



Formation Devotional

May 27, 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.

Call to Prayer

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

Opening Prayer

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen. (BCP 816)

Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us. And grant, O most merciful Father, for Jesus' sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and joyful life, 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.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:8-12)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 55

Cast Your Burden on the LORD

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!

²Attend to me, and answer me;
I am restless in my complaint and I moan,
³because of the noise of the enemy,
because of the oppression of the wicked.

For they drop trouble upon me,
and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

⁴My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.

⁵Fear and trembling come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me.

⁶And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
⁷yes, I would wander far away;
I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah
⁸I would hurry to find a shelter
from the raging wind and tempest."

⁹Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues;
for I see violence and strife in the city.

¹⁰Day and night they go around it
on its walls,

and iniquity and trouble are within it;

¹¹ ruin is in its midst;

oppression and fraud

do not depart from its marketplace.

¹² For it is not an enemy who taunts me—

then I could bear it;

it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—

then I could hide from him.

¹³ But it is you, a man, my equal,

my companion, my familiar friend.

¹⁴ We used to take sweet counsel together;

within God's house we walked in the throng.

¹⁵ Let death steal over them;

let them go down to Sheol alive;

for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.

¹⁶ But I call to God,

and the LORD will save me.

¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon

I utter my complaint and moan,

and he hears my voice.

¹⁸ He redeems my soul in safety

from the battle that I wage,

for many are arrayed against me.

¹⁹ God will give ear and humble them,

he who is enthroned from of old, Selah

because they do not change

and do not fear God.

²⁰My companion stretched out his hand against his friends;

he violated his covenant.

²¹His speech was smooth as butter,

yet war was in his heart;

his words were softer than oil,

yet they were drawn swords.

²²Cast your burden on the LORD,

and he will sustain you;

he will never permit

the righteous to be moved.

²³But you, O God, will cast them down

into the pit of destruction;

men of blood and treachery

shall not live out half their days.

But I will trust in you.

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 18

Paul in Corinth

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them,³ and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.⁶ And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”⁷ And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue.⁸ Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.⁹ And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent,¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”¹¹ And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¹² But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal,¹³ saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.”¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint.¹⁵ But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.”¹⁶ And he drove them from the tribunal.¹⁷ And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

Paul Returns to Antioch

¹⁸ After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.¹⁹ And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined.²¹ But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus.

²² When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.²³ After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Apollos Speaks Boldly in Ephesus

²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in

spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Prayers of Intercession

Church Community

- Pray for Christ Covenant's elders: for wisdom, humility, and courage as they serve the church and community.
- Pray that those who attend Sundays at Christ Covenant would find their way to a Growth Group so they would grow as disciples of Jesus by cultivating a relationship with God and friendship with others.
- Pray for the global church, especially in Europe. Praise God for the ongoing faithful witness of many historic churches. Pray for the challenges that mark parts of the region: pervasive secularism, indifference toward Christianity, the challenges of pluralism and immigrant minorities.
- Pray for church planters in our community: for provision of resources, vision for their ministries, and open doors to serve their communities.

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.