



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**28**

**DAYS OF PRAYER**

GOD ENCOUNTERS

Reflections on encountering God  
by the Pastors of Penticton

# Introduction

*“Prayer is awe, intimacy, struggle—yet the way to reality. There is nothing more important, or harder, or richer, or more life-altering. There is absolutely nothing so great as prayer.” ~Tim Keller*

Thank you for participating in the 28 Days of Prayer. It is hard to think of a better way to practice unity in the church than to spend a month in prayer together.

Prayer humbles us before the only person in the universe with the wisdom and resources to help us in our times of need. It is an action signifying our acceptance of the fact that we are wholly dependant on God for everything. As the quote above says, there’s nothing more important, or harder, or richer, or more life-altering or greater than prayer.

The Penticton Ministerial Association has put this book together to help our churches grow and be strengthened in prayer and in unity. As we do this together over the next 28 days, we will not only deepen our communion with God individually, but we will also grow in our unity as the city-wide body of Christ. Be sure to encourage others in your church to participate, and spur them on along the way, as sometimes it’s easy to lose steam part way through.

God will certainly bless us during this time, and the fruit of these prayers will carry us far beyond these 28 days.

In Christ,

The Pastors of the Penticton Ministerial Association

# Using this book

This book was designed to be a devotional guide for the 28 days of February. It can be used to facilitate your daily devotions in as little as 5-10 minutes.

The theme of this book is **"God Encounters."** We have selected 28 passages of scripture where regular people like us had a life-changing encounter with the living God. Hopefully, as you engage with the text each day, you too will experience God's presence and transformational power in your life.

The themes are broken up into daily devotionals with three elements to interact with:

1. **Bible Reading:** Under the date on each page you will see a scripture reference. Start your time by reading this passage. It serves as the starting point for the devotional thoughts.
2. **Devotional thoughts:** Each day has a short devotional thought to read and reflect on. Each devotional was contributed by a Pastor representing one of the churches of Penticton. You'll see their name and picture in the top right corner of the page.
3. **Prayer Focus:** The 28 Days of Prayer is our opportunity to be praying in unity. Each day has a prayer focus related to the ministry of the contributor of the devotional. What a great opportunity we have to pray for the various churches and ministries represented throughout our city! They are just suggestions to get you started, so pray as the Spirit leads.

## February 1

### Genesis 12:1-9

When we read Genesis 12, the thrill we get from hearing about someone newly converted to Christ stirs within us. It is a familiar passage where we see God act and people (Abram and Sarai) simply respond with real and practical faith. Not just a cognitive recognition of the truth, but a pedestrian faith, taking real steps away from the safety and comforts of home, family, and employment - their faith demonstrated their "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen", that is part of every road trip with God.



**Curtis Collins**  
*Cheers the Church*

Abram's journey with God might seem like a calling that differs greatly from ours - but it is the same God who is calling, leading, empowering, and equipping us for the work of ministry. We too have a part to play in God blessing "all the families of the earth". And, like Abram, when God says to us, or Jesus to His disciples, "Go", it really means "Come with me", for "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20).

God expected Abram and Sarai to pack up all their things and to be lead away down an unknown road - together with God. They learned on the road to be available, humble, and flexible and the wonderful satisfaction of encountering God: "Then the Lord appeared to Abram". Abram, like Moses, saw the glory of God in the context of true friendship, that happens while on the road, and it is while walking with God that he enjoys the ultimate compliment - to be known as the friend of God (James 2:23). Pray and ask God for a life more like Abram's.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- For a life more like Abram's - for boldness to go with God where he calls.

### **For Cheers the Church**

- For a greater ability to partner with other churches to support the needs we can not address by ourselves.
- To develop a stronger disciple-making church culture
- For equipping and every-member ministry

## February 2

### Genesis 18:16-33

Here we find Abraham having had lunch with God and two other heavenly visitors at his tent near the great trees of Mamre. The other visitors have headed towards Sodom and Abraham is alone with God. Does it seem strange that God would have lunch with His people? In the same way today, Jesus knocks at our heart's door, offering to come in and eat with us (Rev 3: 20).



**Tim Leslie**  
*Salvation Army*

The after dinner conversation is serious. Because of the immensity of Abraham's calling, the Lord shares with him His plans for the destruction of Sodom and Gamorah. The outcry against these cities has been great and a further read into Genesis 18 will give us some insight into the violence and immorality that characterized local society there.

