



Formation Devotional

May 13, 2020 Morning

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

Enter into this time expectantly, knowing that God delights to reveal himself to you. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. (Psalm 59:16)

Opening Prayer

O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 206)

Confession of Sin

Our gracious Father, you sent your Son to die and rise to new life in order that death might be brought to an end and that we too might live a new life. Yet foolishly, we have chosen death over life. In our thoughts, words and deeds we have rebelled against you and your intentions for us. In so doing, we have broken our fellowship with you whose love is better than life and whom to know is life itself. We have hurt others, sometimes unintentionally and sometimes deliberately, and have diminished their lives. In so doing, we have damaged ourselves who have been created to reflect your beauty. Father, forgive us our sin for Jesus' sake. And grant that your resurrection power might course through our entire being so that we walk in the ways of love and justice 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.

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Romans 3:21-24)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 35

Great Is the LORD

Of David.

Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me;

fight against those who fight against me!

²Take hold of shield and buckler

and rise for my help!

³Draw the spear and javelin

against my pursuers!

Say to my soul,

“I am your salvation!”

⁴Let them be put to shame and dishonor

who seek after my life!

Let them be turned back and disappointed

who devise evil against me!

⁵Let them be like chaff before the wind,

with the angel of the LORD driving them away!

⁶Let their way be dark and slippery,

with the angel of the LORD pursuing them!

⁷For without cause they hid their net for me;

without cause they dug a pit for my life.

⁸Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it!

And let the net that he hid ensnare him;

let him fall into it—to his destruction!

⁹Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD,
exulting in his salvation.

¹⁰All my bones shall say,
“O LORD, who is like you,
delivering the poor
from him who is too strong for him,
the poor and needy from him who robs him?”

¹¹Malicious witnesses rise up;
they ask me of things that I do not know.

¹²They repay me evil for good;
my soul is bereft.

¹³But I, when they were sick—
I wore sackcloth;
I afflicted myself with fasting;

I prayed with head bowed on my chest.

¹⁴ I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother;
as one who laments his mother,
I bowed down in mourning.

¹⁵But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered;
they gathered together against me;
wretches whom I did not know
tore at me without ceasing;

¹⁶like profane mockers at a feast,
they gnash at me with their teeth.

¹⁷How long, O Lord, will you look on?
Rescue me from their destruction,
my precious life from the lions!

¹⁸I will thank you in the great congregation;
in the mighty throng I will praise you.

¹⁹Let not those rejoice over me
who are wrongfully my foes,
and let not those wink the eye
who hate me without cause.

²⁰For they do not speak peace,
but against those who are quiet in the land
they devise words of deceit.

²¹They open wide their mouths against me;
they say, "Aha, Aha!
Our eyes have seen it!"

²²You have seen, O LORD; be not silent!
O Lord, be not far from me!

²³Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication,
for my cause, my God and my Lord!

²⁴Vindicate me, O LORD, my God,
according to your righteousness,
and let them not rejoice over me!

²⁵Let them not say in their hearts,
"Aha, our heart's desire!"
Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."

²⁶Let them be put to shame and disappointed altogether

who rejoice at my calamity!

Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor

who magnify themselves against me!

²⁷Let those who delight in my righteousness

shout for joy and be glad

and say evermore,

“Great is the LORD,

who delights in the welfare of his servant!”

²⁸Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness

and of your praise all the day long.

New Testament Reading

Acts, as it is commonly called, is a second volume of the Gospel of Luke. Both were likely written by Luke, an early Christian who traveled with the apostle Paul. Luke was probably a physician or doctor and was also a Gentile, or non-Jewish Christian. The gospel of Luke functions as the first volume of the set, detailing the story of Jesus, while Acts functions as a second volume, telling the stories of the apostles, or messengers, of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Scholars believe both volumes were written about 50 or more years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

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.

Acts 8

Saul Ravages the Church

And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ²Devout men buried

Stephen and made great lamentation over him. ³But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Philip Proclaims Christ in Samaria

⁴Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. ⁵Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. ⁶And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. ⁷For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸So there was much joy in that city.

Simon the Magician Believes

⁹But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. ¹⁰They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." ¹¹And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. ¹²But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

¹⁴Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²²Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." ²⁴And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

²⁵Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are

reading?" ³¹And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Prayers of Intercession

Church Community

- Pray for Christ Covenant's youth and children's ministry leaders: for joy, compassion, and energy as they serve the church and the city.
- Pray for the global church, especially in Latin America. Praise God for how the church has continued to grow and flourish in many Latin American nations. Pray for the challenges that mark parts of the region: drug-related violence, oppressive governments, racial tensions.
- Pray also for Christians in North America: for unity that transcends ethnicity, college ministries to reach international students and those falling away from faith, and boldness against spiritual complacency.

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.