



Formation Devotional

May 20, 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

Eternal God, in every age you have raised up men and women to live and die in faith. Forgive our indifference to your will. You have commanded us to speak, but we have been silent. You have called us to do what is just, but we have been idle. You have called us to live faithfully, but we have been afraid. Have mercy on us and forgive us. Keep before us faithful people to follow so that living with courage and love, we may work for and inherit the kingdom promised in Jesus Christ. 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.

“Yet we know a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 45

Your Throne, O God, Is Forever

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song.

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;

I address my verses to the king;

my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

²You are the most handsome of the sons of men;

grace is poured upon your lips;

therefore God has blessed you forever.

³Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,

in your splendor and majesty!

⁴In your majesty ride out victoriously

for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;

let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!

⁵Your arrows are sharp

in the heart of the king's enemies;

the peoples fall under you.

⁶Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;

⁷ you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you

with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;

⁸ your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;

⁹ daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;

at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

¹⁰Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:

forget your people and your father's house,

¹¹ and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him.

¹² The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,

the richest of the people.

¹³All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

¹⁴ In many-colored robes she is led to the king,

with her virgin companions following behind her.

¹⁵With joy and gladness they are led along

as they enter the palace of the king.

¹⁶In place of your fathers shall be your sons;

you will make them princes in all the earth.

¹⁷I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;

therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

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 13

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Barnabas and Saul on Cyprus

⁴So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. ⁶When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. ⁷He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? ¹¹And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹²Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia

¹³Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, ¹⁴but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it." ¹⁶So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

"Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. ²⁰All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' ²³Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶“Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. ²⁷For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead, ³¹and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. ³²And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,

“You are my Son,

today I have begotten you.’

³⁴And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

³⁵Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

³⁶For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. ³⁸Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

⁴¹“Look, you scoffers,

be astounded and perish;

for I am doing a work in your days,

a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.”

⁴²As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. ⁴³And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

“I have made you a light for the Gentiles,

that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

⁴⁸And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

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.
- 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.