

Title: **The Upper Room (Part 1): Opening Observations**  
Text: **Acts 1:12-17**  
Date: **April 23, 2023**

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## Big Idea

The disciples have to wait about a week from the ascension of Jesus to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And much of their time is spent in this “upper room” of a house somewhere in Jerusalem. But what are they doing there? And what lessons can we learn from it all?

### Observation #1: “The Mount Called Olivet” (v. 12)

The Garden of Gethsemane is located in this same mountain region as the place of ascension and rise. It’s how God so often works. He crushes you to the dirt that he might lift you to the skies. Our God is in the business of flipping scripts. That’s what the gospel is.

I wonder if, after the resurrection, Jesus walked on by the Garden of Gethsemane on his way to Bethany on the eastern slope. I wonder what would have passed through his mind as he considered the place of his pleading and bleeding. It seemed so terrible there, so hopeless, so dire. But God would make a way. God has made a way. God has turned the curse to blessing, the darkness to light, the sorrow to joy, the death to life.

### Observation #2: “The Upper Room” (v. 13)

When you look back, Jesus told his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promised Spirit, but he doesn’t exactly tell them what to do while they waited. So I love this. It fills in the gaps a bit for us. In the space between promise and fulfillment, when God seems to be delaying, when we’re trying to wait for his help and action, what do we do? We head to that upper room—we get together with other likeminded brothers and sisters and we devote ourselves to prayer.

### Observation #3: “All These” (v. 14)

Here’s what’s so awesome about the “all these” in this upper room: while there’s profound unity, there’s also surprising diversity.

*Example #1: Men and Women*

*Example #2: Matthew and Simon*

When you come to Jesus by grace through faith, you come into the family of God. And, therein, not only is God your Father, but fellow Christians—however different they may be from you—are your brothers and sisters.

### Observation #4: “In All about 120” (v. 15)

The Son of God, the one before whom the angels bow in adoration, spent his life on 120. Nothing was too small for him. You’re not too small for him. So don’t walk around acting like anything is too small for you. Oh, Lord help us grow in this. And start with me!

### Observation #5: “Peter Stood Up” (v. 15)

What we have here with him standing and addressing the disciples, it isn’t just par for the course with Peter. It’s a profound picture of grace and hope and restoration. I never get over Peter’s story. And I never tire of retelling it. I’m not quite sure why. Maybe because I find I relate in some ways. Maybe you do too. You make a fool of yourself. You have vain self-confidence. You think you’re something. Then you realize you’re nothing. You blow it big time. Your sin is grievous. And yet Jesus isn’t done with you. The story doesn’t end with Peter’s shame. It ends with his restoration. It doesn’t end with his going out into the night, with his tail tucked between his legs, weeping bitterly, alone. It ends with him standing up among the brothers and sisters and speaking for Jesus.



## Reflection Questions

- Which of the observations outlined this morning seemed most relevant to you and why? What’s one way you might apply the insights gained to your upcoming 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 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 the

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

**Neighbor |** We are the Family of and brought into covenantal 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

### Members' Meeting - Sunday, April 30th!

Covenant Members, please save the date for our next Members' Meeting to be held after the service on Sunday, April 30th (lunch provided). A form to RSVP has been emailed directly to you. Be sure to fill that out!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at [info@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:info@mercyhillchurch.org).

### Allen at Steinbeck Elementary - Volunteer Opportunity!

**Kid-sitting (4/27 - 5:00 to 7:00pm):** The school is putting on an in-person workshop/seminar for parents of the school regarding social media/internet safety. Volunteers are needed to watch children during the seminar so parents can attend. This is a great opportunity to serve the school, the families and get to know some of the children/families in our church's neighborhood!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Joey at [joey@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:joey@mercyhillchurch.org).

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