



Formation Devotional

February 18, 2020 Morning

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

As you read and pray this morning, remember you are in God's presence. Trust in the Holy Spirit to guide you and direct your thoughts. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (BCP 201)

Confession of Sin

Lord God, we have given more weight to our successes and our happiness than to your will. We have eaten without a thought for the hungry. We have spoken without an effort to understand others. We have kept silent instead of telling the truth. We have judged others, forgetful that you alone are the Judge. We have acted in accordance with our desires rather than according to your commands. Within the church we have been slow to practice love of our neighbors. And in the world we have not been your faithful servants. Father, forgive us and help us to live as followers of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior. Amen.

Take a moment to confess your sins, knowing that he hears you, and respond in gratitude according to the assurance of grace.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 69

Save Me, O God

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. Of David.

Save me, O God!

For the waters have come up to my neck.

²I sink in deep mire,

where there is no foothold;

I have come into deep waters,

and the flood sweeps over me.

³I am weary with my crying out;

my throat is parched.

My eyes grow dim

with waiting for my God.

⁴More in number than the hairs of my head

are those who hate me without cause;

mighty are those who would destroy me,

those who attack me with lies.

What I did not steal

must I now restore?

⁵O God, you know my folly;

the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.

⁶Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me,

O Lord GOD of hosts;

let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me,

O God of Israel.

⁷For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach,

that dishonor has covered my face.

⁸I have become a stranger to my brothers,

an alien to my mother's sons.

⁹For zeal for your house has consumed me,

and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

¹⁰When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting,

it became my reproach.

¹¹When I made sackcloth my clothing,

I became a byword to them.

¹²I am the talk of those who sit in the gate,

and the drunkards make songs about me.

¹³But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD.

At an acceptable time, O God,

in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness.

¹⁴Deliver me

from sinking in the mire;

let me be delivered from my enemies

and from the deep waters.

¹⁵Let not the flood sweep over me,

or the deep swallow me up,

or the pit close its mouth over me.

¹⁶Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good;

according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

¹⁷Hide not your face from your servant,

for I am in distress; make haste to answer me.

¹⁸Draw near to my soul, redeem me;

ransom me because of my enemies!

¹⁹You know my reproach,

and my shame and my dishonor;

my foes are all known to you.

²⁰Reproaches have broken my heart,

so that I am in despair.

I looked for pity, but there was none,

and for comforters, but I found none.

²¹They gave me poison for food,

and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

²²Let their own table before them become a snare;

and when they are at peace, let it become a trap.

²³Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see,

and make their loins tremble continually.

²⁴Pour out your indignation upon them,

and let your burning anger overtake them.

²⁵May their camp be a desolation;

let no one dwell in their tents.

²⁶For they persecute him whom you have struck down,

and they recount the pain of those you have wounded.

²⁷Add to them punishment upon punishment;

may they have no acquittal from you.

²⁸Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;

let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

²⁹But I am afflicted and in pain;
let your salvation, O God, set me on high!

³⁰I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.

³¹This will please the LORD more than an ox
or a bull with horns and hoofs.

³²When the humble see it they will be glad;
you who seek God, let your hearts revive.

³³For the LORD hears the needy
and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

³⁴Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and everything that moves in them.

³⁵For God will save Zion
and build up the cities of Judah,
and people shall dwell there and possess it;

³⁶ the offspring of his servants shall inherit it,
and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

New Testament Reading

Mark wrote more for the Romans, who couldn't care less about Hebrew genealogy. Mark's gospel is filled with action. By the fourteenth verse of chapter 1, Mark already records Jesus preaching about the kingdom of God. Mark loses little time, and his gospel is regarded as the fast-paced account. This brief account of Jesus' earthly ministry highlights Jesus' authority and servanthood.

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.

Mark 7

Traditions and Commandments

Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ² they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

““This people honors me with their lips,

but their heart is far from me;

⁷in vain do they worship me,

teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

⁹And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ ¹¹But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God) — ¹²then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

What Defiles a Person

¹⁴And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” ¹⁷And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

The Syrophenician Woman's Faith

²⁴And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. ²⁵But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷And he said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁸But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table

eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Prayers of Intercession

Gospel Identity

- Are there things causing you worry, fear, sadness, or anger? Pray that you would experience Christ's love for you precisely in those places.
- Pray for those around you to feel secure in the identity that God freely offers.

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.