



# Formation Devotional

July 14, 2020 Evening

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

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*Come into this time just as you are, like a child who runs to his father's arms. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.*

## Call to Prayer

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands. (Psalm 90:17)

## Opening Prayer

O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 814)

## 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 119:129-152

*Pe*

<sup>129</sup>Your testimonies are wonderful;

therefore my soul keeps them.

<sup>130</sup>The unfolding of your words gives light;

it imparts understanding to the simple.

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<sup>131</sup> I open my mouth and pant,

because I long for your commandments.

<sup>132</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me,

as is your way with those who love your name.

<sup>133</sup> Keep steady my steps according to your promise,

and let no iniquity get dominion over me.

<sup>134</sup> Redeem me from man's oppression,

that I may keep your precepts.

<sup>135</sup> Make your face shine upon your servant,

and teach me your statutes.

<sup>136</sup> My eyes shed streams of tears,

because people do not keep your law.

*Tsadhe*

<sup>137</sup> Righteous are you, O LORD,

and right are your rules.

<sup>138</sup> You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness

and in all faithfulness.

<sup>139</sup> My zeal consumes me,

because my foes forget your words.

<sup>140</sup> Your promise is well tried,

and your servant loves it.

<sup>141</sup> I am small and despised,

yet I do not forget your precepts.

<sup>142</sup> Your righteousness is righteous forever,

and your law is true.

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<sup>143</sup>Trouble and anguish have found me out,  
but your commandments are my delight.

<sup>144</sup>Your testimonies are righteous forever;  
give me understanding that I may live.

*Qoph*

<sup>145</sup>With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O LORD!

I will keep your statutes.

<sup>146</sup>I call to you; save me,  
that I may observe your testimonies.

<sup>147</sup>I rise before dawn and cry for help;  
I hope in your words.

<sup>148</sup>My eyes are awake before the watches of the night,  
that I may meditate on your promise.

<sup>149</sup>Hear my voice according to your steadfast love;  
O LORD, according to your justice give me life.

<sup>150</sup>They draw near who persecute me with evil purpose;  
they are far from your law.

<sup>151</sup>But you are near, O LORD,  
and all your commandments are true.

<sup>152</sup>Long have I known from your testimonies  
that you have founded them forever.

## **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.

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

## **Numbers 23**

### **Balaam's First Oracle**

And Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams." <sup>2</sup>Balak did as Balaam had said. And Balak and Balaam offered on each altar a bull and a ram. <sup>3</sup>And Balaam said to Balak, "Stand beside your burnt offering, and I will go. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet me, and whatever he shows me I will tell you." And he went to a bare height, <sup>4</sup>and God met Balaam. And Balaam said to him, "I have arranged the seven altars and I have offered on each altar a bull and a ram." <sup>5</sup>And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." <sup>6</sup>And he returned to him, and behold, he and all the princes of Moab were standing beside his burnt offering. <sup>7</sup>And Balaam took up his discourse and said,

"From Aram Balak has brought me,

the king of Moab from the eastern mountains:

'Come, curse Jacob for me,

and come, denounce Israel!

<sup>8</sup>How can I curse whom God has not cursed?

How can I denounce whom the LORD has not denounced?

<sup>9</sup>For from the top of the crags I see him,

from the hills I behold him;

behold, a people dwelling alone,

and not counting itself among the nations!

<sup>10</sup>Who can count the dust of Jacob

or number the fourth part<sup>u</sup> of Israel?

Let me die the death of the upright,

and let my end be like his!"

<sup>11</sup>And Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have done nothing but bless them." <sup>12</sup>And he answered and said, "Must I not take care to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?"

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## Balaam's Second Oracle

<sup>13</sup>And Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place, from which you may see them. You shall see only a fraction of them and shall not see them all. Then curse them for me from there." <sup>14</sup>And he took him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar. <sup>15</sup>Balaam said to Balak, "Stand here beside your burnt offering, while I meet the LORD over there." <sup>16</sup>And the LORD met Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and thus shall you speak." <sup>17</sup>And he came to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the LORD spoken?" <sup>18</sup> And Balaam took up his discourse and said,

"Rise, Balak, and hear;

give ear to me, O son of Zippor:

<sup>19</sup>God is not man, that he should lie,

or a son of man, that he should change his mind.

Has he said, and will he not do it?

Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

<sup>20</sup>Behold, I received a command to bless:

he has blessed, and I cannot revoke it.

<sup>21</sup>He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob,

nor has he seen trouble in Israel.

The LORD their God is with them,

and the shout of a king is among them.

<sup>22</sup>God brings them out of Egypt

and is for them like the horns of the wild ox.

<sup>23</sup>For there is no enchantment against Jacob,

no divination against Israel;

now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel,

'What has God wrought!'

<sup>24</sup>Behold, a people! As a lioness it rises up

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and as a lion it lifts itself;

it does not lie down until it has devoured the prey

and drunk the blood of the slain.”

<sup>25</sup> And Balak said to Balaam, “Do not curse them at all, and do not bless them at all.” <sup>26</sup> But Balaam answered Balak, “Did I not tell you, ‘All that the LORD says, that I must do?’” <sup>27</sup> And Balak said to Balaam, “Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there.” <sup>28</sup> So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the desert. <sup>29</sup> And Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me here seven altars and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams.” <sup>30</sup> And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

## Prayers of Thanksgiving

### Gospel Identity

- Take a moment to look back on your day. Where was God drawing near to you in love? Thank him.
- Thank God for forming the desire in your heart to seek him.
- Thank him for meeting you in daily prayer and speaking to you through his Word.

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)

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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).*