



# Formation Devotional

January 3, 2020 Morning

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

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*Rejoice and be glad, for your father invites you into his loving presence. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.*

## Call to Prayer

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who has set the solitary in families: We commend to your continual care the homes in which your people dwell. Put far from them every root of bitterness, the desire of vainglory, and the pride of life. Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness. Knit together in constant affection those who, in holy wedlock, have been made one flesh. Turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents; and so kindle love among us all, that we may be kind to one to another; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 828)

## Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father, we are thankful that your mercy is higher than the heavens, wider than our wanderings, deeper than all our sin. Forgive our frivolous attitude toward life, our callousness toward suffering, our envy of those who have more than we have, our obsession with creating a life of constant pleasure, our indifference to the treasures of heaven, and our neglect of your wise and gracious law. Help us to change our way of life so that we may desire what is good, love what you love, and do what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

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## Praying the Psalms

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

### Psalm 5

#### Lead Me in Your Righteousness

*To the choirmaster: for the flutes. A Psalm of David.*

1 Give ear to my words, O LORD;

consider my groaning.

2 Give attention to the sound of my cry,

my King and my God,

for to you do I pray.

3 O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;

in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;

evil may not dwell with you.

5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;

you hate all evildoers.

6 You destroy those who speak lies;

the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

7 But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,

will enter your house.

I will bow down toward your holy temple

in the fear of you.

8 Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness

because of my enemies;

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make your way straight before me.

**9** For there is no truth in their mouth;

their inmost self is destruction;

their throat is an open grave;

they flatter with their tongue.

**10** Make them bear their guilt, O God;

let them fall by their own counsels;

because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out,

for they have rebelled against you.

**11** But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;

let them ever sing for joy,

and spread your protection over them,

that those who love your name may exult in you.

**12** For you bless the righteous, O LORD;

you cover him with favor as with a shield.

## **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 3**

### **John the Baptist Prepares the Way**

**1** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, **2** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." **3** For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

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“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;

make his paths straight.’”

4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

### **Prayers of Intercession**

#### **Relationships**

- Pray for those in your immediate family. For what do they need prayer? If any do not know Christ, pray that they would come to know him.
- Ask God to reveal to you if there are members of your family whom you can come alongside and encourage in their faith. If so, pray that God would reveal them to you and give you the words, wisdom, and compassion to share.

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.

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## **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)

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*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](http://ccotc.org/devotional).*