



Formation Devotional

March 2, 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

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 261)

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 88

I Cry Out Day and Night Before You

A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. To the choirmaster: according to Mahalath Leannoth. A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD, God of my salvation,
I cry out day and night before you.

²Let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry!

³For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.

⁴I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am a man who has no strength,

⁵like one set loose among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,

like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.

⁶You have put me in the depths of the pit,
in the regions dark and deep.

⁷Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah

⁸You have caused my companions to shun me;
you have made me a horror to them.

I am shut in so that I cannot escape;

⁹my eye grows dim through sorrow.

Every day I call upon you, O LORD;
I spread out my hands to you.

¹⁰Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah

¹¹Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?

¹²Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

¹³But I, O LORD, cry to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.

¹⁴O LORD, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me?

¹⁵Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.

¹⁶Your wrath has swept over me;

your dreadful assaults destroy me.

¹⁷ They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in on me together.

¹⁸ You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me;
my companions have become darkness.

Old Testament Reading

Genesis gives the account of creation, and the reason why it is so amazing and so corrupt at the same time. The original intent of God for mankind is revealed: God creates the earth for mankind, and mankind for God. Though things go wrong in the beginning, God promises the nomad Abraham that there would be a people who would know Him and walk in His ways in the midst of a broken and rebellious world. The rest of Genesis unfolds in the way God forms this people in the ancient world.

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

Genesis 44

Joseph Tests His Brothers

Then he commanded the steward of his house, “Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, ²and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph told him.

³As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. ⁴They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, “Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.’”

⁶When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. ⁷They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! ⁸Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? ⁹Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord's servants.” ¹⁰He said, “Let it be as you say: he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent.” ¹¹Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. ¹²And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground. ¹⁵Joseph said to them, “What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination?” ¹⁶And Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we

are my lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found." ¹⁷ But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, go up in peace to your father."

¹⁸ Then Judah went up to him and said, "Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' ²⁰ And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' ²¹ Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' ²² We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ²³ Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.'

²⁴ "When we went back to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' ²⁶ we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷ Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. ²⁸ One left me, and I said, "Surely he has been torn to pieces," and I have never seen him since. ²⁹ If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.'

³⁰ "Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, ³¹ as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. ³² For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.' ³³ Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. ³⁴ For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would find my father."

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Work

- Praise God that the same resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead is living and active today even amidst difficult situations you may encounter in your day-to-day work.
- Thank God for his Holy Spirit, who guides us through our workday, remembering that we are always in his hand and ever walking in his sight.

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, and illuminate this night with your celestial brightness; that by night as by day your people may glorify your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 133)

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.