



Formation Devotional

March 17, 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

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us. And grant, O most merciful Father, for Jesus' sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and joyful life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Take a moment to confess your sins, knowing that he hears you, and give thanks for his assurance of pardon through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:16-18)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 109

Help Me, O LORD My God

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

Be not silent, O God of my praise!

²For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.

³They encircle me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.

⁴In return for my love they accuse me,
but I give myself to prayer.

⁵So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

⁶Appoint a wicked man against him;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.

⁷When he is tried, let him come forth guilty;
let his prayer be counted as sin!

⁸May his days be few;
may another take his office!

⁹May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow!

¹⁰May his children wander about and beg,
seeking food far from the ruins they inhabit!

¹¹May the creditor seize all that he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil!

¹²Let there be none to extend kindness to him,

nor any to pity his fatherless children!

¹³May his posterity be cut off;

may his name be blotted out in the second generation!

¹⁴May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD,

and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out!

¹⁵Let them be before the LORD continually,

that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth!

¹⁶For he did not remember to show kindness,

but pursued the poor and needy

and the brokenhearted, to put them to death.

¹⁷He loved to curse; let curses come upon him!

He did not delight in blessing; may it be far from him!

¹⁸He clothed himself with cursing as his coat;

may it soak into his body like water,

like oil into his bones!

¹⁹May it be like a garment that he wraps around him,

like a belt that he puts on every day!

²⁰May this be the reward of my accusers from the LORD,

of those who speak evil against my life!

²¹But you, O GOD my Lord,

deal on my behalf for your name's sake;

because your steadfast love is good, deliver me!

²²For I am poor and needy,

and my heart is stricken within me.

²³I am gone like a shadow at evening;

I am shaken off like a locust.

²⁴My knees are weak through fasting;

my body has become gaunt, with no fat.

²⁵I am an object of scorn to my accusers;

when they see me, they wag their heads.

²⁶Help me, O LORD my God!

Save me according to your steadfast love!

²⁷Let them know that this is your hand;

you, O LORD, have done it!

²⁸Let them curse, but you will bless!

They arise and are put to shame, but your servant will be glad!

²⁹May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;

may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak!

³⁰With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD;

I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

³¹For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,

to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.

New Testament Reading

Luke was a Gentile (non-Jewish) physician who wrote for sophisticated non-Jewish readers. He records in great detail in order that Gentile readers would understand the universal appeal of the gospel. Luke also wrote the book of Acts.

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.

Luke 11

The Lord's Prayer

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread,

⁴and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation."

⁵And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Jesus and Beelzebul

¹⁴Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. ¹⁵But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons," ¹⁶while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. ¹⁸And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁰But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; ²²but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. ²³Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Return of an Unclean Spirit

²⁴"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' ²⁵And when it comes, it finds

the house swept and put in order. ²⁶ Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

True Blessedness

²⁷ As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” ²⁸ But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

The Sign of Jonah

²⁹ When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰ For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³¹ The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. ³² The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

The Light in You

³³ “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. ³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers

³⁷ While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. ³⁸ The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. ³⁹ And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹ But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.

⁴² “But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ⁴³ Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴ Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.”

⁴⁵ One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also.” ⁴⁶ And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷ Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. ⁴⁸ So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ ⁵⁰ so that the blood of all the

prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. ⁵²Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”

⁵³As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, ⁵⁴lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

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 in the community 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.