



Formation Devotional

April 1, 2020 Morning

Forming Worship, Life, and Ministry Together at Christ Covenant Church

Enter into this time expectantly, knowing that God delights to reveal himself to you. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

Opening Prayer

Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 225)

Confession of Sin

O Lord, we want to enter your presence, awed by your majesty, greatness, and glory, yet encouraged by your love. Yet there is a coldness in our hearts, a hardness toward you, an unwillingness to admit our sin and need for you. Forgive us, for Jesus' sake. Come near and strengthen us until Christ reigns supreme within us, in every thought, word, and deed. Give us a faith that purifies the heart, overcomes the world, works by love, fastens us to you, and always clings to the cross. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Take a moment to confess your sins, knowing that he hears you, and give thanks for his assurance of pardon through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Praying the Psalms

Read the psalm prayerfully back to God by faith in Christ.

Psalm 125

The LORD Surrounds His People

A Song of Ascents.

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,

which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

²As the mountains surround Jerusalem,

so the LORD surrounds his people,

from this time forth and forevermore.

³For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest

on the land allotted to the righteous,

lest the righteous stretch out

their hands to do wrong.

⁴Do good, O LORD, to those who are good,

and to those who are upright in their hearts!

⁵But those who turn aside to their crooked ways

the LORD will lead away with evildoers!

Peace be upon Israel!

New Testament Reading

Luke was a Gentile (non-Jewish) physician who wrote for sophisticated non-Jewish readers. He records in great detail in order that Gentile readers would understand the universal appeal of the gospel. Luke also wrote the book of Acts.

Meditate on the passage, noting a few words or a phrase that stood out or a promise to meditate on today. Take them to God in prayer.

Luke 23

Jesus Before Pilate

Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. ²And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar,

and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”³ And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.”⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.”⁵ But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.”

Jesus Before Herod

⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.⁷ And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him.⁹ So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer.¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him.¹¹ And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate.¹² And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

¹³Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him.¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him.¹⁶ I will therefore punish and release him.”

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

¹⁸But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas” —¹⁹ a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder.²⁰ Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus,²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!”²² A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.”²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted.²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

The Crucifixion

²⁶And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

³²Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and

one on his left. ³⁴And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" ⁴⁸And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

Jesus Is Buried

⁵⁰Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, ⁵¹who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. ⁵⁴It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Prayers of Intercession

Church Community

- Pray for Christ Covenant's deacons: for perseverance, compassion, and courage as they serve the church and city.
- Pray for the global church, especially for those in Africa facing ethnic conflicts, famine, and corrupt leaders.
- Pray for evangelistic efforts throughout Columbia: that the whole body of believers would experience personal gospel renewal and that many others would also come to know Christ.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Wonder what your next step in spiritual formation is? Consider getting involved in a Growth Group.

For a handy guide to the devotional elements and an archive of past issues, visit ccotc.org/devotional.