Abraham begins to bargain with God: What if there were 50 righteous? Would you turn from your anger? 45? 40...? The divine guest leaves the scene and Abraham is left with his concerns for his precious nephew, Lot who made the journey of faith with him out of Ur of the Chaldees into Canaan; with whom he had fought battles and built fortunes; surely God would spare his life.

What Abraham did not know was that while he bargained with God, his two other visitors were already in Sodom warning Lot of the wrath to come and urging him to leave the city.

The Lord loves to answer our prayers. Isaiah 65:24 declares: "before they call I will answer and while they are yet speaking I will hear." God hears even the unutterable cries of our hearts and responds in love.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Pray for God to save those who are rebelling against him.

#### **For Salvation Army:**

- For the homeless in our city.
- For Compass House as we prepare to move into another facility.

## **February 3**

### **Genesis 32:22-32**

“He started it, no, he started it” was usually the way things went down growing up. The blame game was often used to rid myself of being the guilty party. When we come to the story in Genesis 32:22-32 an important detail is, who started it? To our surprise it is not Jacob, but God, who started the wrestling match.



**Clark Taylor**  
*First Baptist*

Wrestling was always frowned upon in our house growing up. Even in the era of WWF (World Wrestling Federation). Jacob’s wrestling was a physical and spiritual battle that he had waged since before birth. Esau was his older brother by a few seconds, he automatically received the blessing as the firstborn male and his father’s inheritance. Jacob set out to steal this blessing, lie to his father, and betray his family. All this to be blessed by his father and God.

Fast forward twenty years, Jacob is still wanting God’s blessing. God has called Jacob back to Canaan. This return would mean that Jacob would need to face Esau. God wrestles with Jacob through the night hoping Jacob would surrender. Jacob did not surrender until God touched his hip and made him unable to wrestle. Then and only then did Jacob surrender to his opponent and realize that he would be blessed when he stops controlling others and surrender to his brother, family, and most importantly to his God.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Pray that God will help us see when to stop struggling and surrender to him.

#### **For First Baptist:**

- Pray for continued cooperation between churches in Penticton in 2018.
- Pray for First Baptist Church as we embrace a new leadership model and renewed vision.



## February 4

### Exodus 3:1-22

This is a powerful moment in the history of God's interactions with humanity. God reveals himself to Moses and calls him into his role as deliverer and leader of Israel.



**Dave Funk**  
Bethel Church

Moses understandably questions God by asking "who am I?" He can't understand why God would choose someone who had already tried to save his people, but failed miserably (Exodus 2:11-14). But God doesn't try to convince Moses that he's qualified, he merely promises to be with Moses. This time Moses would have the wisdom and strength of God.

Our personal calling is not based on our own qualifications. It has been said, *God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called.* We can be confident that he give us what we need to accomplish his purposes in our lives.

The second question Moses has for God is, "who are you?" God then reveals himself in a very special way: "I am who I am" (v. 14). This phrase is where the Israelites got the name "Yahweh". It's hard to fully convey what this name means: God is what he is. He is everything we need. He has no beginning or end. He has no rivals. He has no needs. He is in charge of everything. Everything in the universe finds its meaning in him. THIS is the God who is sending Moses to deliver his people.

This is the God who is still present with us, empowering us to accomplish his purposes. This is the God who still wants to reveal himself to the world today. Will we trust in him and do what he's called us to do?

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For an understanding of who God is
- For deliverance for people in our city who are enslaved to sin and death

#### **For Bethel Church**

- For our leaders and their families
- To grow in health and effectiveness in ministry

## February 5

### Exodus 33:12-23

Have you ever watched kids in the playground? They never get tired of the swings, the slides, the monkey bars, the teeter-totter. They always want more. They're never satisfied.



**Laurence Johnston**  
*Penticton Alliance*

Similarly, as it came to experiencing God, Moses was never satisfied either. The burning bush. The ten plagues. The Red Sea crossing. Manna in the morning. Water from the rock. Mount Sinai shaking. And, if that wasn't enough, just prior to this story, the Bible says that God met with Moses and would speak to him "as a man speaks with a friend" (Exodus 33:11 NIV). Yet, Moses wanted more! To see more of God's glory.

