

# GRACEPOINT CHURCH

## Weekly Devotional

### Forward in Faith Despite Disappointment

By Ian France

#### Scripture

**Nehemiah 13:15-22**

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

#### Observation

After the spiritual revival that had occurred in Jerusalem, Nehemiah left the city and returned to the Persian court to resume his duties there for 10 to 12 years. He was shocked and distressed to see what was happening in Jerusalem on his return. The people were ignoring the Lord's commands. He set about putting things right. One of the examples he gave of the people's disobedience was how they were ignoring the Sabbath. It was supposed to be a day of rest, but they were bringing their goods into the city to sell and they traded throughout the day. They had put making a living ahead of honouring and glorifying God. Nehemiah was not prepared to put up with this and took action to stop the trading that was taking place, threatening to arrest them. He ordered the gates to be locked for the whole of each Sabbath and set guards there to prevent people from entering the city to trade. The merchants would camp outside the city walls so they could enter the city at the earliest opportunity. From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath.

#### Icebreaker:

Describe a disappointment you experienced as a child, teenager or young adult. How did you deal with it? Looking back now, what would you say to that young, disappointed person today?

#### Application

- When were you last disappointed? What happened and how has it affected you in the long-term?
- *When we are disappointed, we lean on the grace God shows toward us:* How do you deal with disappointment? Are you able to work through it, learn from it, and move on? Or does it hold you back from trying again? What part does God play in helping you to cope with

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disappointments in your life? What difference do you think He could make if you spoke to Him about them? Where have you seen His grace in the way you have coped in the past?

- *When we are disappointed, we show the same grace to others:* Are you aware of doing this? Are you quick to blame others for the cause of your disappointment or are you willing to forgive? How does this affect your relationships with one another? How would you like to be able to deal with disappointments – in your past, present and those still to come? What do you need to do to show the same grace to others as God shows to you?
- *When we are disappointed, we trust in God's redemptive purposes working through the disappointment:* Do you? Why/why not? Think of your most recent disappointment. What would it mean to you if you could see God's redemptive purpose working through it? How would you feel about the disappointment then? When has God turned a disappointment that you have experienced in your life into a blessing? How can you encourage others when they are disappointed in some way?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

### Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time and for any other needs of the group. Spend some time in silence, asking God to do any inner transformation you may need. Listen for His personal word to you as individuals.

Are you willing to let God transform your heart in this regard?

### Service

Make an effort this week to deal with any disappointments you experience with grace. Look for opportunities to encourage those who are also opportunity and ask God to show you what blessings can come from such disappointments.

### Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/nehemiah-13/>

