



Formation Devotional

May 4, 2020 Morning

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

As you enter into his presence this morning, remember that God is with you and for you, because he loves you. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. (Psalm 65:8)

Opening Prayer

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 259)

Confession of Sin

God of love, it is your will that we should love you with heart, soul, mind, strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, but we are not sufficient for these things. We confess that our affections continually turn away from you: from purity to lust, from freedom to slavery, from compassion to indifference, from fullness to emptiness. Have mercy on us. Order our lives by your holy Word and make your commandments the joy of our hearts. Conform us to the image of your loving Son, Jesus, so that we may shine before the world to your glory. 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.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." (John 3:16-18)

Praying the Psalms

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

Psalm 21

The King Rejoices in the LORD's Strength

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices,

and in your salvation how greatly he exults!

²You have given him his heart's desire

and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah

³For you meet him with rich blessings;

you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

⁴He asked life of you; you gave it to him,

length of days forever and ever.

⁵His glory is great through your salvation;

splendor and majesty you bestow on him.

⁶For you make him most blessed forever;

you make him glad with the joy of your presence.

⁷For the king trusts in the LORD,

and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

⁸Your hand will find out all your enemies;

your right hand will find out those who hate you.

⁹You will make them as a blazing oven

when you appear.

The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,

and fire will consume them.

¹⁰You will destroy their descendants from the earth,

and their offspring from among the children of man.

¹¹ Though they plan evil against you,
though they devise mischief, they will not succeed.

¹² For you will put them to flight;
you will aim at their faces with your bows.

¹³ Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength!
We will sing and praise your power.

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. From 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 1

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ¹until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ²He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The Ascension

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white

robes, ¹¹and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰“For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“‘May his camp become desolate,

and let there be no one to dwell in it’;

and

“‘Let another take his office.’”

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Prayers of Intercession

Calling

- Confess the ways you rely too much on your own wisdom and experience to discern your vocational purpose, rather than looking to God to define your identity and guide your daily work toward his glory.
- Pray for a growing awareness of the Spirit’s wisdom for your daily callings, that you might actively depend on God to navigate today’s challenges.

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.