Are you like Moses? Do you want more of God? To know Him in a deeper way? To see more and more of Him reflected in you all the time? If you do, then the place to start... and to finish... is with Jesus, the Rock.

You see, just like Moses encountered God yet again on that rock and was protected from the fullness of God's glory by that same rock, we too can be intimately close to God today and experience the fullness of His glory one day because of Jesus' (the rock's) sacrifice for us all. Because of Him, we too can be friends with God (see Romans 5).

Do you want more of God? To know Him in a deeper way? Accept His grace, if you haven't already. Then, take Jesus' words to heart: "Come to Me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life...Walk with Me and work with Me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace" (Matthew 11:28-30, MSG).

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- The churches of penticton would want to know God in a deeper way.

#### **For Penticton Alliance Church:**

- To reflect more and more of God's glory to His world as He reveals more and more of it to us.

## **February 6**

### **Joshua 5:13-6:7**

For those of us who grew up in a church-going family, the Battle of Jericho is a familiar story, reinforced in our memories with Sunday School songs, flannel-graphs and even a Veggie Tales version we watched with our kids. But before the Israelite army marched or the walls fell, Joshua is met with a celestial, sword-wielding being.



**George Clarke**  
*Penticton Alliance*

When Joshua finds himself standing before the commander of the army of the Lord, he says, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" I think Joshua instinctively knew that the one who had this awesome individual as an ally was automatically the one on the winning side. Just as the commander of the Lord's army had not shown up to carry out the plans of either Israel's or Jericho's armies, God's answer to our prayers will not be centred on fulfilling the answer that we were hoping for, or even someone else's wishes; His answers will result in Him being glorified and praised. Joshua could have laid out all his military strategies for the destruction of Jericho before the heavenly commander and asked him to bless them, but he didn't. Instead, he fell before the Lord in submission and reverence, and asked for a message from the Lord.

What things might God speak to us if we came before him, not with our grocery list of requests and suggestions for His will, but with the posture of Joshua, in expectant, reverential humility asking, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Ask God "what message do you have for me today?"

#### **For Penticton Alliance Church:**

- That our youth would continue to forsake worldly values and instead find their identity in Christ.
- That we as leaders will effectively teach our youth how to maintain healthy relationships with both God and people.
- That we would have God encounters on our youth nights.

## February 7

### 1 Kings 19:9-18

Elijah is scared, depressed, and worn out! Prior to this, he has been powerfully used by God, resulting in Queen Jezebel threatening his life. Hers is no empty threat. She has already killed numerous other prophets of God. Somehow this threat gets under Elijah's skin.



**Hart Loewen**  
*Penticton Vineyard*

After 40 days of running, Elijah finally arrives at the mountain of God, only to have God ask him what he's doing there. He pours out his complaints to God, hoping God will answer with further powerful executions of judgment, as he saw God do most recently. Instead, God answers with a quiet voice, giving him detailed instructions for the next steps of his mission.

What a great example of God's mercy and understanding in the middle of those times when we're discouraged and worn out. God doesn't disqualify Elijah for running away (40 days of it) but quietly recommissions him, and assures him that he still has seven thousand other devoted followers in Israel, contrary to Elijah's belief that he's the last one standing.

Interesting that God spoke in the "gentle whisper". In the last while I've been challenged afresh with taking time to just be silent before God. It is in those times of silence, and times of just meditating on his Word, that God has spoken most powerfully – further instructions, words of encouragement, affirmation. As with Elijah, I'm amazed at his patience.

God still speaks today – usually with that quiet voice! Let's have ears to hear how he speaks, directs, affirms – just like he did with Elijah.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For ears to hear that gentle whisper of God.

#### **For Penticton Vineyard Church:**

- The privilege of seeing more and more people come to faith in Jesus, and become true disciples of him.
- For wisdom and direction for the leadership and staff of our church to lead effectively towards fulfilling God's mandate for us.

## February 8

### Isaiah 6:1-13

Fear. Why is it that when Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord, he was filled with fear? Why did Peter fall at Jesus' feet and cry out "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"? Why did John fall like a "dead" man at his vision of Jesus? When all three men encountered God, they were filled with fear. Why is that?



**Joe Bott**

*Bethel Church*

God's presence strips back our false righteousness and moral security. We are exposed. In that moment we, like Isaiah, realize that we are "ruined". God points his finger at our secret sins and greatest insecurities. It's uncomfortable—painful even—but it isn't an accusing finger. He reaches down and touches our hearts where we are most vulnerable and loves us. He heals and renews.

