



Formation Devotional

March 23, 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

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 118

His Steadfast Love Endures Forever

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures forever!

²Let Israel say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

³Let the house of Aaron say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

⁴Let those who fear the LORD say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

⁵Out of my distress I called on the LORD;

the LORD answered me and set me free.

⁶The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.

What can man do to me?

⁷The LORD is on my side as my helper;

I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

⁸It is better to take refuge in the LORD

than to trust in man.

⁹It is better to take refuge in the LORD

than to trust in princes.

¹⁰All nations surrounded me;

in the name of the LORD I cut them off!

¹¹They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;

in the name of the LORD I cut them off!

¹²They surrounded me like bees;

they went out like a fire among thorns;

in the name of the LORD I cut them off!

¹³I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,

but the LORD helped me.

¹⁴The LORD is my strength and my song;

he has become my salvation.

¹⁵Glad songs of salvation

are in the tents of the righteous:

“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,

¹⁶ the right hand of the LORD exalts,

the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!”

¹⁷I shall not die, but I shall live,

and recount the deeds of the LORD.

¹⁸The LORD has disciplined me severely,

but he has not given me over to death.

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness,

that I may enter through them

and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰This is the gate of the LORD;

the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹I thank you that you have answered me

and have become my salvation.

²²The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone.

²³This is the LORD's doing;

it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵Save us, we pray, O LORD!

O LORD, we pray, give us success!

²⁶Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

We bless you from the house of the LORD.

²⁷The LORD is God,

and he has made his light to shine upon us.

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,

up to the horns of the altar!

²⁸You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;

you are my God; I will extol you.

²⁹Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures forever!

Old Testament Reading

Exodus tells the story of the enslavement of God's people by the Egyptians. God raises up a deliverer named Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, but the Egyptians resist, and God answers with the ten plagues. Exodus also contains the Ten Commandments and instructions for a tent where God would meet His people. This was called the tent of Moses, or the tabernacle.

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

Exodus 9

The Fifth Plague: Egyptian Livestock Die

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ²For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, ³behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. ⁴But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die.'"" ⁵And the LORD set a time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." ⁶And the next day the LORD did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. ⁷And Pharaoh sent, and

behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

⁸And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” ¹⁰So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. ¹¹And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. ¹²But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

¹³Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ¹⁴For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. ¹⁵For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. ¹⁷You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. ¹⁸Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.’” ²⁰Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, ²¹but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field.

²²Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt.” ²³Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. ²⁶Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.

²⁷Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸Plead with the LORD, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” ²⁹Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the LORD's. ³⁰But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.” ³¹(The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³²But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.) ³³So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and

stretched out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. ³⁴But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Work

- Thank God that we can come before him empty-handed and confess the futility of our efforts. Thank him that he is the one who gives us work and blesses the fruit of our labor.
- Look back over the past week and praise God for the ways you may have glimpsed tangible expressions of his glory in your daily work.

O God, the Father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice to truth; deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 816)

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.