on our own, we cry out to him. We pray.

Step #2: Hear (cf. Gal. 3:1-5)

Hearing the gospel with faith is not just how you begin the Christian life, it's also how you carry on in it. Hearing the gospel with faith is not just how you initially receive the Holy Spirit, it's how you continue to be supplied with the Holy Spirit in power.

Step #3: Abide (cf. John 15:5)

Abiding in Jesus means that, in our prayers and in our reading of Scripture and things, we are actively rooting ourselves in him.

Reflection Questions

- Before hearing this sermon, what would you have said is the point of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus? What verses come to mind in support of your answer? Why does it matter for you and your life?
- How do you feel when someone commands you to do something? What's your gut reaction to being bossed around a bit? Does it feel any different coming from Jesus?
- Which of the three steps above do you most need to take this week and why?

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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 relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal relationship with his people.

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his ambassadors. This value presses our church *outwards* in love for the 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

Covenant Membership Class - Open Registration!

At the request of some in the congregation, registration for the Covenant Membership Class is now open! If you are interested in becoming a member or simply want to re-familiarize yourself with what we're all about, you can register online at mercyhillchurch.org/community/covenant-membership/. We will leave registration open for the next few weeks, then we'll pick a Sunday to hold the class.

Scan the QR code below to find a clickable link to register.

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

All Church Campout - Save the Date!

As many of you know, last year we had a great time at our All Church Campout which was held at Mount Madonna County Park (just 45 minutes from here, but it feels like a world away). We camped Saturday night and held the service in the redwoods there on Sunday morning.

Good news: we're planning to do it again! Based on a survey y'all filled out a while back, it seemed the weekend of June 24-25 was best. So that's what we went with. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us. You won't want to miss it! More info to come as we get closer to the date.

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

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