In Isaiah's story, the Seraphim takes a coal from the altar, (a symbol of purity), and touches Isaiah's greatest insecurity and heals it. Before we can get to a place of healing, we must first realize that there is an uncomfortable "dying", a vulnerability to encountering God. The good news is that it is our old-self that is "dying". God is making us into something beautiful. Dying gives way to life. Fear gives way to love.

So today, when you spend time in his presence, allow God to put his finger on the most vulnerable part of your heart. There is no need to fear, for; "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18).

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For God to touch your heart and drive out fear.

#### **For Bethel Church:**

- Pray for the youth of Penticton. That they would find new life in Jesus.
- Pray for Bethel Church's Next Gen. volunteers.

## **February 9**

### **Ezekiel 1:1-28**

Ezekiel was a priest in Jerusalem when the Babylonians attacked the city and took many captives, including him, into exile. About five years later, still in Babylon, he was sitting down by the riverbank when suddenly God's Spirit showed up and he had this magnificent vision.



**Blake Wagner**  
*Grace MB Church*

Visions like this you are unlikely to ever forget. The heavens opened and the Glory of God appeared! It was an awesome God moment!

Ezekiel goes into great detail trying to describe the elements of what he saw. Four weird looking creatures carrying a throne with someone glowing on it would not suffice as a description. It was far too awesome! Its lasting impact cemented the message that God wanted this priest to deliver.

What on earth can we take away from this magnificent scene? Pushing aside the technical details for a moment, as awesome as they may be, one notices that this God moment happened when Ezekiel took time alone to pray. In fact, had he allowed being in captivity to overwhelm and paralyze him, he may have missed what God wanted to speak through him. But by a riverbank, a message of repentance from sin and idolatry and the promise and hope for the nation was impressed upon Ezekiel's heart.

Sometimes the simplest disciplines can get pushed aside by the busyness of our lives or our sin or circumstances. Yet taking time alone to pray and commune with our Lord may give us a glimpse of His Glory. Is there a spot in this beautiful valley we live in waiting for you today? What's the Lord showing you?

### **Prayer Focus:**

- For a glimpse of God's glory

### **For Grace MB Church:**

- Pastoral transition this year. Guidance for Blake and Lynda.
- Pray for God's Kitchen and the many great volunteers who bring good news to those who come in need of it.

## February 10

### Daniel 3:1-30

Attempting to relate to what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went through standing up to the ungodly king is virtually impossible. Our 21st century Western culture has almost no scenario that depicts the social structure, demands and ultimate sentencing of a ruthless king, nonetheless, life will throw 'fiery furnaces' at us and our faith and our trust in God will be tried.



**Greg Hamm**

*Penticton Vineyard*

When my wife called me at work one Friday morning four years ago to tell me of our second miscarriage in our struggle to have a family, the flames from that furnace seemed to be "heated seven times hotter". Often people have this idea that having faith in God means that they will live a relaxed, trouble-free life, and when this doesn't happen their faith is shattered. Exercising our faith in God can take us to the place where He can encounter us. Right after my wife told me the news I knew I had a choice: I could be mad, blame God and harden my heart, or I could trust Him and embrace who He is. So as I stood in that furnace, with my wife on the phone, I opened to the book of Psalms and encountered again the God who embraces me in the fire.

Our faith cannot be based on what God can do for us, but must be based rather on who God is. Regardless of which furnace we find ourselves in, real faith is believing God can intervene, expecting that He will, and trusting Him even when it seems like He doesn't.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For increased faith in God, regardless of which "furnace" we find ourselves in.

#### **For Penticton Vineyard Church:**

- Gods kingdom to be expanded in our schools and city. For the youth to be bold in their love for Jesus and to step out in sharing their faith.

## February 11

### Daniel 4:28-37

Two strong willed people stood arguing their opinions. Both were confident they were right, and the other was wrong. By this point it really didn't matter and as time passed who would remember. With the relationship broken, both were too proud to admit they were wrong; a scene too often repeated.



