



Formation Devotional

February 28, 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

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. (Psalm 16:6-7)

Opening Prayer

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 823)

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 86

Great Is Your Steadfast Love

A Prayer of David.

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,

for I am poor and needy.

²Preserve my life, for I am godly;

save your servant, who trusts in you — you are my God.

³Be gracious to me, O Lord,

for to you do I cry all the day.

⁴Gladden the soul of your servant,

for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

⁵For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,

abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

⁶Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;

listen to my plea for grace.

⁷In the day of my trouble I call upon you,

for you answer me.

⁸There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,

nor are there any works like yours.

⁹All the nations you have made shall come

and worship before you, O Lord,

and shall glorify your name.

¹⁰For you are great and do wondrous things;

you alone are God.

¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD,

that I may walk in your truth;

unite my heart to fear your name.

¹²I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,

and I will glorify your name forever.

¹³For great is your steadfast love toward me;

you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

¹⁴O God, insolent men have risen up against me;

a band of ruthless men seeks my life,
and they do not set you before them.

¹⁵But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,

slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

¹⁶Turn to me and be gracious to me;

give your strength to your servant,
and save the son of your maidservant.

¹⁷Show me a sign of your favor,

that those who hate me may see and be put to shame
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

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 43

Joseph's Brothers Return to Egypt

Now the famine was severe in the land. ²And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food." ³But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' ⁴If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵But if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.'" ⁶Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?" ⁷They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?" ⁸And Judah said to Israel his

father, "Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. ⁹I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. ¹⁰If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice."

¹¹Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. ¹²Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. ¹⁴May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

¹⁵So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon." ¹⁷The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys." ¹⁹So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house, ²⁰and said, "Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food. ²¹And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, ²²and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." ²³He replied, "Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴And when the man had brought the men into Joseph's house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, ²⁵they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

²⁶When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and bowed down to him to the ground. ²⁷And he inquired about their welfare and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" ²⁸They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. ²⁹And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" ³⁰Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. ³¹Then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself he said, "Serve the food." ³²They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. And the men looked at one another in amazement. ³⁴Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Neighborhood

- Thank God that he calls us, in a commitment-averse culture, to commit ourselves to loving and serving the communities he has placed us in.
- Thank him for giving us the living water that satisfies our deepest needs. Thank him for actively softening hearts of those who don't yet believe.

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.