



Formation Devotional

March 6, 2020 Evening

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

Lay your worries down to God and simply enjoy being with him. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength. (Isaiah 30:15)

Opening Prayer

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 826)

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 96

Worship in the Splendor of Holiness

Oh sing to the LORD a new song;

 sing to the LORD, all the earth!

²Sing to the LORD, bless his name;

 tell of his salvation from day to day.

³Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!

⁴For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.

⁶Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

⁸Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!

⁹Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!

¹⁰Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."

¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
¹² let the field exult, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

¹³ before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

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 48

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

After this, Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ²And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you." Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. ³And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.' ⁵And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. ⁶And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

⁸When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them."

¹⁰Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." ¹²Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). ¹⁵And he blessed Joseph and said,

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,

the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day,

¹⁶the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys;

and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;

and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

¹⁷When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸And Joseph said to his father, “Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.” ¹⁹But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations.” ²⁰So he blessed them that day, saying,

“By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying,

‘God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.’”

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²²Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow.”

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Neighborhood

- Thank God that he hears the cries of the oppressed and upholds the cause of the weak and fatherless, the afflicted and destitute.
- Praise God for his mercy on us who once were also without hope. Thank him for bringing us out of our spiritual poverty.
- Thank God for the gospel of Jesus Christ that gives us hope and even joy in the midst of our suffering and patience to endure it well.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 69)

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

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.