**Neil Allenbrand**

*Church of the Nazarene*

Pride is one of the biggest barriers to good relationships. Pride can hinder us from seeing ourselves as we really are and our need for God. Scripture gives evidence that God sees pride as a barrier in our relationship with Him (James 4:6; 1 John 2:16). That was definitely the case for Nebuchadnezzar who we read about in our passage today. As he looks around his palace, he becomes filled with self-importance, bragging about his power and what he had accomplished. Nebuchadnezzar seems to think like a 'self-made man' capable of god like abilities.

God graciously encounters Nebuchadnezzar. The long process God led him through seemed harsh, but God alone knows how to set one free of pride's enslavement. Once humbled, Nebuchadnezzar began to see and relate to God the way he needed to. Before, he looked at and relied on his own abilities, but now he looked to God and acknowledged Him and His ways. He got his eyes off himself and onto God. Nebuchadnezzar's words and actions are amazingly different; you can almost feel the change in him and his relationship with God.

Don't let pride rob you of your relationships, especially your relationship with God. Remember to: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." (James 4:10 NKJV)

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For strong relationships free from selfish pride

#### **For the Church of the Nazarene:**

- That God would guide and empower our leaders to the task he has for us this year.
- That God would work through us to reach our community for Christ.



## **February 12**

### **Matthew 8:5-13**

Centurions were tough soldiers from the occupying army, but this one had a tender heart for his servant who was paralyzed and afflicted. He had only heard of Jesus' works of mercy, but for him that was enough to believe – Jesus can intervene. He sent a delegation to ask Jesus for healing. Local Jewish leaders agreed to repay him for his favour, telling Jesus: 'he is worthy because he built us a synagogue and loves our nation.'



**Karel Samek**

*Penticton Adventist Church*

Jesus agreed to come. As he starts, the centurion learns this and quickly sends (likely) a soldier with a message: 'I am not worthy to have you even come into my house or you talk to me. But speak the word only and my servant will be healed.' 'You see I have authority over my soldiers and when I give commands they immediately obey. You Jesus must have much greater authority, so just speak and my servant will be healed.' That simple!

No need of touch, no show, no need to come – Your word has power. Jesus marvels at his faith, comparing it with the Jews unbelief who have had so many proofs.

Jesus is no respecter of persons. Today, anyone sensing their unworthiness, believing in His grace and love, knowing theirs (or someone else's) need, can claim and believe in the power of His word. In the Old Testament, "He sent His word and healed them" (Psalm 107:20). The same compassionate Jesus waits for our prayers of faith to heal our hearts and lives by His word.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For the power of Jesus' word to bring healing to your places of pain.

#### **For the Penticton Adventist Church:**

- For effective ministry to their congregation and the community.

## **February 13**

### **Matthew 17:1-13**

This passage is often called “The Transfiguration.” A more easily understood translation for the word transfigure, is transformed. Jesus blesses his closest three disciples with an intimate experience of seeing him transformed into his unveiled glory. Moses and Elijah are there as representatives of the Law and the Prophets and to highlight that Jesus’ ultimate path to the Cross is fast approaching.



**Adrian Bonin**  
*Church of the Nazarene*

The three disciples are overcome with fear and awe at the pure power of God revealed to them. As we spend time with Jesus through worship, prayer, reading the Word, and soaking in his glorious presence we cannot help but to be transformed into his likeness. Intimacy with Jesus transforms us from the inside out until we are radiant reflections of him.

Sometimes, like the disciples, God gives us a glimpse of his glory and majesty in the midst of our bleak world. This allows us to persevere through the hardships and trials of life. We must maintain a vision of our King’s glorious identity and power and to respond to him in obedience as the Father commands. If we are to be like Jesus, then we must look and act like Jesus, no matter what trials or suffering we face.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For greater intimacy with Jesus, so we can become more like him.

#### **For the Church of the Nazarene:**

- God would guide our church in the coming season as we pursue his unique calling for us.
- God could help us to be a people that are focused on him and making an eternal impact on our city.
- God would help us to pass on our faith to the next generation in a relevant and impactful way.

## February 14

### Luke 8:26-39

An encounter with Jesus can sometimes involve fear. In this passage, a demon-possessed man came to Jesus, shrieking and questioning what God wanted from him. It was not the wild man himself speaking but his demon whose name was Legion. A Roman legion was comprised of 6000 soldiers. You can imagine then how this man could break shackles off, refuse clothing and why he dwelled in the lonely tombs.



