



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.

“Yet the most precious use of the word *hesed* in the Old Testament is as a description of what God does. Having entered a covenant relationship with His people, God bound Himself to act toward them in certain ways, and He is utterly faithful to His self-commitment.”

“The fullness of the Lord’s *hesed* is seen in the cross: there the true *hasid*, Jesus Christ Himself—the only human ever truly to be loyal to the Lord and to His neighbor in every aspect of life—was treated as the covenant breaker and cursed for sin so that we who are unfaithful might be clothed in His faithfulness and thus redeemed. In this way, God’s original covenant purpose to have a people for His praise was faithfully accomplished.

“The Lord’s *hesed* will never let us go. In the midst of life’s trials and tragedies, we may cry out to our loving Lord in confidence that nothing in all creation can ever separate us from the loyal love that chose us before time began, is sanctifying us in the present, and will faithfully bring us to our eternal home ([Rom. 8:28–30](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/loyal-love-hesed/)).” <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/loyal-love-hesed/>

February 21, 2021

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Declaring What We Believe: New City Catechism, Question #8

Question: What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?

Answer: You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below—you shall not bow down to them or worship them. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

Welcoming Each Other

Giving Worship to God: Offering

Hearing God’s Word: Scripture Reading *Ezra 7*

Now after this, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, ²son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, ³son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth, ⁴son of Zerariah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, ⁵son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the chief priest—⁶ this Ezra went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses that the LORD, the God of Israel, had given, and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.

⁷ And there went up also to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king, some of the people of Israel, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants. ⁸ And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. ⁹ For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

¹¹ This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, a man learned in matters of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes for Israel: ¹² “Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven. Peace. And now ¹³ I make a decree that anyone of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. ¹⁴ For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God, which is in your hand, ¹⁵ and also to carry the silver and gold that the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem[.] ... ¹⁷ With this money, then, you shall with all diligence buy bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and you shall offer them on the altar of the house of your God that is in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ Whatever seems good to you and your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do, according to the will of your God. ¹⁹ The vessels that have been given you for the service of the house of your God, you shall deliver before the God of Jerusalem. ²⁰ And whatever else is required for the house of your God, which it falls to you to provide, you may provide it out of the king’s treasury.

²¹ “And I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River: Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, requires of you, let it be done with all diligence[.] ... ²³ Whatever is decreed by the God of heaven, let it be done in full for the house of the God of heaven, lest his wrath be against the realm of the king and his sons. ²⁴ We also notify you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll on anyone[.] ...

²⁵ “And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. ²⁶ Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment.”

²⁷ Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem, ²⁸ and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the king’s mighty officers. I took courage, for the hand of the LORD my God was on me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

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: Living With the Gospel Story First Among All Stories

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

Outline:

1. We Meet Ezra, the Leader of the Second Wave of those Returning to Jerusalem, from Three Perspectives: v.1–10, 11–26, 27–28
2. Ezra Shows Us Genuine Gospel Faith vs. Nominal Religion
3. Ezra Shows Us Gospel-Produced Worshipful Courage, v. 28

Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Prayer

God, we confess we often struggle to experience the genuine faith and worshipful courage that we see in Ezra. Some of us may be like the King with a nominal or appeasement-based view of You. But we long that these Gospel realities that Ezra was living would be more present in us. Help us.

Father, You intend Your salvation through Your Son to transform our whole selves. Faith in Jesus can produce a holy, humble courage within us that is unique in the world because it is the spiritual fruit of Your unique grace at work in us. Enable Your steadfast love (hesed) to not only save us from our sins and from nominal religious expressions, but transform our relationship with You, our view of ourselves, and our willingness to offer ourselves to You in the work of Your Kingdom and Church.

Private Reflection

The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ

And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."
~Dan. 10:19

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)

Announcements:

- **CORE Zoom Pin: 989209**
- **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/>
- **Called to Lead: Yourself and Others. Leadership/Discipleship Monthly Meeting:** The Session invites everyone to Called to Lead meetings on the Fourth Tuesdays. Next: Tuesday, 2/23/21.
- **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 text the word "Give" 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 or by cell phone at 919.593.2169. Our Youth Director is Daniel Havener, daniel@gracehillnc.org. Our Worship Music Director is Kayli Havener, kayli@gracehillnc.org. Our Communications Coordinator is Andrea Sterling, andrea@gracehillnc.org. Address: 515 Meadowlands Drive, Suite 500, Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278 www.gracehillnc.org; Facebook: Grace Hill Church; Twitter: @gracehillchurch; Instagram: gracehillnc