



Formation Devotional

February 20, 2020 Morning

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

Rejoice and be glad, for your father invites you into his loving presence. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress. (Isaiah 33:2)

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in his steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you and their neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 829)

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 73

Book Three

God Is My Strength and Portion Forever

A Psalm of Asaph.

Truly God is good to Israel,

to those who are pure in heart.

²But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,

my steps had nearly slipped.

³For I was envious of the arrogant

when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

⁴For they have no pangs until death;

their bodies are fat and sleek.

⁵They are not in trouble as others are;

they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.

⁶Therefore pride is their necklace;

violence covers them as a garment.

⁷Their eyes swell out through fatness;

their hearts overflow with follies.

⁸They scoff and speak with malice;

loftily they threaten oppression.

⁹They set their mouths against the heavens,

and their tongue struts through the earth.

¹⁰Therefore his people turn back to them,

and find no fault in them.

¹¹And they say, "How can God know?

Is there knowledge in the Most High?"

¹²Behold, these are the wicked;
always at ease, they increase in riches.

¹³All in vain have I kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.

¹⁴For all the day long I have been stricken
and rebuked every morning.

¹⁵If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
I would have betrayed the generation of your children.

¹⁶But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,

¹⁷until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I discerned their end.

¹⁸Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin.

¹⁹How they are destroyed in a moment,
swept away utterly by terrors!

²⁰Like a dream when one awakes,
O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.

²¹When my soul was embittered,
when I was pricked in heart,

²²I was brutish and ignorant;
I was like a beast toward you.

²³Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.

²⁴You guide me with your counsel,

and afterward you will receive me to glory.

²⁵Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail,

but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

²⁷For behold, those who are far from you shall perish;

you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.

²⁸But for me it is good to be near God;

I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,

that I may tell of all your works.

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 9

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

The Transfiguration

²And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my

beloved Son; listen to him.”⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

⁹And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. ¹¹And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” ¹²And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit

¹⁴And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. ¹⁶And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” ¹⁷And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” ¹⁹And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” ²⁰And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²²And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can!’ All things are possible for one who believes.” ²⁴Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” ²⁵And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ²⁶And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. ²⁸And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁹And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection

³⁰They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” ³²But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Who Is the Greatest?

³³And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” ³⁴But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” ³⁶And he took a child and put him in the midst

of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

Anyone Not Against Us Is for Us

³⁸John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For the one who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

Temptations to Sin

⁴²“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁴And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁵And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁶‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ ⁴⁷For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁴⁸Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Prayers of Intercession

Relationships

- Pray for healthy relationships between men and women at Christ Covenant and that deep friendships and marriages would be formed.
- Pray that Christians would not over or under value any one marital status. That we would celebrate our different giftedness and consider both marriage and singleness as God-ordained capacities for love and service to others.
- Pray that Christ Covenant would be a place where friendships across difference are cultivated (across gender, race, class, political and religious lines, etc.)

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.