



Formation Devotional

January 24, 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

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. (Psalm 143:8)

Opening Prayer

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, and especially the hearts of the people of this land, 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)

Confession of Sin

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Amen.

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

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(Titus 3:4-7)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 35

Great Is the LORD

Of David.

Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me;

fight against those who fight against me!

²Take hold of shield and buckler

and rise for my help!

³Draw the spear and javelin

against my pursuers!

Say to my soul,

“I am your salvation!”

⁴Let them be put to shame and dishonor

who seek after my life!

Let them be turned back and disappointed

who devise evil against me!

⁵Let them be like chaff before the wind,

with the angel of the LORD driving them away!

⁶Let their way be dark and slippery,

with the angel of the LORD pursuing them!

⁷For without cause they hid their net for me;

without cause they dug a pit for my life.

⁸Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it!

And let the net that he hid ensnare him;

let him fall into it—to his destruction!

⁹Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD,

exulting in his salvation.

¹⁰All my bones shall say,

“O LORD, who is like you,

delivering the poor

from him who is too strong for him,

the poor and needy from him who robs him?”

¹¹Malicious witnesses rise up;

they ask me of things that I do not know.

¹²They repay me evil for good;

my soul is bereft.

¹³But I, when they were sick—

I wore sackcloth;

I afflicted myself with fasting;

I prayed with head bowed on my chest.

¹⁴ I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother;

as one who laments his mother,

I bowed down in mourning.

¹⁵But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered;

they gathered together against me;

wretches whom I did not know

tore at me without ceasing;

¹⁶like profane mockers at a feast,

they gnash at me with their teeth.

¹⁷How long, O Lord, will you look on?

Rescue me from their destruction,

my precious life from the lions!

¹⁸I will thank you in the great congregation;

in the mighty throng I will praise you.

¹⁹Let not those rejoice over me

who are wrongfully my foes,

and let not those wink the eye

who hate me without cause.

²⁰For they do not speak peace,

but against those who are quiet in the land

they devise words of deceit.

²¹They open wide their mouths against me;

they say, "Aha, Aha!

Our eyes have seen it!"

²²You have seen, O LORD; be not silent!

O Lord, be not far from me!

²³Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication,

for my cause, my God and my Lord!

²⁴Vindicate me, O LORD, my God,

according to your righteousness,

and let them not rejoice over me!

²⁵Let them not say in their hearts,

"Aha, our heart's desire!"

Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."

²⁶Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether

who rejoice at my calamity!

Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor

who magnify themselves against me!

²⁷Let those who delight in my righteousness

shout for joy and be glad

and say evermore,

“Great is the LORD,

who delights in the welfare of his servant!”

²⁸Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness

and of your praise all the day long.

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 18

Who Is the Greatest?

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ²And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Temptations to Sin

⁷“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! ⁸And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be

thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹⁰“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹²What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

If Your Brother Sins Against You

¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Prayers of Intercession

Neighborhood

- Pray that Christians would be faithful in obeying Jesus' command to love our neighbors especially through hospitality, kindness and gospel witness.
- Pray that those who are caught in human trafficking would find safety from their abusers. Pray that they would find emotional, physical, and spiritual healing.
- Pray that women facing unexpected pregnancies would find loving care. Pray that they would ultimately choose life for the child and be hopeful about their future after giving birth.
- Pray for spiritual thirst that would draw people to churches in their neighborhood. Pray that many new people would become followers of Jesus.

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.