



Formation Devotional

July 15, 2020 Evening

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

Cling to Jesus and rest in him this evening, knowing that the Father sees you and loves you like his only Son. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure. (Psalm 16:8-9)

Opening Prayer

Almighty Father, grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 255)

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 120

Deliver Me, O LORD

A Song of Ascents.

In my distress I called to the LORD,

and he answered me.

²Deliver me, O LORD,

from lying lips,

from a deceitful tongue.

³What shall be given to you,

and what more shall be done to you,

you deceitful tongue?

⁴A warrior's sharp arrows,

with glowing coals of the broom tree!

⁵Woe to me, that I sojourn in Meshech,

that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!

⁶Too long have I had my dwelling

among those who hate peace.

⁷I am for peace,

but when I speak, they are for war!

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 24

Balaam's Third Oracle

When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. ²And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, ³and he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,

the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,^{4a}
4the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

5How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,
your encampments, O Israel!

6Like palm groves^{4a} that stretch afar,
like gardens beside a river,
like aloes that the LORD has planted,
like cedar trees beside the waters.

7Water shall flow from his buckets,
and his seed shall be in many waters;
his king shall be higher than Agag,
and his kingdom shall be exalted.

8God brings him out of Egypt
and is for him like the horns of the wild ox;
he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries,
and shall break their bones in pieces
and pierce them through with his arrows.

9He crouched, he lay down like a lion
and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?

Blessed are those who bless you,
and cursed are those who curse you.”

¹⁰And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times. ¹¹ Therefore now flee to your own place. I said, ‘I will certainly honor you,’ but the LORD has held you

back from honor.” ¹² And Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me, ¹³ ‘If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the LORD speaks, that will I speak’? ¹⁴ And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.”

Balaam's Final Oracle

¹⁵ And he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
¹⁶ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
and knows the knowledge of the Most High,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

¹⁷ I see him, but not now;

I behold him, but not near:
a star shall come out of Jacob,

and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;
it shall crush the forehead^{al} of Moab
and break down all the sons of Sheth.

¹⁸ Edom shall be dispossessed;

Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed.

Israel is doing valiantly.

¹⁹ And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion

and destroy the survivors of cities!”

²⁰ Then he looked on Amalek and took up his discourse and said,

“Amalek was the first among the nations,
but its end is utter destruction.”

²¹ And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said,

“Enduring is your dwelling place,

and your nest is set in the rock.

²² Nevertheless, Kain shall be burned

when Asshur takes you away captive.”

²³ And he took up his discourse and said,

“Alas, who shall live when God does this?

²⁴ But ships shall come from Kittim

and shall afflict Asshur and Eber;

and he too shall come to utter destruction.”

²⁵ Then Balaam rose and went back to his place. And Balak also went his way.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Church Community

- Thank God for the caring spirit displayed in the deacons at Christ Covenant Church as they come alongside congregants in times of hardship.
- Thank God for sending his church to make disciples of all nations. Thank him for the faith and courage with which Christians suffer persecution.
- Thank God for the indomitable gospel movement already on the rise. Thank him for being the author and perfecter of our faith.

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.