



Formation Devotional

January 17, 2020 Morning

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

Remind yourself that this morning marks another day to enjoy and glorify God. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

Opening Prayer

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 826)

Confession of Sin

Heavenly Father, loving King, our thoughts and motives cannot be hidden from Your sight. Our self-pity and pride, our cowardice and sloth, our greed and lust, our anger and envy are laid bare before Your eyes and ours. We open ourselves to You and ask that You cover us in Christ. Let us hear Your voice: saying His blood is our peace, His death is our freedom, His Spirit our power, His smiting our safety. And convince our hearts afresh that in Your service is perfect freedom. Amen.

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

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 25

Teach Me Your Paths

Of David.

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all the day long.

6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

according to your steadfast love remember me,

for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

8 Good and upright is the LORD;

therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

9 He leads the humble in what is right,

and teaches the humble his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,

for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For your name's sake, O LORD,

pardon my guilt, for it is great.

12 Who is the man who fears the LORD?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

13 His soul shall abide in well-being,

and his offspring shall inherit the land.

14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,

and he makes known to them his covenant.

15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,

for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,

for I am lonely and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged;

bring me out of my distresses.

18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,

and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider how many are my foes,

and with what violent hatred they hate me.

20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!

Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me,

for I wait for you.

22 Redeem Israel, O God,

out of all his troubles.

New Testament Reading

Matthew was written for a Jewish audience. That's why he starts his gospel with a genealogy. Tracing the lineage of Jesus back to David would be significant to a Hebrew who was wondering if Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. In that light, Matthew's references to the Old Testament reminds us that Jesus is God's fulfillment of the Jewish law and the prophets. The Sermon on the Mount becomes the new identity for the people of God.

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.

Matthew 13

The Parable of the Sower

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. **2** And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. **3** And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. **5** Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, **6** but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. **7** Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. **8** Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. **9** He who has ears, let him hear."

The Purpose of the Parables

10 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" **11** And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12** For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **14** Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

""You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive."

15 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,

lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears

and understand with their heart

and turn, and I would heal them.'

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. **17** For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower: **19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. **20** As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, **21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. **22** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. **23** As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The Parable of the Weeds

24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, **25** but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. **27** And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'""

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. **32** It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

33 He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

Prophecy and Parables

34 All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. **35** This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." **37** He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. **40** Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, **42** and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, **46** who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. **48** When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. **49** So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous **50** and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

New and Old Treasures

51 "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." **52** And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53 And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, **54** and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? **55** Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? **56** And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" **57** And they took offense at him. But

Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.” 58 And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Prayers of Intercession

Neighborhood

- Pray that Christians would oppose injustice in all forms and work towards racial reconciliation and healing in their neighborhoods.
- Pray for strength as immigrants, refugees, and international students to Columbia transition into a new culture and way of life. Pray that they would be surrounded by encouraging neighbors and find jobs to support their families.
- Pray that formerly incarcerated men and women would be welcomed back by friends and family with love and grace. Pray that severed relationships would be mended and strengthened.

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.