



Formation Devotional

February 20, 2020 Evening

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

Take a moment to slow down and turn your thoughts to God. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Opening Prayer

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 829)

Prayer of Examine

Turn your attention to Christ who is present with you now. With him, review the ordinary events and emotions of your day with gratitude.

1. Where did you move with or feel close to Jesus today?
2. Where did you resist or feel far from Jesus today?
3. Where is Jesus leading you tomorrow? Ask for joy as you follow him.

Praying the Psalms

Prayerfully read the psalm back to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 74

Arise, O God, Defend Your Cause

A Maskil of Asaph.

O God, why do you cast us off forever?

Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?

²Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!

Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.

³Direct your steps to the perpetual ruins;
the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary!

⁴Your foes have roared in the midst of your meeting place;
they set up their own signs for signs.

⁵They were like those who swing axes
in a forest of trees.

⁶And all its carved wood
they broke down with hatchets and hammers.

⁷They set your sanctuary on fire;
they profaned the dwelling place of your name,
bringing it down to the ground.

⁸They said to themselves, "We will utterly subdue them";
they burned all the meeting places of God in the land.

⁹We do not see our signs;
there is no longer any prophet,
and there is none among us who knows how long.

¹⁰How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?
Is the enemy to revile your name forever?

¹¹Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?
Take it from the fold of your garment and destroy them!

¹²Yet God my King is from of old,
working salvation in the midst of the earth.

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- ¹³You divided the sea by your might;
you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters.
- ¹⁴You crushed the heads of Leviathan;
you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
- ¹⁵You split open springs and brooks;
you dried up ever-flowing streams.
- ¹⁶Yours is the day, yours also the night;
you have established the heavenly lights and the sun.
- ¹⁷You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth;
you have made summer and winter.
- ¹⁸Remember this, O LORD, how the enemy scoffs,
and a foolish people reviles your name.
- ¹⁹Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild beasts;
do not forget the life of your poor forever.
- ²⁰Have regard for the covenant,
for the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence.
- ²¹Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame;
let the poor and needy praise your name.
- ²²Arise, O God, defend your cause;
remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
- ²³Do not forget the clamor of your foes,
the uproar of those who rise against you, which goes up continually!

Old Testament Reading

Genesis gives the account of creation, and the reason why it is so amazing and so corrupt at the same time. The original intent of God for mankind is revealed: God creates the earth for mankind, and mankind for God. Though

things go wrong in the beginning, God promises the nomad Abraham that there would be a people who would know Him and walk in His ways in the midst of a broken and rebellious world. The rest of Genesis unfolds in the way God forms this people in the ancient world.

As you read and reflect on this passage, prayerfully consider how God might be revealing himself to you this evening.

Genesis 37

Joseph's Dreams

Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

²These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Billhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

⁵Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

⁹Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" ¹¹And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

¹²Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." ¹⁴So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" ¹⁶"I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." ¹⁷And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

¹⁸They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." ²¹But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." ²²And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him" —that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. ²³So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. ²⁴And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes ³⁰and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?" ³¹Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³²And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." ³³And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." ³⁴Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. ³⁶Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Relationships

- Thank him for the rich and meaningful relationships Christians can have with one another because God first broke down the dividing wall of hostility and made us one.
- Thank him for all who faithfully walk with God, whether married or single, for a season or for a lifetime.
- Thank him for the opportunities at Christ Covenant that allow us to forge and cultivate friendships across the barriers that divide our society.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen. (BCP 70)

Benediction

Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

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.