

Title: **I'm the Problem, It's Me.**
Text: **Acts 2:22-41**
Date: **July 16, 2023**

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Big Idea

As Christians, the full range of religious motion must move from our heads through our hearts to our hands. If knowledge of God and the gospel only fills our heads and nothing more, then we are self-blinding hypocrites. If it travels on to fill our hearts and nothing more, then we are self-centered sentimentalists. But if knowledge of God and the gospel moves from our heads through our hearts to our hands, well then my friends . . . we are Christians after all!

1. Head

Peter begins by reasoning with this crowd. In other words: he addresses the head. The first goal we should have is to help a person understand the gospel and see it as true and relevant and deeply significant. But how do we even approach such a thing? What ought to be our starting point?

We can learn a lot from what Peter does here in Acts 2 and what we see these early disciples do elsewhere in the book of Acts. What we notice is that they don't often start at the same point. They always try to get to the same place by the end—to the gospel and the reality of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension—but how they get there is often quite different.

They try to meet people in their world, wherever they may be. And only then do they proceed to walk with them towards the world of the Bible—the world as it really is. In other words: In order to reach people where they're at, the apostles and early church start with people right where they're at. Whatever their assumptions, their values, their pursuits, their longings—they start with those things and walk them towards the Scriptures and the gospel.

So when they're trying to reach the Gentiles, they might quote from their poets or their philosophers and lead them from there to Jesus

(cf. Paul in Athens in Acts 17). But then, of course, here in Acts 2 with Peter trying to reach these Jews, because they already value the Bible, he starts straightaway with the OT they already held to.

2. Heart

When you truly get the gospel it's always going to cut at your heart in two directions at once . . .

Direction #1: I'm a Great Sinner

On the one hand, you see your sin. You realize: I've rejected him. I've turned on him. As Peter says, I've "crucified" him (v. 36). I drove in the nails. I wanted God out of my life. I wanted to run things my way. "I'm the problem, it's me."

Direction #2: He's an Even Greater Savior

But on the other hand, when the gospel penny drops, when I'm cut to the heart, I don't just see my sin, I also see his love. I don't just see myself as the problem. I see him and his cross as the solution. I hung him on that cross because I despised him. He went to the cross because he loves me. I'm not the hero; I'm the anti-hero. But on the flip side, he's not the anti-hero we made him out to be; he's the hero come to save!

3. Hand

This crowd's line of questioning evolves appropriately from "What does this *mean*?" (v. 12) to "[W]hat shall we *do*?" (v. 37). And I'd distill Peter's response into just two steps for now: repent and receive. Repent of your sin and receive his forgiveness. Let's do that today!

Reflection Questions

- Which of the three elements (head, heart, hand) do you trend towards most in your own walk as a Christian? Which comes easiest to you? Which comes hardest? Why do you think? How can Jesus and this community around you help you fire on all cylinders?
- Consider the people in the culture around us. What are their assumptions, values, longings, pursuits? Where might you start with them in your attempt to walk with them towards the gospel in a meaningful and relevant way?

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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 presses our church *upwards* in love

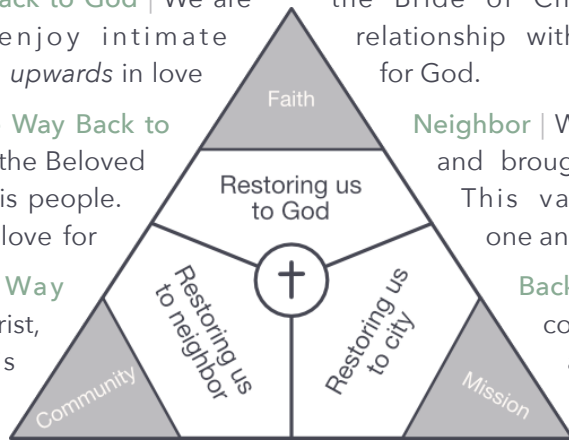
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

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

Mercy Hill Youth Hangout - Game Time!

All Mercy Hill Youth (6th thru 12th grade) are invited to join us after service today at 12:30pm for a time of fun. Food will be provided and board games will be played. The youth are encouraged to invite friends and family (siblings and parents!) and bring their favorite board game if they have one. Weather permitting, we'll meet at the picnic tables in the pavilion around the back of Allen at Steinbeck Elementary or inside in the Cafeteria area. See ya there!

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

Mercy Hill Kids - Creek-Walking Adventure!

Mercy Hill families! We had so much fun at the beach last weekend and are excited to announce our next adventure: Creek-walking off the Sam Trail in Sanborn County Park THIS Tuesday, July 18th. We hope you all can make it!

Please scan the QR Code below to find information about the event as well as a place to RSVP! Please do all you can to RSVP so we can know to expect you there. We are excited to explore God's beautiful creation and to spend a few hours fellowshiping with you!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Megan Weber at kids@mercyhillchurch.org.

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