

Title: **The Pattern and the Point: Cruciformity in the Life (and Death) of a Christian (Part 2)**
Text: **Acts 25:23-27**

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Big Idea

In the closing chapters of Acts, Luke goes out of his way to show how the story of Paul follows after the pattern of Jesus. The point is clear: those who look to Christ will look like him—but, even more specifically, they will look like the cross!

Seven Situations

The cross of Christ, it would seem, is the touchstone of the Christian ethic. If you want to know what you're supposed to do, or what you're supposed to look like, in whatever situation you may be currently facing, the first thing to do is climb up Calvary's hill and take in the view once again. We're to *look to the cross* and then go and *look like the cross*. That's the New Testament message time and again, in one situation after another.

Situation #1: When You're Suffering Unjustly (1 Pet. 2:18-24)

Situation #2: When You've Been Sinned Against (Eph. 4:31-32; Col. 3:12-13)

Situation #3: When Someone Is Different (Rom. 15:1-3, 5-7)

Situation #4: When Someone Needs Help (2 Cor. 8:1-4, 9)

Situation #5: When They're All Throwing Elbows (Mark 10:42:45; Phil. 2:3-8)

Situation #6: When You're Out with Your Friends (Eph. 5:1-2)

Situation #7: When You're Home with Your Spouse (Eph. 5:25-27)

Two Clarifications

Clarification #1: You're Not Doing This in Your Own Strength (Gal. 2:20)

Jesus is not merely your example, he's also your Savior. And he's come not merely to show you the way, but to give you the power to walk in it!

Clarification #2: You're Not Doomed to a Miserable Life (John 15:9-13)

Do you want to know why we're not as happy as we wish we were?! Do you want to know why our joy is not full?! It is not what we think. We think we're not happy because we don't have all that we want. Jesus is saying: That's precisely why we're not happy! We keep trying to get more for ourselves. When his joy, real joy, full joy comes to those who finally stop trying to fill themselves with the things of this world and start pouring themselves out for others.

You do that and you'll be full. Why? Because that's where Jesus is. And Jesus is all we truly need and all we ultimately want!



Reflection Questions

- Which of the seven situations discussed today seemed most relevant to you personally and why?
- Can you think of other places in the New Testament where we are encouraged (in essence) to "look like the cross"?
- What's been playing in the "theater" of your life lately? Are you acting more like Herod and Bernice ("Look at me!") or Paul ("Look at him!")? Why do you think? What (if anything) needs to change?
- Read John 15:9-13 once more. Do you see the connection between self-sacrifice and full joy? Have you ever experienced this personally? Tell the story!

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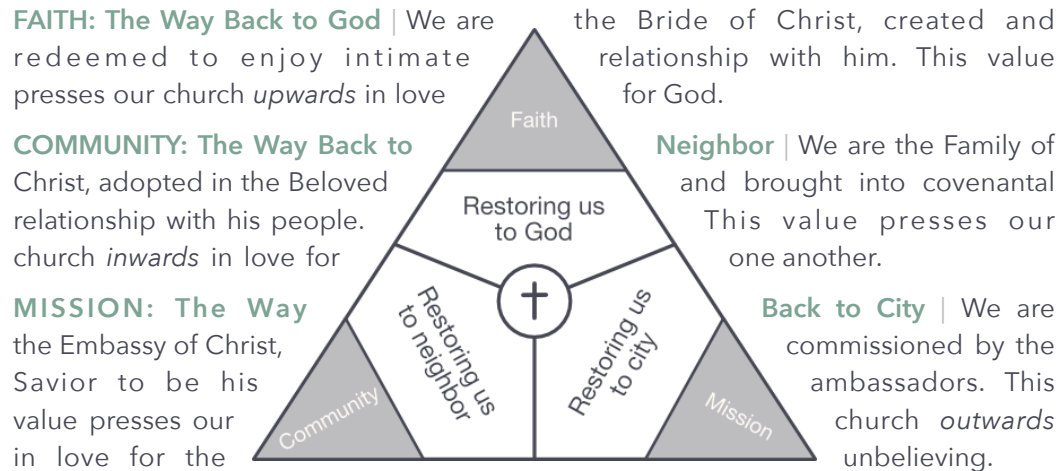


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Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.



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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Announcement Spotlight

Covenant Membership Class - Open Registration!

At the request of some in the congregation, registration for the Covenant Membership Class is now open! If you are interested in becoming a member or simply want to re-familiarize yourself with what we're all about, please scan the QR code below and find the link to register. We will leave registration open for the next few weeks, then we'll pick a Sunday to hold the class.

To learn more, visit our [Covenant Membership page online](#).

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

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