



Formation Devotional

January 7, 2020 Morning

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

As you read and pray this morning, remember you are in God's presence. Trust in the Holy Spirit to guide you and direct your thoughts. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, who has revealed to his Church his eternal Being of glorious majesty and perfect love as one God in Trinity of Persons: Give us grace to continue steadfast in the confession of this faith, and constant in our worship of you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen. (BCP 199)

Confession of Sin

Gracious Lord, we confess that we dishonor you in our words, thoughts and deeds. Depending on our strength, we stumble. Glorifying in our own righteousness, we reject you. Turning our faces from you, we desire the things of this world to satisfy us. We pray now, Lord, for you to forgive all of our many sins; to cleanse the darkness from our lives, and to turn our faces and our hearts back towards you. We pray these things in the name of your most precious son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 9

I Will Recount Your Wonderful Deeds

To the choirmaster: according to Muth-labben. A Psalm of David.

1 I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;

I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

2 I will be glad and exult in you;

I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

3 When my enemies turn back,

they stumble and perish before your presence.

4 For you have maintained my just cause;

you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgment.

5 You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish;

you have blotted out their name forever and ever.

6 The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins;

their cities you rooted out;

the very memory of them has perished.

7 But the LORD sits enthroned forever;

he has established his throne for justice,

8 and he judges the world with righteousness;

he judges the peoples with uprightness.

9 The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed,

a stronghold in times of trouble.

10 And those who know your name put their trust in you,

for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion!

Tell among the peoples his deeds!

12 For he who avenges blood is mindful of them;

he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

13 Be gracious to me, O LORD!

See my affliction from those who hate me,

O you who lift me up from the gates of death,

14 that I may recount all your praises,

that in the gates of the daughter of Zion

I may rejoice in your salvation.

15 The nations have sunk in the pit that they made;

in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught.

16 The LORD has made himself known; he has executed judgment;

the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. *Higgaion. Selah*

17 The wicked shall return to Sheol,

all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten,

and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

19 Arise, O LORD! Let not man prevail;

let the nations be judged before you!

20 Put them in fear, O LORD!

Let the nations know that they are but men! *Selah*

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 5

The Sermon on the Mount

1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

The Beatitudes

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot,

will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **19** Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Anger

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ **22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. **23** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. **25** Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. **26** Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Lust

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **29** If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. **30** And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Divorce

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ **32** But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ **34** But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, **35** or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Retaliation

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ **39** But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. **40** And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. **41** And if

anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. **42** Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Prayers of Intercession

Gospel Identity

- Pray that as Christians go out into the community this morning, they would enter into their neighborhood, work and relationships as those called to be ambassadors of Christ.
- Pray that Christians across the city would be so renewed in their faith they would share their faith freely with others, and that those who don't believe would be made open to the gospel.

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.