



Formation Devotional

July 13, 2020 Evening

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

As you come before him this evening, rest in the assurance of his great love. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day. (Psalm 91:4-5)

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we remember those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use our public and private wealth that all may find suitable and fulfilling employment, and receive just payment for their labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 824)

Prayer of Examine

Turn your attention to Christ who is present with you now. With him, review the ordinary events and emotions of your day with gratitude.

1. Where did you move with or feel close to Jesus today?
2. Where did you resist or feel far from Jesus today?
3. Where is Jesus leading you tomorrow? Ask for joy as you follow him.

Praying the Psalms

Prayerfully read the psalm back to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 119:65-96

You have dealt well with your servant,

O LORD, according to your word.

⁶⁶Teach me good judgment and knowledge,

for I believe in your commandments.

⁶⁷Before I was afflicted I went astray,

but now I keep your word.

⁶⁸You are good and do good;

teach me your statutes.

⁶⁹The insolent smear me with lies,

but with my whole heart I keep your precepts;

⁷⁰their heart is unfeeling like fat,

but I delight in your law.

⁷¹It is good for me that I was afflicted,

that I might learn your statutes.

⁷²The law of your mouth is better to me

than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Yodh

⁷³Your hands have made and fashioned me;

give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.

⁷⁴Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice,

because I have hoped in your word.

⁷⁵I know, O LORD, that your rules are righteous,

and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

⁷⁶Let your steadfast love comfort me

according to your promise to your servant.

⁷⁷Let your mercy come to me, that I may live;

for your law is my delight.

⁷⁸Let the insolent be put to shame,

because they have wronged me with falsehood;

as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.

⁷⁹Let those who fear you turn to me,
that they may know your testimonies.

⁸⁰May my heart be blameless in your statutes,
that I may not be put to shame!

Kaph

⁸¹My soul longs for your salvation;
I hope in your word.

⁸²My eyes long for your promise;
I ask, "When will you comfort me?"

⁸³For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,
yet I have not forgotten your statutes.

⁸⁴How long must your servant endure?^{1a}
When will you judge those who persecute me?

⁸⁵The insolent have dug pitfalls for me;
they do not live according to your law.

⁸⁶All your commandments are sure;
they persecute me with falsehood; help me!

⁸⁷They have almost made an end of me on earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.

⁸⁸In your steadfast love give me life,
that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.

Lamedh

⁸⁹Forever, O LORD, your word
is firmly fixed in the heavens.

⁹⁰Your faithfulness endures to all generations;

you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

⁹¹By your appointment they stand this day,

for all things are your servants.

⁹²If your law had not been my delight,

I would have perished in my affliction.

⁹³I will never forget your precepts,

for by them you have given me life.

⁹⁴I am yours; save me,

for I have sought your precepts.

⁹⁵The wicked lie in wait to destroy me,

but I consider your testimonies.

⁹⁶I have seen a limit to all perfection,

but your commandment is exceedingly broad.

Old Testament Reading

Numbers describes the preparations the Jews undertook to enter the land that God promised them. They come to the border of that land and send in spies, who are overwhelmed by the obstacles they see and bring back a report that the Jews won't survive there. God then forbids this generation of Jews to enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief, and forty years of wandering in the wilderness ensues.

As you read and reflect on this passage, prayerfully consider how God might be revealing himself to you this evening.

Numbers 22

Balak Summons Balaam

Then the people of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. ²And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. ³And Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were many. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel. ⁴And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, ⁵sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River^[E] in the land of the people of

Amaw,¹⁰ to call him, saying, "Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. ⁶Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

⁷So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand. And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's message. ⁸And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. ⁹And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" ¹⁰And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, ¹¹'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" ¹²God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." ¹³So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you." ¹⁴So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

¹⁵Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than these. ¹⁶And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Let nothing hinder you from coming to me, ¹⁷for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do. Come, curse this people for me.'" ¹⁸But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the LORD my God to do less or more. ¹⁹So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me." ²⁰And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you." ²¹So Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab.

Balaam's Donkey and the Angel

²²But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. ²³And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand. And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road. ²⁴Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. ²⁵And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pushed against the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again. ²⁶Then the angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. ²⁷When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. ²⁸Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" ²⁹And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." ³⁰And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?" And he said, "No."

³¹Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face. ³²And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to

oppose you because your way is perverse³² before me. ³³The donkey saw me and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live.” ³⁴Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, “I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back.” ³⁵And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you.” So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak.

³⁶When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, on the border formed by the Arnon, at the extremity of the border. ³⁷And Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?” ³⁸Balaam said to Balak, “Behold, I have come to you! Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak.” ³⁹Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. ⁴⁰And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent for Balaam and for the princes who were with him.

⁴¹And in the morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal, and from there he saw a fraction of the people.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Work / Calling

- Praise God for his mercy in calling you to himself and to your work as one of the main ways he has called you to participate in his work.
- Think back on your day. Was there an instance where God enabled you to respond to a situation in a countercultural, Christ-like way? Thank him for that.
- Thank God for sending Christians into every industry and work environment to work with Christian distinctiveness and reveal his glories to the world through our labor.

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. (BCP 134)

Benediction

Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

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.