



Formation Devotional

February 21, 2020 Evening

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

Lay your worries down to God and simply enjoy being with him. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

Lord, you are the God who saves me; day and night I cry out to you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. (Psalm 88:1-2)

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy — for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 260)

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 76

Who Can Stand Before You?

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

In Judah God is known;

his name is great in Israel.

²His abode has been established in Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.

³There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. Selah

⁴Glorious are you, more majestic
than the mountains full of prey.

⁵The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil;
they sank into sleep;
all the men of war
were unable to use their hands.

⁶At your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both rider and horse lay stunned.

⁷But you, you are to be feared!
Who can stand before you
when once your anger is roused?

⁸From the heavens you uttered judgment;
the earth feared and was still,

⁹when God arose to establish judgment,
to save all the humble of the earth. Selah

¹⁰Surely the wrath of man shall praise you;
the remnant of wrath you will put on like a belt.

¹¹Make your vows to the LORD your God and perform them;
let all around him bring gifts
to him who is to be feared,

¹²who cuts off the spirit of princes,

who is to be feared by the kings of the earth.

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 38

Judah and Tamar

It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. ²There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her, ³and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. ⁴She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. ⁵Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

⁶And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. ⁸Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." ⁹But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰And what he did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also. ¹¹Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up" — for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.

¹²In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," ¹⁴she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. ¹⁵When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶He turned to her at the roadside and said, "Come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" ¹⁷He answered, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "If you give me a pledge, until you send it—" ¹⁸He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She replied, "Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. ²¹And he asked the men of the place, "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim at the roadside?" And they said, "No cult prostitute has been here." ²²So he returned to Judah and said, "I have not found her. Also, the men of the place said, 'No cult prostitute has been here.'" ²³And Judah replied, "Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent this young goat, and you did not find her."

²⁴About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned." ²⁵As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." ²⁶Then Judah identified them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her again.

²⁷When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." ²⁹But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. ³⁰Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Neighborhood

- Thank God for reconciling us first to him through Christ, so that we can seek true peace and reconciliation in our communities.
- Thank him for the way he is healing our society across racial, economic, and cultural divides though we may not always see how.
- Thank him for the gifts he's given that we can share generously with others in need.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 69)

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.