**Miriam Leslie**  
*Salvation Army*

Legion recognized Jesus' authority immediately, requesting to be cast into the herd of swine. As the pigs ran into the sea and drowned, the herdsman's hearts must have failed for fear. Their encounter with Jesus was powerful but in a way that shook them to the core. With their livelihood gone, they begged Jesus to leave and yet they also left to tell their neighbours what had transpired.

The man, now truly free from spiritually binding shackles, was cleansed, delivered, whole and literally in his right mind. The Bible doesn't describe how he rebuilt his life, finding a home, employment and clothing; however, Jesus rebuilt his life, appointing him to go home and tell his story to everyone he met there. He had asked to travel with His Lord but God's plan was even bigger. Everyone knew how he had lived before his encounter with Jesus and now everyone would know him in his freedom.

We have a ministry at The Salvation Army called Celebrate Recovery. It is a support group for "healing from life's hurts, habits and hang-ups" (John Baker). Members come from various backgrounds: substance abuse, mental illness, food addictions and simply struggling with life. Please pray that our friends will have a powerful encounter with Jesus who will set them free from shackles and release them to proclaim His great news!

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For freedom from demonic forces, and "shackles" that bind people.

#### **For Salvation Army:**

- For Celebrate Recovery to be an effective ministry.

## February 15

### Luke 8:22-25

In their weakness the disciples asked the most important question any person could ever ask since the foundation of the world, "Who is this?" The answer one gives to this question concerning Jesus is in direct correlation to the answer of the question Jesus asked before, "Where is your faith?" Our honest answer to who Jesus is to us directly correlates to the size of our faith.



**Jordan Knorr**

*True North*

We know in scripture that faith is the assurance of things not seen (Heb. 11:1 KJV) so our faith grows when we not only believe in God, but we believe God. We take Him at His word with confidence that what He says will and does always come to pass. In order to do this we must fervently and prayerfully study and meditate on His word, study who He is: His unchangingness, His limitless power, His compassion, His long-lastingness, His love, His justness, His mercy, the ways He is like you and can sympathize and the wonderful and assuring ways He is not like you. Glean from and encounter Him until His attributes consume you.

In light of who He is, pray earnestly and with confidence today that God would strengthen your faith in who He is and the promises He has made. Pray today that your view of Him would be lifted even higher by the power of His Spirit. As we grow in adoration and understanding of the object (God) of our faith, our faith WILL strengthen and we WILL begin to walk obediently in this world with more peace and boldness as Children of the Most High, never to be capsized by any wave.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- For stronger faith in who God is and the promises he has made.

### **For True North Community Church:**

- To be given the favour and honour of preaching the gospel to more of those who are in need of saving grace.
- To honour God in all that they do.
- To not falter from attacks from the Evil One but be a stronghold for the Kingdom of God.

## February 16

### Luke 8:40-56

Have you ever got more than you asked for? Perhaps you ordered a hamburger to find it also include a milkshake, fries and hot fudge sundae. You got more than you bargained for! Maybe you asked for an advance from your boss and he gave you a pay raise instead. An unexpected surprise, right? We all know what we really want but what happens when we get more than we ask for?



**Noel Wadson**  
*Victory Church*

In today's devotion, the woman knows exactly what she wants from Jesus. She had heard the stories of deaf hearing, lame walking, and blind eyes seeing and her plan was simple. Get close enough to touch the "fringe of his robe" and her twelve years of constant bleeding would be over.

She then implements the plan. Discretely she cuts through the crowd, approaches Jesus from behind, and with one touch her illness is cured. But the story is not done, because to encounter Jesus means you will most likely get more than you bargained for.

You see, twelve years of "uncleanness" meant friends avoided her, family excluded her, and companionship was inconceivable. This is where Jesus gives her more. Jesus draws her out and he calls her "daughter". Until now she was known as "that woman" who was bleeding and unclean! But now, she is a daughter. Accepted, received and loved. In one word, she got more than she bargained for.

Similarly, when we pray we should expect that God will answer. But don't be surprised if He answers with more than you thought. After all, as a loving Father, he knows what it really takes to fix our brokenness. All of it!

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For God to work in ways that are more than we bargained for.

#### **For Victory Church:**

- For awakening to the call to make disciples.
- For wisdom & knowledge & ideas to reach the unchurched.

## February 17

### Luke 19:1-10

Have you ever hung around someone who is incredibly generous? Generosity is actually quite contagious, especially when we are the ones receiving it. What happens when a wealthy man experiences the generosity of Jesus?



