



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.

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, ... You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. ... “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.” ~Dt. 7.1–6

“[T]he issue was not racial purity but religious difference. The objection both here and in Deuteronomy is against unconverted marriage partners. The mixed racial makeup of the returnees [likely non-Israelites in Ezra 2:43–58] shows that Ezra-Nehemiah does not promote a theory of ethnic purity.” ~Goswell, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 193.

“So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. ²¹ It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.” ~Ezra 6.20–21

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and **I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me**, says the Lord Almighty.” Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” ~2 Cor. 6.14–7.1

“And the **foreigners** who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and **make them joyful in my house of prayer**; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.’ The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, ‘I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.’” ~Is. 56.6–8

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. ~Joel 2.12-13

March 7, 2021

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Declaring What We Believe: New City Catechism, Question #10

Question: What does God require in the fourth and fifth commandments?

Answer: Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in public and private worship of God, rest from routine employment, serve the Lord and others, and so anticipate the eternal Sabbath. Fifth, that we love and honor our father and our mother, submitting to their godly discipline and direction.

Welcoming Each Other

Giving Worship to God: Offering

Hearing God’s Word: Scripture Reading *Ezra 8.36–9.6*

They also delivered the king’s commissions to the king’s satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and they aided the people and the house of God.

9 ¹ After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, “The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from [NET: similar to] the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ² For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost.” ³ As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. ⁴ Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. ⁵ And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, ⁶ saying: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.”

Understanding God’s Word and Our Lives

Sermon: Our Sin Cripples Mission

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

Outline:

1. In the Midst of God’s External Calling, Our Internal Sin Can Undermine God’s Work, v. 1
2. Why This Is Such a Critical Problem, v. 1–2
3. How Mourning for Sin Is Our Powerful First Response, v. 3–5

Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Prayer

God, we confess we often have a casualness and compromising spirit with some things that You hold as immensely important. We don't often reflect on the magnitude of the saving work You are doing in us and in the world, and how much our holiness and purity matters in that process. Forgive us.

Father, You are doing an impossible work in the world: to create a holy family from rebellious humanity, a beautiful bride from those who hid. But this is the work of Jesus, taking our place, working both by truth and grace (Jn. 1.14, 17; Rom 5.21). Help us by Your Spirit to tremble at Your word. Keep our eyes on Jesus, mourning at our sin, attentively following His paths, and humbly bowing in worship.

Private Reflection

The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

~1 John 2.12

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**
- **GH Spring Break Food Drive:** Drop-off dates Today 3/7, 9:30am–10am & Wed. 3/10, 4pm–6pm. See email for more details about what to donate!
- **Shower the Elniffs!** with love and practical things as they prepare for life with a baby again! They have many things already. No baby clothing, books, or toys needed right now. However, there are a few things that we can do to help support them as they welcome a little one sometime in April!!
 1. Purchase something from her Amazon registry: https://www.amazon.com/baby-reg/sarah-el-niff-april-2021-hillsborough/2IH1MKEMWYPGD?ref=cm_sw_em_r_px_MOBILE_semZNR5MyEfMX
 2. Purchase a gift card to Walmart, Once Upon A Child in Durham, Weaver Street Market, or Amazon.
 3. Send a note or a written prayer for their family encouraging them during this transition time. Their address: 626 Freeland Drive, Hillsborough, NC 27278.
- **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, 3/23/21.
- **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