



Formation Devotional

January 31, 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

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 234)

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 45

Your Throne, O God, Is Forever

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song.

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;

I address my verses to the king;

my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

²You are the most handsome of the sons of men;

grace is poured upon your lips;

therefore God has blessed you forever.

³Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,

in your splendor and majesty!

⁴In your majesty ride out victoriously

for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;

let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!

⁵Your arrows are sharp

in the heart of the king's enemies;

the peoples fall under you.

⁶Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;

⁷ you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you

with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;

⁸ your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;

⁹ daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;

at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

¹⁰Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:

forget your people and your father's house,

¹¹ and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him.

¹² The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,

the richest of the people.

¹³All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

¹⁴ In many-colored robes she is led to the king,

with her virgin companions following behind her.

¹⁵With joy and gladness they are led along

as they enter the palace of the king.

¹⁶In place of your fathers shall be your sons;

you will make them princes in all the earth.

¹⁷I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;

therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

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 23

Seven Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³ so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

¹⁶“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁹You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. ²²And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

²⁵“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

²⁷“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

²⁹“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure

of your fathers. ³³You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? ³⁴Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Lament over Jerusalem

³⁷“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Prayers of Intercession

Neighborhood

- Pray that the gospel would be experienced as good news to the poor and marginalized of Columbia.
- Pray for all the men, women, and children who have no place to call home. Pray they find shelter and access to adequate food and health care.
- Pray for those recovering from various addictions: that they would experience freedom and liberation from such debilitating diseases as alcoholism, drug addiction, and sex addictions, and that they would find ultimate satisfaction in Christ.
- Pray for the leaders of our city to pursue justice especially for the most vulnerable of our city.

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.