

Title: **Our Risen and Ascendant King: Prerogatives**
Text: **Acts 1:1-11**
Date: **March 26, 2023**

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Big Idea

Sometimes Christians can get so distracted with theological conjecture and debate that we neglect the things God has made plain to us in his Word. Jesus is here calling us to keep the main things the main things!

1. **Be Careful with What You Think You Know (v. 6)**

We all have this propensity to take Scripture and make it say what we want. I'm referring to what I'd call the danger of *hermeneutical hijacking*. You take a verse, you take a promise, and you run with it in the direction of your desires. You don't stop to ask God what he means, how it applies. You don't surrender your wants and will. You hijack Scripture to reinforce what you want and will.

2. **Be Humble with What You Don't Really Know (v. 7)**

I think especially in the West, we don't like the idea that we don't know, that perhaps there are things we *can't* know. This became especially true after the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, where man and his intellect were enshrined above everything else. "If it's true, the only way I'm going to accept it is if it can be proven sufficiently to the convincing of my own autonomous reason. If I can't get my mind around it, so far as I'm concerned, it must be false. I'm the authority. God has to bow to me." But here Jesus puts it in reverse, and in so doing, he puts it right-side up. God is the authority, and he tells you what you need to know . . . and what you don't.

So if in the first case we were warned against what I called hermeneutical hijacking, here now there is a warning against what I would call *epistemological trespassing*. We trespass into God's territory. We go where we don't belong. We try to get at the secret things, and we can't. Instead of getting more knowledge, we get into more trouble.

3. **Be Faithful with What You Actually Know (vv. 8-11)**

So often we use our studying of the Bible, ironically, as a way of avoiding what the Bible actually says. If we're studying the Scriptures, talking about the Scriptures, even arguing about the Scriptures, we feel like good Christians, even if we aren't actually *obeying* the Scriptures. So we want to talk about end-times and get out our charts and argue for this or that framework or interpretation, and we get heated over it and all this. We get all worked up over that which Jesus says we will never really fully get. All the while we're neglecting the clear call from Scripture—that, however long it is until Jesus returns, we need to be witnessing, we need to be out in the world spreading the good news of his kingdom to all. We major in the minors and minor in the majors when it should be the other way around.

"[Y]ou will be my witnesses . . ." Jesus says. But what does it mean to be a witness for Jesus? Well, there are at least three elements to it I think . . .

Element #1: Knowledge

We have to know something of the facts of the gospel.

Element #2: Experience

You're not just reading the menu and looking at the pictures, so to speak. You've tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

Element #3: Love

To truly witness the way Jesus is calling us to here involves not just sharing words, but sharing our hearts with people. We're laying down our lives in love for them. We don't just talk about the cross. We show it to them in the way we serve and care, in the way we live and die.

Reflection Questions

- Look back up at the three main points from this morning's sermon. Which do you think is most relevant to you right now and why?
- Jesus says that we are to be his witnesses in all the world. What do you think it means to be a witness for Jesus? How would you define it? What examples from Scripture come to mind? How do you try to live this out personally in your own life? What steps can you take to grow more in it this week?

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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.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for

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

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

Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal relationship with his people. This value presses our one another.

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!

With Easter just around the corner, here are some details we want to make you aware of . . .

EASTER EGG HUNT & NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH EVENT (SATURDAY 4/8): We're mixing things up this year. In an attempt to better serve and reach the neighborhood around Mercy Hill, we are going to be hosting a standalone event on Saturday, April 8th. It will be held at 3:00pm in the pavilion around the back of Allen at Steinbeck Elementary. We'll have an egg hunt (with prizes!) and a whole lot more. Of course, all Mercy Hill families are invited (please mark your calendars!). And we hope you'll invite friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc. as well. **Please scan the QR code below to find a link to RSVP. This will help us know how many to plan for!**

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE (SUNDAY 4/9): Join us at 10:00am for a special service celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. We'll sing songs of worship, spend time in God's Word, and linger after together over coffee and sweets.

EVER WONDERED? (SUNDAY 4/16): Every now and then we try to specifically take up a question it seems those curious or even skeptical about Christianity might be asking and devote a whole Sunday sermon to addressing it. These sermons are a part of what we've titled our ongoing Ever Wondered? sermon series. The Sunday following Easter, we'll be tackling another one: ***Aren't Christians Just a Bunch of Hypocrites?*** Have you ever wondered about this? Do you know anyone else who has? Please, INVITE your curious/skeptical friends. And pray God uses this Sunday to help encourage people towards him.

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

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