



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.

“Since all of us have consciences that regularly accuse and judge us, we also have some sense that contrition and confession is the first step on the road to conversion.” Bavinck 4.161

“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Psalm 32.1

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Pr. 28:13

“Confession is inseparable from a true knowledge of sin and the way to God’s mercy.” Bavinck 4.167

“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” ~1 Peter 1:14–19

March 14, 2021

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Declaring What We Believe: New City Catechism, Question #11

Question: What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments?

Answer: Sixth, that we do not hurt, or hate, or be hostile to our neighbor, but be patient and peaceful, pursuing even our enemies with love. Seventh, that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else, nor withhold any good from someone we might benefit.

Welcoming Each Other

Giving Worship to God: Offering

Hearing God’s Word: Scripture Reading *Ezra 9.3–10.6*

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. ⁷ From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today. ⁸ But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery. ⁹ For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem.

¹⁰ “And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, ¹¹ which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. ¹² Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.’ ¹³ And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this, ¹⁴ shall we break your commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? ¹⁵ O LORD, the God of Israel, you are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today. Behold, we are before you in our guilt, for none can stand before you because of this.”

¹⁰ ¹ While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly. ² And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra: “We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. ³ Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the Law. ⁴ Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be strong and do it.” ⁵ Then Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and all Israel take an oath that they would do as had been said. So they took the oath.

⁶ Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib, where he spent the night, neither eating bread nor drinking water, for he was mourning over the faithlessness of the exiles.

Understanding God's Word and Our Lives

Sermon: Help for Confessing Our Sins

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

Outline:

1. Confession is an Essential Part of the Christian Life, v.6
2. Confession Can be Hard; How Do We Do It? V.6-15
3. Confession Brings Healing, Restoration, Comfort, v.10.2-5
4. We Confess Because in Christ We Have Hope, 10.2

Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Prayer

God, we know confession is both a call and privilege of the gospel. But we are not as intent in our prayers of confession as Ezra was. We are not properly seeing Your full holiness and how You are calling us to be Your holy people. We also have forsaken Your commands and have not been your faithful, holy people.

Father, we acknowledge that our salvation took the most extreme solution, the death of the Son of God. Let His work has its full effect, turning us from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, to receive both forgiveness and sanctification. Thank You that the mercy of Jesus enables us to tell You the truth. Thank You that the hope of the covenant of Christ is always larger and stronger than our sin.

Private Reflection

The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ~1 John 1.9

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)

Additional Quote:

"[A] Christian knows from experience that sin, to the degree it is understood in its true character, evokes a correspondingly stronger feeling of grief and regret. True inward confession of sin is heard not from the lips of the ungodly but from those of the devout. ... And although grief increases in depth along with the knowledge of sin and growth in grace, it is nevertheless from the start an integral part of conversion and constitutes the other side of the revewal of life (Luke 15.18, 18.13, Acts 2.37, 9.6ff, 16.30, 2 Cor 7.10). Bavinck 4.161-2.

Announcements:

- **CORE Zoom Pin: 989209**
- **Shower the Elniffs!**
 1. Purchase something from her Amazon registry: https://www.amazon.com/baby-reg/sarah-elniff-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.
- **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
 1. Use your bank's BillPay system to give to Grace Hill
 2. Send a physical check
 3. 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