

Title: **God Has Come Down to Us!**
Text: **Acts 14:8-18**
Date: **May 18, 2025**

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Big Idea

When Paul and Barnabas attempt to bring the gospel to the Gentiles in a little agrarian village named Lystra, they don't start with the Old Testament scriptures. These people were likely completely unfamiliar with them. Instead, they start with that which these people would have already been concerned with—matters of nature: rain, seasons, harvest, etc. Time and again, we see it: God always meets us where we are and walks with us towards Jesus and the gospel from there. He doesn't demand that we come up to him to get it. Instead, he happily comes down to us to give it!

1. The Miracle

Observation #1: It's a Rerun (kind of)

The miracle in Acts 3 took place with the Jews out in front of the Jewish temple there in Jerusalem. But here now this miracle in Acts 14 takes place in what was clearly Gentile territory. There doesn't even seem to have been a synagogue for miles. And we're not out in front of YHWH's temple anymore. Now we're out in front of Zeus' (v. 13). That is a stunning difference. And the implication couldn't be clearer: This one and same gospel is not just for the Jews. It's for the world. It's not just being proclaimed in the Jewish synagogues or temple. It's invading the pagan temples of the nations. Even Zeus will bow to King Jesus. The Gentiles will find rescue and redemption in his name just as the Jews.

Observation #2: It's by Faith (kind of)

There is a teaching going round in our day—and sometimes whole churches are swept up in it—that makes far too much of this idea that it's my faith that, in some decisive way, brings in the miracle. If I can conjure up enough faith, as it were, I can bend the will of God to mine. And, if I don't get the miracle, then it must be that I don't have enough faith. But the full biblical picture is not nearly so simple.

2. The Idol

Idolatry isn't just a thing of the past; it's alive and well today. And it's not just out there in others; often it's right here in you and me. We're all living for something—looking for something to give us meaning and satisfaction and joy. It might be God, it might be Jesus. But anytime we slip into sin—which, if we're honest with ourselves, even as Christians, is everyday—it means something else, for the moment at least, has captured our ultimate affection and trust.

3. The Gospel

Idols are idle—they don't work. They don't satisfy. They may momentarily fill and excite you, but they leave you even emptier and more despondent in the end.

Step #1: They Meet Them Where They Are

- They Don't Begin By Quoting at Them from Scripture, but By Looking with Them at Nature
- They Don't Begin with the Law and Our Need for Justification but with Life and Our Quest for Satisfaction

Step #2: They Walk with Them from There to Jesus

- God Is One (v. 15)
- God Is Good (vv. 16-17)
- God Has Come Down to Us . . . in Jesus!

"[W]e bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God . . ." (v. 15).



Reflection Questions

- If you had to identify some of the more dominant idols in our culture here in the Bay Area today, what would they be and why? How might you try to meet people, even in their place of idolatry, and walk with them towards the true and living God from there?
- Looking at your own life and heart, what idols are you often tempted by? Why? How does Jesus offer you something better? What would it look like for you to turn from these vain things to the living God today?

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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

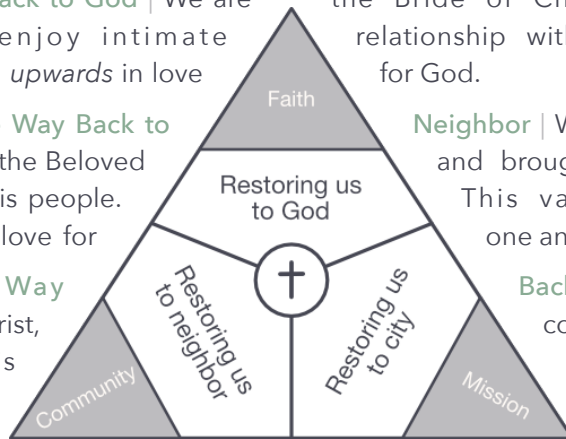
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

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

All Church Campout - Register Today!

We are excited to announce that we'll be hosting an All Church Campout at Mount Madonna County Park over the weekend of June 20-22! We have a huge group campsite all to ourselves and lots of options in the park for having fun together. Whether you love to camp or you'd rather still sleep in your own bed, we have something for everyone. Because the park is only a 45 minute drive from south San Jose, people can feel free to come and go as it works with their schedule and preference.

- **Option #1: Day-Use:** For those not wanting to camp but still wanting to participate, the Day-Use option is best. You can come in for the day, enjoy activities, meals, etc., and then head home to your warm bed while the rest of us "rough" it :).
- **Option #2: Camp:** This option is for those who want the full camping experience. We have the site for Friday and Saturday nights. You can choose to camp for one or both of these depending upon your availability and desire.

Scan the QR code below for more info and to find a link to sign up!

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

All Church Prayer - Tonight!

Post-Missions Emphasis Week - What's Next?

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.