



# Grace Hill Church

*The Mission of Grace Hill Is to Gather People to the Table of Christ, Who Is the Bread of Life, to Be Transformed by His Grace, Renewed in His Truth, and Sent on His Mission.*

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”  
~Philippians 1:6

“For the Lord will not cast off forever, <sup>32</sup> but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; <sup>33</sup> for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.” ~Lamentations 3:31-33

“Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law” ~Psalm 94:12

“For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.” ~Hebrews 12:10

“I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus.” ~Revelation 1:9a

“I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you” ~Job 42:5

January 31, 2021

## **Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song**

### **Declaring What We Believe: New City Catechism, Question #5**

**Question:** What else did God create?

**Answer:** God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule.

## **Welcoming Each Other**

### **Giving Worship to God: Offering**

#### **Hearing God’s Word: Scripture Reading *Ezra 4.1–24***

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, <sup>2</sup> they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers’ houses and said to them, “Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here.” <sup>3</sup> But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers’ houses in Israel said to them, “You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.”

<sup>4</sup> Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build <sup>5</sup> and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

<sup>6</sup> And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>7</sup> In the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia. The letter was written in Aramaic and translated. <sup>8</sup> Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows: <sup>9</sup> Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites, <sup>10</sup> and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River. <sup>11</sup> (This is a copy of the letter that they sent.)

“To Artaxerxes the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now <sup>12</sup> be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.

<sup>13</sup> Now be it known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired. <sup>14</sup> Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king, <sup>15</sup> in order that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old. That was why this city was laid waste. <sup>16</sup> We make known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River.”

<sup>17</sup> The king sent an answer: “To Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their associates who live in Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, greeting. And now <sup>18</sup> the letter that you sent to us has been plainly read before me. <sup>19</sup> And I made a decree, and search has been made, and it has been found that this city from of old has risen against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it. <sup>20</sup> And mighty kings have been over Jerusalem, who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid. <sup>21</sup> Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. <sup>22</sup> And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?”

<sup>23</sup> Then, when the copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. <sup>24</sup> Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

*The Vision of Grace Hill Is to Love God and Love Our Neighbor and Love God and ...*

## **Understanding God's Word and Our Lives**

**Sermon: Adversity Is a Certain Reality of the Kingdom of Heaven**

**Series: The Grace and Work of Leading: Rebuilding God's People for Worship in Ezra**

Outline:

1. Common Reasons God Ordains Adversity
2. Responding to Adversity with Mourning, but Not Grumbling
3. When Adversity Is Likely in the Mission of God and the Example We Turn To

## **Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin**

### **Public Prayer**

Father, we confess that we do not see adversity through cross-colored glasses. We either avoid it at all costs, quit when it begins to press upon us, or complain while experiencing it. We doubt that in Your sovereignty there is a purpose to struggle, conflict, and pain. Forgive us.

We know that there is nothing, nothing that occurs outside of Your divine plan. We seek to trust You by looking to Your Son's obedience in the midst of adversity. Because of His adversity, we are healed and forgiven. Since You turned the death of the Son of God into good for Your people, help us to be convinced that You can cause our much smaller adversities to be converted to good for Your name, Kingdom, and even us, Your people. By Your Spirit, may we find rest in You in the midst of all our difficulties.

### **Private Reflection**

## **The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ**

...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

~Hebrews 12:2

## **Responding to the Lord with Worship**

### **Taking hold of the Good Word: Benediction ("the good word")**

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13.20–21)

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### **Announcements:**

- **CORE Zoom Pin: 989209**
- **Youth Serve Orange:** There will be a Serve Orange on February 6th from 10am–11:30am. Location and project are still yet to be determined but parents of students should expect an email on Tuesday with more information.
- **New City Catechism:** Please make plans to use the New City Catechism book and website at Home at least one day a week. This article speaks to how our kids are already being catechized by our broader context: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/catechize-kids/>
- **Growing Leaders/Disciples Monthly Meeting:** The Session invites everyone to schedule the Fourth Wednesday of the Month to join us for a Growing Leaders/Disciples meeting.
- **Worship in Offering:** Three ways to worship the Lord with your tithes and offerings
  - Use your bank's BillPay system to give to Grace Hill
  - Send a physical check
  - Use our mobile giving option (either as a guest or by setting up an account):
    - <https://faithlife.com/grace-hill-church/give>, or
    - <https://tinyurl.com/ul68txo>, or
    - Simply text the word Give with the amount (e.g. Give 100) to 919 296 1330.



Grace Hill seeks to live by and testify to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ (John 1.14–18). We are affiliated with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a Presbyterian denomination with a rich history of living in Christ's grace and truth. Our pastor is Ross Durham. He can be reached at [ross@gracehillnc.org](mailto:ross@gracehillnc.org) or by cell phone at 919.593.2169. Our Youth Director is Daniel Havener, [daniel@gracehillnc.org](mailto:daniel@gracehillnc.org). Our Worship Music Director is Kayli Havener, [kayli@gracehillnc.org](mailto:kayli@gracehillnc.org). Our Communications Coordinator is Andrea Sterling, [andrea@gracehillnc.org](mailto:andrea@gracehillnc.org). Address: 515 Meadowlands Drive, Suite 500, Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278 [www.gracehillnc.org](http://www.gracehillnc.org); Facebook: Grace Hill Church; Twitter: @gracehillchurch; Instagram: gracehillnc