



Formation Devotional

February 24, 2020 Morning

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

As you enter into his presence this morning, remember that God is with you and for you, because he loves you. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. (Psalm 65:8)

Opening Prayer

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 259)

Confession of Sin

Lord Jesus Christ, though being in very nature God, when you came to redeem us you humbled yourself and made yourself nothing. Though you were rich, for our sakes you became poor, so that through your poverty we might become rich. We confess how unlike you we are in our attitudes and actions. We strive for recognition from others, and we sulk and become bitter if we do not get it. We attend to our own needs and concerns yet fail to care for others except when it serves our purposes. Forgive us our sin and renew our hearts. Grant us to realize that we only achieve greatness and gain our lives by giving them away. Work in us by the power of your Spirit so that we become more like you and so bring glory to our Father in heaven. Amen.

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

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. (Romans 5:9-11)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 77

In the Day of Trouble I Seek the Lord

To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

I cry aloud to God,

aloud to God, and he will hear me.

²In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;

in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;

my soul refuses to be comforted.

³When I remember God, I moan;

when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah

⁴You hold my eyelids open;

I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

⁵I consider the days of old,

the years long ago.

⁶I said, "Let me remember my song in the night;

let me meditate in my heart."

Then my spirit made a diligent search:

⁷"Will the Lord spurn forever,

and never again be favorable?

⁸Has his steadfast love forever ceased?

Are his promises at an end for all time?

⁹Has God forgotten to be gracious?

Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah

¹⁰Then I said, "I will appeal to this,
to the years of the right hand of the Most High."

¹¹I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

¹²I will ponder all your work,
and meditate on your mighty deeds.

¹³Your way, O God, is holy.
What god is great like our God?

¹⁴You are the God who works wonders;
you have made known your might among the peoples.

¹⁵You with your arm redeemed your people,
the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

¹⁶When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
indeed, the deep trembled.

¹⁷The clouds poured out water;
the skies gave forth thunder;
your arrows flashed on every side.

¹⁸The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
your lightnings lighted up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.

¹⁹Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.

²⁰You led your people like a flock

by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

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 11

The Triumphal Entry

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

¹¹And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

¹²On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹⁵And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷

And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”¹⁸ And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.¹⁹ And when evening came they went out of the city.

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

²⁰As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.²¹ And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.”²² And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God.²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

²⁷And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him,²⁸ and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?”²⁹ Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.³⁰ Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.”³¹ And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’³² But shall we say, ‘From man?’” — they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet.³³ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Prayers of Intercession

Work

- Confess the ways you rely too much on your own wisdom and experience to discern your vocational purpose, rather than looking to God to define your identity and guide your daily work toward his glory.
- Pray for a growing awareness of the Spirit’s wisdom for your daily work, that you might actively depend on God to navigate today’s challenges.

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.