



# 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.*

“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.” ~Hebrews 12.11–17

“This represents the story of the Tanakh [the Hebrew Bible], a story that leaves Israel still in a type of exile, waiting for someone from David’s house to come and build a house to bring about the restoration of all things. ... And this Story is about the reclamation of a lost human dominion over the world through a Davidic dynasty. In short, it is about the coming of the kingdom of God, and it is unfinished.” ~Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 231.

“Thus, when Jesus begins his ministry, he, as the new Adam and the new Israel, succeeds where the old Adam and the old Israel failed (Matt. 4:1–11). Hence he recapitulates in his life the history of Adam and Israel. He triumphs over the satanic enemy and announces the kingdom of God, a domain that includes geography and which will one day encompass the entire earth. And this is the emphasis at the end of Matthew’s Gospel, in which a suffering Davidic Messiah has been exalted and given authority over not just an Israelite kingdom but the globe. He commands his subjects to go into this domain and disciple all nations (Matt. 28:18–20; cf. Dan. 7:13–14).” ~Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 232–233.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 12.1–2

“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.” ~Hebrews 12.28–29

March 21, 2021

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

### **Declaring What We Believe: New City Catechism, Question #12**

**Question:** What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?

**Answer:** Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive, but speak the truth in love. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone or resenting what God has given them or us.

## **Welcoming Each Other**

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

#### **Hearing God’s Word: Scripture Reading *Ezra 10.7–25, 44; Nehemiah 1.1, 13.30-31***

And a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the returned exiles that they should assemble at Jerusalem,<sup>8</sup> and that if anyone did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles.

<sup>9</sup> Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. And all the people sat in the open square before the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain. <sup>10</sup> And Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have broken faith and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. <sup>11</sup> Now then make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.” <sup>12</sup> Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, “It is so; we must do as you have said. <sup>13</sup> But the people are many, and it is a time of heavy rain; we cannot stand in the open. Nor is this a task for one day or for two, for we have greatly transgressed in this matter. <sup>14</sup> Let our officials stand for the whole assembly. Let all in our cities who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders and judges of every city, until the fierce wrath of our God over this matter is turned away from us.” <sup>15</sup> Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supported them.

<sup>16</sup> Then the returned exiles did so. Ezra the priest selected men, heads of fathers’ houses, according to their fathers’ houses, each of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to examine the matter; <sup>17</sup> and by the first day of the first month they had come to the end of all the men who had married foreign women.

<sup>18</sup> Now there were found some of the sons of the priests who had married foreign women: [lists 8+ individuals] <sup>19</sup> They pledged themselves to put away their wives, and their guilt offering was a ram of the flock for their guilt. Of the sons of Immer: [2]. <sup>21</sup> Of the sons of Harim: [5]. <sup>22</sup> Of the sons of Pashhur: [6] <sup>23</sup> Of the Levites: [6] <sup>24</sup> Of the singers: [1]. Of the gatekeepers: [3]. <sup>25</sup> And of Israel: [~86].

<sup>44</sup> All these had married foreign women, and some of the women had even borne children.

**Nehemiah 1<sup>1</sup>** The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

**13<sup>30</sup>** Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; <sup>31</sup> and I provided for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

*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: Warning and Hope at the End of Ezra**

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

Outline:

1. Good News: There Is Confession and Repentance, v.12–14
2. Bad News: What Does the Ending of Ezra (and Nehemiah) Mean?
3. Sober Warning and Great Hope

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

#### **Public Prayer**

God, we are Your people. When we are humble and reflective, we know that there is no joy and hope apart from You. But we struggle as Israel did in believing that Your path results in our greatest joy. We question if it is really needful and best for us to keep all Your commands. We need to confess and to hold much more tightly to our hope in You. Forgive us.

Father, we see our frailty to be Your people in Ezra, and so we rejoice all the more that Christ came not to give us a law or to inspire us to ethics, but to succeed for us where we and all others have failed. Because we are Christ's people now, living out of the abundance of His accomplishments, enable us to have His courage to go forth, His help to live in holiness, and Your Spirit to worship You with faithful exuberance.

#### **Private Reflection**

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

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. ~Acts 4.12.

#### **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)

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#### **Announcements:**

- **CORE Zoom Pin: 989209**
- **Note:** GH Session encourages everyone to get the Covid 19 vaccine as soon as you are able. It is, of course, your decision, but it can be a tool that will enable us to more quickly gather together as a full church. Here is the link for the Duke waiting list: <https://www.dukehealth.org/covid-19-update/join-waiting-list>
- **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](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 meeting this Tuesday, 3/23/21. Topic: the critical nature of character; we lead (ourselves and others) much more from character than giftedness.
- **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](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