



Formation Devotional

February 25, 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

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. (Isaiah 58:8-9)

Opening Prayer

Almighty and eternal God, draw our hearts to you, guide our minds, fill our imaginations, control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you; and then use us as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (BCP 832)

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 79

How Long, O LORD?

A Psalm of Asaph.

O God, the nations have come into your inheritance;

they have defiled your holy temple;

they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.

²They have given the bodies of your servants

to the birds of the heavens for food,

the flesh of your faithful to the beasts of the earth.

³They have poured out their blood like water

all around Jerusalem,

and there was no one to bury them.

⁴We have become a taunt to our neighbors,

mocked and derided by those around us.

⁵How long, O LORD? Will you be angry forever?

Will your jealousy burn like fire?

⁶Pour out your anger on the nations

that do not know you,

and on the kingdoms

that do not call upon your name!

⁷For they have devoured Jacob

and laid waste his habitation.

⁸Do not remember against us our former iniquities;

let your compassion come speedily to meet us,
for we are brought very low.

⁹Help us, O God of our salvation,
for the glory of your name;
deliver us, and atone for our sins,
for your name's sake!

¹⁰Why should the nations say,
“Where is their God?”

Let the avenging of the outpoured blood of your servants
be known among the nations before our eyes!

¹¹Let the groans of the prisoners come before you;
according to your great power, preserve those doomed to die!

¹²Return sevenfold into the lap of our neighbors
the taunts with which they have taunted you, O Lord!

¹³But we your people, the sheep of your pasture,
will give thanks to you forever;
from generation to generation we will recount your praise.

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 12

The Parable of the Tenants

And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. ² When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. ⁶ He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸ And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Have you not read this Scripture:

"The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

¹¹ this was the Lord's doing,

and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

¹² And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.

Paying Taxes to Caesar

¹³ And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. ¹⁴ And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" ¹⁵ But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." ¹⁶ And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him.

The Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection

¹⁸ And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, ¹⁹ "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. ²¹ And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. ²² And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. ²³ In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife."

²⁴Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? ²⁵For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ²⁶And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? ²⁷He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."

The Great Commandment

²⁸And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³²And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. ³³And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

³⁵And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet."

³⁷David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" And the great throng heard him gladly.

Beware of the Scribes

³⁸And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁰who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

The Widow's Offering

⁴¹And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴For they all

contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Prayers of Intercession

Gospel Identity

- Ask God to deepen your devotional life. Pray that God would meet you in your daily prayer and speak to you through his Word.
- Pray that God would help you to be prayerful and attentive to him throughout your day, paying attention to his love for you and how he is sending you to love others.
- Pray that you would experience him more fully in the liturgy of Sunday worship, the Lord’s Supper, and in the preaching of his Word.

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.