



Formation Devotional

May 15, 2020 Morning

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

Remind yourself that this morning marks another day to enjoy and glorify God. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. (Psalm 143:8)

Opening Prayer

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 815)

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 39

What Is the Measure of My Days?

To the choirmaster: to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

I said, "I will guard my ways,

that I may not sin with my tongue;

I will guard my mouth with a muzzle,

so long as the wicked are in my presence."

²I was mute and silent;

I held my peace to no avail,

and my distress grew worse.

³ My heart became hot within me.

As I mused, the fire burned;

then I spoke with my tongue:

⁴"O LORD, make me know my end

and what is the measure of my days;

let me know how fleeting I am!

⁵Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths,

and my lifetime is as nothing before you.

Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Selah

⁶ Surely a man goes about as a shadow!

Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;

man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!

⁷"And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?"

My hope is in you.

⁸Deliver me from all my transgressions.

Do not make me the scorn of the fool!

⁹I am mute; I do not open my mouth,

for it is you who have done it.

¹⁰Remove your stroke from me;

I am spent by the hostility of your hand.

¹¹When you discipline a man

with rebukes for sin,

you consume like a moth what is dear to him;

surely all mankind is a mere breath! Selah

¹²“Hear my prayer, O LORD,

and give ear to my cry;

hold not your peace at my tears!

For I am a sojourner with you,

a guest, like all my fathers.

¹³Look away from me, that I may smile again,

before I depart and am no more!”

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 10

Peter and Cornelius

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ² a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." ⁴ And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵ And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, ⁸ and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

⁹ The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰ And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³ And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." ¹⁵ And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate ¹⁸ and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. ¹⁹ And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." ²¹ And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" ²² And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." ²³ So he invited them in to be his guests.

The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴ And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. ²⁸ And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me."

³⁰ And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been

heard and your alms have been remembered before God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' ³³So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Prayers of Intercession

Neighborhood

- Pray that the gospel would be experienced as good news to the poor and marginalized of Columbia.
- Pray for all the men, women, and children who have no place to call home. Pray they find shelter and access to adequate food and health care.
- Pray for those recovering from various addictions: that they would experience freedom and liberation from such debilitating diseases as alcoholism and drug addiction, and that they would find ultimate satisfaction in Christ.
- Pray for the leaders of our city to pursue justice especially for the most vulnerable of our city.

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.