



# Formation Devotional

March 3, 2020 Morning

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

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*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

In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly. (Psalm 5:3)

## Opening Prayer

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who care for us: Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in 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 216)

## Confession of Sin

Gracious Father, we confess that we have longed too much for the comforts and treasures of this world rather than for your enduring Kingdom. We have loved the gifts more than the Giver. In your mercy, help us to see that the things we strive for are shadows, but you are the substance; that they are quicksand, but you are a mighty rock; that they are shifting, but you are an anchor. Thank you for forgiving us through the riches of Christ and freeing us to live a new life, faithfully devoted to him. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Take a moment to confess your sins, knowing that he hears you, and respond in gratitude according to the assurance of grace.*

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:18-21)

## Praying the Psalms

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

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## Psalm 89

### I Will Sing of the Steadfast Love of the LORD

*A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.*

I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;

with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

<sup>2</sup>For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;

in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."

<sup>3</sup>You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn to David my servant:

<sup>4</sup>"I will establish your offspring forever,

and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah

<sup>5</sup>Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,

your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

<sup>6</sup>For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD?

Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD,

<sup>7</sup>a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones,

and awesome above all who are around him?

<sup>8</sup>O LORD God of hosts,

who is mighty as you are, O LORD,

with your faithfulness all around you?

<sup>9</sup>You rule the raging of the sea;

when its waves rise, you still them.

<sup>10</sup>You crushed Rahab like a carcass;

you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.

<sup>11</sup>The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours;

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the world and all that is in it, you have founded them.

<sup>12</sup>The north and the south, you have created them;

Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name.

<sup>13</sup>You have a mighty arm;

strong is your hand, high your right hand.

<sup>14</sup>Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;

steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

<sup>15</sup>Blessed are the people who know the festal shout,

who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face,

<sup>16</sup>who exult in your name all the day

and in your righteousness are exalted.

<sup>17</sup>For you are the glory of their strength;

by your favor our horn is exalted.

<sup>18</sup>For our shield belongs to the LORD,

our king to the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>19</sup>Of old you spoke in a vision to your godly one, and said:

“I have granted help to one who is mighty;

I have exalted one chosen from the people.

<sup>20</sup>I have found David, my servant;

with my holy oil I have anointed him,

<sup>21</sup>so that my hand shall be established with him;

my arm also shall strengthen him.

<sup>22</sup>The enemy shall not outwit him;

the wicked shall not humble him.

<sup>23</sup>I will crush his foes before him

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and strike down those who hate him.

<sup>24</sup>My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him,

and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

<sup>25</sup>I will set his hand on the sea

and his right hand on the rivers.

<sup>26</sup>He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father,

my God, and the Rock of my salvation.'

<sup>27</sup>And I will make him the firstborn,

the highest of the kings of the earth.

<sup>28</sup>My steadfast love I will keep for him forever,

and my covenant will stand firm for him.

<sup>29</sup>I will establish his offspring forever

and his throne as the days of the heavens.

<sup>30</sup>If his children forsake my law

and do not walk according to my rules,

<sup>31</sup>if they violate my statutes

and do not keep my commandments,

<sup>32</sup>then I will punish their transgression with the rod

and their iniquity with stripes,

<sup>33</sup>but I will not remove from him my steadfast love

or be false to my faithfulness.

<sup>34</sup>I will not violate my covenant

or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

<sup>35</sup>Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;

I will not lie to David.

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<sup>36</sup>His offspring shall endure forever,  
his throne as long as the sun before me.

<sup>37</sup>Like the moon it shall be established forever,  
a faithful witness in the skies." Selah

<sup>38</sup>But now you have cast off and rejected;  
you are full of wrath against your anointed.

<sup>39</sup>You have renounced the covenant with your servant;  
you have defiled his crown in the dust.

<sup>40</sup>You have breached all his walls;  
you have laid his strongholds in ruins.

<sup>41</sup>All who pass by plunder him;  
he has become the scorn of his neighbors.

<sup>42</sup>You have exalted the right hand of his foes;  
you have made all his enemies rejoice.

<sup>43</sup>You have also turned back the edge of his sword,  
and you have not made him stand in battle.

<sup>44</sup>You have made his splendor to cease  
and cast his throne to the ground.

<sup>45</sup>You have cut short the days of his youth;  
you have covered him with shame. Selah

<sup>46</sup>How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever?  
How long will your wrath burn like fire?

<sup>47</sup>Remember how short my time is!  
For what vanity you have created all the children of man!

<sup>48</sup>What man can live and never see death?

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Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah

<sup>49</sup>Lord, where is your steadfast love of old,

which by your faithfulness you swore to David?

<sup>50</sup>Remember, O Lord, how your servants are mocked,

and how I bear in my heart the insults of all the many nations,

<sup>51</sup>with which your enemies mock, O LORD,

with which they mock the footsteps of your anointed.

<sup>52</sup>Blessed be the LORD forever!

Amen and Amen.

## **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 1**

### **Dedication to Theophilus**

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup>just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup>it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

### **Birth of John the Baptist Foretold**

<sup>5</sup>In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup>And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup>But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup>Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup>according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup>And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup>And there

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appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup> and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

<sup>18</sup> And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” <sup>19</sup> And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. <sup>20</sup> And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” <sup>21</sup> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. <sup>22</sup> And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. <sup>23</sup> And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

<sup>24</sup> After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, <sup>25</sup> “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

### **Birth of Jesus Foretold**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

### **Mary Visits Elizabeth**

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of

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Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

### **Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat**

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

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## The Birth of John the Baptist

<sup>57</sup>Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. <sup>58</sup>And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup>And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, <sup>60</sup>but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." <sup>61</sup>And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." <sup>62</sup>And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. <sup>63</sup>And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. <sup>64</sup>And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup>And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, <sup>66</sup>and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

## Zechariah's Prophecy

<sup>67</sup>And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup>"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has visited and redeemed his people

<sup>69</sup>and has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David,

<sup>70</sup>as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

<sup>71</sup>that we should be saved from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us;

<sup>72</sup>to show the mercy promised to our fathers

and to remember his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup>the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

<sup>74</sup> that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

<sup>76</sup>And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

<sup>77</sup>to give knowledge of salvation to his people

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in the forgiveness of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup>because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
<sup>79</sup>to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

<sup>80</sup>And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

### **Gospel Identity**

- Pray that Christians at Christ Covenant would be formed more and more into Christ's image through the practices of devotion, worship, accountability, hospitality, and rest.
- Pray that God would make you ready to share the reason for your hope within with those around you.

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)

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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).*