

Title: **Death, Taxes, and the 3-Dimensional Grace of God (Part 2)**  
Text: **Acts 23:11**  
Date: **May 31, 2026**

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



## Big Idea

Suffering is inevitable. Life is going to be hard. But how do we get through? We need what Paul has here: 3-dimensional grace. Past grace, future grace, and present grace—all coming to us from Jesus!

Present grace. Sometimes when things get hard, this is the one that we really struggle with. Maybe you remember just fine how faithful God was to you in the past. And maybe you have no problem imagining that he'll be good to you in the end. But where is he today?

### 1. "The following night"

Why the delay? Why not come stand by him, encourage him, straightaway? I think there's an important lesson for us in this. On the one hand, it reminds us that sometimes the redemption, the help, the presence of God we seek, it doesn't come right away. Sometimes we have to wait. It was 25 years between God's promise to Abraham of a son and the actual arrival of Isaac (cf. Gen. 12:4; 21:5). And it's hard not to lose our nerve in the middle, isn't it? But, on the other hand, it also reminds us that sometimes, even when his grace is right in front of our face, it takes us a little bit to see it. We don't catch it right away. Our eyes are often dimmed in our distress. I can't see where he is in all of this. I'm not able to trace out his grace.

### 2. "the Lord stood by him"

This is the turning point in every trial: when you realize that, no matter how hard or horrible it gets, he really is with you. Just because he doesn't always unveil it, just because you don't always see it, doesn't mean it isn't always true.

*"[The Christian] believes [God] to be too wise to err and too good to be unkind; he trusts him where he cannot trace him, looks up to him in the darkest hour, and believes that all is well"* - Charles Spurgeon

### 3. "and said, 'Take courage'"

Our courage, our fearlessness—it's not based on the absence of danger but on the presence of the Lord. The courage that is swelling in your chest is directly connected to the Christ who is standing by your side!

### 4. "'for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.'"

Part of what can make suffering so excruciating at times for us is we think it means God is done with us. We're out of his favor. He has no more use for us. Maybe he's even angry at us. But, for Paul, this suffering, these trials—this is actually how Jesus is going to get him to Rome and fulfill his good purpose for him!

*"There are no maverick molecules in the universe"* - Ben Sasse

*"Our lives are in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something we cannot see. He stretches and strains, and every now and again we say, 'I can't take it anymore.' God doesn't waver. He goes on stretching until his purpose is in sight. Then he lets the arrow fly. 'Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him' (Job 13:15). Trust yourself in God's hands. Maintain your relationship to Jesus Christ through . . . faith. Faith is not a pathetic sentiment. It is vigorous confidence built on the fact that God is holy love. It is the heroic effort of your life."* - Oswald Chambers



## Reflection Questions

- Is there anything going on in your life right now that has you feeling afraid, lacking courage? How would it change things for you if you knew (really knew!) that Jesus is with you in the midst of it? Read Rom. 8:31-39. What stands out to you here? What can you cling to by faith to help push back fear and regain courage?
- Read the quote from Oswald Chambers above again. In what way is God currently stretching and straining you right now? What do you think he is aiming for? What good might he be up to even in the hard?

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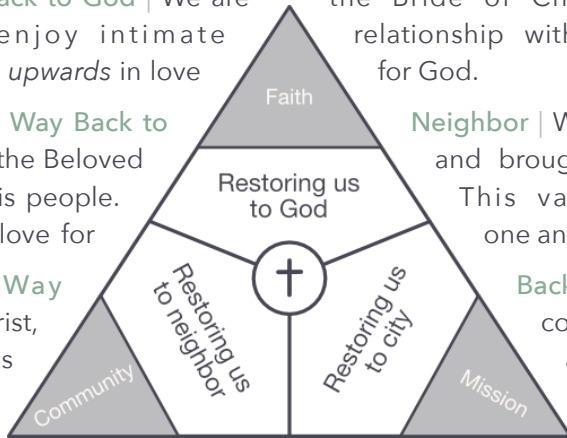
## Our Mission & Values

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

**MISSION: The Way** the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his ambassadors. This value presses our church *outwards* in love for the Back to City | We are commissioned by the 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 - Open Registration!

We are excited to announce that we will again be hosting our All Church Campout at Mount Madonna County Park over the weekend of June 26-28! 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](mailto:info@mercyhillchurch.org).

### Mercy Hill Kids + Youth Graduation Celebration - Today!

Support the Nicaragua Team!

Scan the QR code below for more info and clickable content!

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