



# Formation Devotional

April 3, 2020 Morning

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

*Remind yourself that this morning marks another day to enjoy and glorify God. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.*

## Call to Prayer

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. (Psalm 143:8)

## Opening Prayer

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 815)

## 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 129

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## They Have Afflicted Me from My Youth

*A Song of Ascents.*

“Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth” —

let Israel now say —

<sup>2</sup>“Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth,

yet they have not prevailed against me.

<sup>3</sup>The plowers plowed upon my back;

they made long their furrows.”

<sup>4</sup>The LORD is righteous;

he has cut the cords of the wicked.

<sup>5</sup>May all who hate Zion

be put to shame and turned backward!

<sup>6</sup>Let them be like the grass on the housetops,

which withers before it grows up,

<sup>7</sup>with which the reaper does not fill his hand

nor the binder of sheaves his arms,

<sup>8</sup>nor do those who pass by say,

“The blessing of the LORD be upon you!

We bless you in the name of the LORD!”

## New Testament Reading

John’s gospel is reflective and geared for the Greek reader. The famous first line, “In the beginning was the Word . . .” sets the stage for an account that not only reveals that Jesus is the Son of God but also refutes the pagan mystery religions that were beginning to flourish around him. John exhorts his readers from the beginning that Jesus is the lens through which to see all of creation, and he ends his gospel by saying that even creation could not contain all of the things that Jesus did.

*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.*

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## John 1

### The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

### The Testimony of John the Baptist

<sup>19</sup>And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

<sup>24</sup>(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, <sup>27</sup>even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

### Behold, the Lamb of God

<sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup>This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that

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he might be revealed to Israel.”<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.<sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’<sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

### **Jesus Calls the First Disciples**

<sup>35</sup>The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,<sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.<sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”<sup>39</sup> He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.<sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ).<sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

### **Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael**

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”<sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.<sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”<sup>46</sup> Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”<sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”<sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”<sup>51</sup> And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

### **Prayers of Intercession**

#### **Neighborhood**

- Pray that Christians would be faithful in obeying Jesus’ command to love our neighbors especially through hospitality, kindness and gospel witness.
- Pray that those who are caught in human trafficking would find safety from their abusers. Pray that they would find emotional, physical, and spiritual healing.
- Pray that women facing unexpected pregnancies would find loving care. Pray that they would ultimately choose life for the child and be hopeful about their future after giving birth.
- Pray for spiritual thirst that would draw people to churches in their neighborhood. Pray that many new people would become followers of Jesus.

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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)

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*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](http://ccotc.org/devotional).*