

Title: **Crazy Joy (Part 2): Joy in Light of Suffering?!**

Text: **Acts 5:40-42**

Date: **February 11, 2024**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at [mercyhillchurch.org](http://mercyhillchurch.org).

## Big Idea

The apostles in our text are not just rejoicing *in spite* of their suffering. They're actually rejoicing *in light* of it. But how? Why? Are they crazy? Or do they know something we don't? What if we could have joy like this: a joy that can't be taken from us—resilient, lasting, stable? Wouldn't you want that? In Jesus we can have it!

### Reason #1: Because God Is Refining Us Further (Purity)

God's agenda for your life, before anything else, isn't to change your *circumstances* here and now . . . it's to change *you*. And one of the primary means by which God exposes what's still off in us and helps us towards transformation and change is: suffering. He turns up the heat to refine our hearts (cf. Ps. 119:67, 71, 75; Heb. 12:6-7, 10-11; James 1:2-4).

### Reason #2: Because God Is Inviting Us in Deeper (Intimacy)

Our suffering and trials are not just about refining us and making us more like Jesus. They're actually meant to drive us deeper into relationship with Jesus. Suffering has this way of exposing our idols—our false gospels and saviors. It knocks the props out from under our lives, and we fall upon God. Suffering seen from this angle, then, while in one sense it could be understood as a door closed in our faces, in another sense it's a door opening to deeper fellowship with Christ. It's an invitation to come in closer, to know him at a more intimate level (cf. Hos. 2:14-17, 19-20; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 12:9-10).

### Reason #3: Because God Is Preparing for Us Something Greater (Capacity)

With this third reason, I'm thinking in particular of the biblical notion of heavenly reward. Sometimes I think we imagine this reward to

mean we get more riches, more stuff, more power or prominence in the age to come, or something like this. But I think it's that we get more of *him*. This great reward, this weight of glory—it isn't a place or a possession or a position—ultimately, it's a person. And our persecution, our affliction, our suffering now here on earth somehow, it seems, enables us to get more of him in the age to come (cf. Matt. 5:11-12; 2 Cor. 4:16-17)!

I suppose you could say it's almost like a pendulum: the further you bring it back into one side, the further it swings out into the other side. So if you lose your life for Jesus' sake, if you take up your cross and die daily in love for him and others, if you trust him through hardship and lean in on him more than anyone or anything else, if you suffer with him in this age . . . then in the age to come you'll swing further out into the joy of life with him. You'll have greater capacity for fullness in his presence (cf. 1 Pet. 4:13).

### Reason #4: Because God Wants to Use Us to Reach Others (Opportunity)

I can rejoice in my sufferings because it gives you a chance to see the love of Jesus for you in and through me. No longer am I merely sharing the gospel with my lips. I'm showing it to you with my life, in the way that I'm suffering in love for you (cf. Col. 1:24). This is why, by the way, when you come back to our story in Acts 5 and turn the page, after all this suffering, to Acts 6, do you want to know what you see? The church grows! "[I]n these days . . . the disciples were increasing in number" (v. 1). You would think that seeing the apostles suffer for the gospel might make those outside reluctant or scared to follow Jesus. But, instead, it has the opposite effect. They want to. Why? Because they see, in the suffering of these apostles, the love of Jesus for them!

## Reflection Questions

- Where would you say you are experiencing hardship and suffering right now? How do you feel about it? How are you responding to it? Why?
- Which of the four reasons listed above seems most relevant to you and the suffering you are facing? Why? How might you live differently in view of such a truth? How might you even have joy, not just in spite of your suffering, but in light of it?

W

E

L

C

O

M

E

SCAN TO FILL OUT A



CONNECTION CARD

Give online at [mercyhillchurch.org/give](https://mercyhillchurch.org/give) or text any amount to 84321 and follow the prompts.

## 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

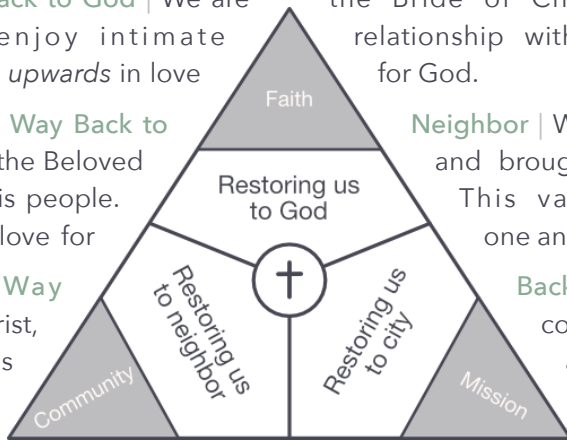
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

**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!



**Mail:** PO Box 23806, San Jose, CA 95153  
**Phone:** (408) 320-7080  
**Email:** [info@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:info@mercyhillchurch.org)  
**Web:** [mercyhillchurch.org](https://mercyhillchurch.org)



Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.  
We are so glad you've joined us today!

## Announcement Spotlight

### Easter Choir!

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sing in a choir? Are you from a choral background and wish you could have that experience again? This year for Easter Sunday, Mercy Hill will bring a choral worship number as a part of our worship service. This is open to singers of all levels and ages.

If you are interested in learning more, please meet at the stage after the service today. Director Brett Williams will be introducing the choral piece and will answer any questions.

Let's raise a mighty chorus to glorify our risen Lord on Easter!

**If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Lynn Kuehn at [lynn\\_kuehn@hotmail.com](mailto:lynn_kuehn@hotmail.com).**

### Short-Term Missions Interest Form!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at [mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub](https://mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub).