

Monday - March 25

"Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.'" I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding."

Nehemiah 2:17-18

"Come on guys, let's go!"

We have had some storms over the years that have led us to gather the entire scout camp in the dining hall as a precaution. Our staff is awesome at finding ways to keep everyone entertained, but you can never fully stop the imaginations of young campers as they anticipate the destruction that is going on in their campsites. We have seen entire campsites knocked down, tents destroyed by falling trees, and gear scattered and soaked in the rain. A very fun week easily has the potential to be overtaken with destruction and defeat in a matter of minutes.

As we release everyone back to their campsites to survey the damage and set back up, our camp staff gathers. After a couple of minutes, it starts to sound like a team huddle. Campsites are divided up, cheers erupt, hands go in the middle, and then they charge off towards the campsites. As staffers sweep through camp, the tents fly back up, broken gear disappears, and extra blankets come out of nowhere. Just like that, worry and defeat transforms into redemption and hope.

The exile was a long period of despair and defeat for the Jewish people. Everything about their faith and culture was desecrated and destroyed, and all reason for hope was scattered along with the Jewish people across the Babylonian and Persian empires. Then God rallied the team. The Jewish people were reminded that God had not forgotten about them, that He forgave their transgressions and offered them hope and redemption. In the depths of darkness, God's grace shone through.

Even in the darkest times of your life, God is there offering grace and hope. No matter where you are, God will call you back to the huddle so you can go out sharing His love and grace with everyone you encounter.

Drew

Prayer: Gracious and redeeming God, we can easily feel distant from you in times of despair and darkness. When hope seems to diminish on our lives, let us be reminded of the grace that is ever present in our lives. Rekindle the fire in our hearts, fan the flame in our soul, and let your light glow from our bodies. Open our hearts and minds to hear You calling us to return to your loving embrace so that we can be redeemed and renewed in the Spirit. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who came to show us the true meaning of grace. Amen.

