



Formation Devotional

January 27, 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

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ in his earthly life shared our toil and hallowed our labor: Be present with your people where they work; make those who carry on the industries and commerce of this land be responsive to your will; and give to us all a pride in what we do, and a just return for our labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (BCP 208)

Confession of Sin

Almighty God, in raising Jesus from the grave, you destroyed the power of sin and death. We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear, bound by our own selfishness and sin. We waste your gifts, wander from your ways, and forget your love. We overlook our neighbor and are constantly focused on ourselves. Forgive us, God of mercy. Help us to trust your power to change our lives and make us new, that we may know the joy of the fullness of life given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. Amen.

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

I acknowledge my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 37

He Will Not Forsake His Saints

Of David.

Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

²For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.

³Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

⁴Delight yourself in the LORD,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵Commit your way to the LORD;

trust in him, and he will act.

⁶He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,

and your justice as the noonday.

⁷Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;

fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,

over the man who carries out evil devices!

⁸Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!

Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

⁹For the evildoers shall be cut off,

but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

¹⁰In just a little while, the wicked will be no more;

though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.

¹¹But the meek shall inherit the land

and delight themselves in abundant peace.

¹²The wicked plots against the righteous

and gnashes his teeth at him,

¹³but the Lord laughs at the wicked,

for he sees that his day is coming.

¹⁴The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows

to bring down the poor and needy,

to slay those whose way is upright;

¹⁵their sword shall enter their own heart,

and their bows shall be broken.

¹⁶Better is the little that the righteous has

than the abundance of many wicked.

¹⁷For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,

but the LORD upholds the righteous.

¹⁸The LORD knows the days of the blameless,

and their heritage will remain forever;

¹⁹they are not put to shame in evil times;

in the days of famine they have abundance.

²⁰But the wicked will perish;

the enemies of the LORD are like the glory of the pastures;

they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.

²¹The wicked borrows but does not pay back,

but the righteous is generous and gives;

²²for those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land,

but those cursed by him shall be cut off.

²³The steps of a man are established by the LORD,
when he delights in his way;

²⁴though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong,
for the LORD upholds his hand.

²⁵I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or his children begging for bread.

²⁶He is ever lending generously,
and his children become a blessing.

²⁷Turn away from evil and do good;
so shall you dwell forever.

²⁸For the LORD loves justice;
he will not forsake his saints.

They are preserved forever,
but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

²⁹The righteous shall inherit the land
and dwell upon it forever.

³⁰The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
and his tongue speaks justice.

³¹The law of his God is in his heart;
his steps do not slip.

³²The wicked watches for the righteous
and seeks to put him to death.

³³The LORD will not abandon him to his power
or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial.

³⁴Wait for the LORD and keep his way,
and he will exalt you to inherit the land;
you will look on when the wicked are cut off.

³⁵I have seen a wicked, ruthless man,
spreading himself like a green laurel tree.

³⁶But he passed away, and behold, he was no more;
though I sought him, he could not be found.

³⁷Mark the blameless and behold the upright,
for there is a future for the man of peace.

³⁸But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed;
the future of the wicked shall be cut off.

³⁹The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD;
he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

⁴⁰The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

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 19

Teaching About Divorce

Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." ⁷They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" ⁸He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

Let the Children Come to Me

¹³Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." ¹⁵And he laid his hands on them and went away.

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ²⁰The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." ²²When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

²³And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ²⁷Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" ²⁸Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Prayers of Intercession

Work

- Confess the ways that you despair and complain over specific areas of brokenness in your work, rather than taking your laments to the God who worked both in creation and in a carpenter's shop.
- Ask God to give you eyes to see the ways his Spirit may be at work in those seemingly hopeless situations, empowering you to be an agent of renewal in your workplace.

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.