**Joel Chase**

*Victory Church*

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. We don't like taxes, nor the ones who collect them but the Jews especially hated tax collectors. He was pegged a traitor who was as despicable as a thief or a murderer. Trying to avoid the crowd, he hurried to climb a tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus. To Zacchaeus' surprise, Jesus noticed him clinging to the tree. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

What a generous offer! One dinner appointment would change Zacchaeus forever. You see, when we encounter Jesus we are surprised by extreme generosity. Jesus demonstrates ultimate generosity in paying the penalty for our sin while we were still sinners! Grace is love, acceptance and forgiveness at Christ's expense; that's a generous offer. When you receive an extremely generous gift it always makes it easier to let go of things you once valued. If you received a new car you would find it easy to give away the older one.

It's no surprise that Zacchaeus opens his heart to Jesus's teaching that day and responds by opening his hands in generosity. Hanging out with Jesus will always have a profound effect on our giving. Encountering the generosity of Jesus opens our hands and our hearts. You see, generosity is quite contagious.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- For opportunities to practice the generosity of Jesus.

### **For Victory Church:**

- For boldness for the church to share the great gift they have received & to invite people to come & see.
- For financial Increase in the homes and in the church to increase ability to be a blessing.

## February 18

### Luke 23:32-43

“From beginning to end, the Holy Scriptures testify that the predicament of fallen humanity is so serious, so grave, so irremediable from within, that nothing short of divine intervention [“a personal God Encounter”] can rectify it” (Fleming Rutledge).



**Dean Shingoose**

*Village by the Station*

The cross is both the great dividing wall of separation and also the great reconciling bridge between God and fallen humanity. In the crucifixion story, two criminals were condemned to die alongside of Jesus, juxtaposed “one on his right and one on his left” (v. 33)—representing the two categories of humanity—the saved and the lost. Tragically, only one of Jesus’ condemned companions, before his impending death, placed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (v. 42), while the other scoffed and scorned Jesus as a fraud and false messiah.

The singular truth is, like Jesus’ two condemned companions, we are all ‘offenders’ before God and in dire and desperate need of God’s gift of forgiveness. Compelled by his Father’s heart of love, even in the midst of his suffering, Jesus offers a compassionate prayer for his companions and oppressors: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing” (v. 34). The gospel story ends with Jesus’ promise to the repentant thief of salvation and hope beyond death, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (v. 43). Jesus’ prayer to his Father to forgive his oppressors and the promise of his abiding presence to all who place their faith, hope, and trust in him, is his enduring promise to us as we eagerly await his coming kingdom.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- To experience God’s divine intervention and presence in your life.

#### **For Village by the Station:**

- Pray for the spiritual needs of Village By The Station residents (137), their families, and the staff.
- Pray that my chaplaincy role and ministry will be blessed at Village By The Station.

## February 19

### John 1:1-18

John's gospel profoundly states that "all things were made through Him (Jesus)." Certainly, as human beings who are made in the very image of God, we fit in that category of "all things" that He made. However, it's amazing how we can sometimes (or perhaps often) find ourselves in a place where we're not regularly seeking the counsel and presence of the one who created us. In our busy culture, we can be tempted to strive to accomplish things in our own strength and with our own agenda in mind, while we walk out this thing called life. As Adam, the first human God made, was never intended to live apart from the Lord's presence, the same is true for us today.



**Mark McNeil**  
*Penticton Vineyard*

A couple of years ago, in a season where my wife and I had been too often "striving in our own strength," we intentionally took some time one night to seek God in prayer and worship. He met us in such a powerful way that I felt He was tangibly in the living room with us. I was so impacted in this moment that I remember saying, "Wow! Why don't we do this more often!?"

The great news is, as God became flesh and dwelt among humans (through Jesus) over two thousand years ago, He also desires to dwell with us now. As you meditate on this, ask the One who made you and loves you, how you can make room in your life to encounter Him more today!

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Ask God how you can make more room in your life to encounter him more.

#### **For Penticton Vineyard Church:**

- To become bolder in sharing our faith with those who don't yet know Jesus in our community, and that we would more effectively disciple one another.



## February 20

### John 3:1-21

With the beginning of each new calendar year, come many resolutions and turning over of new leaves. But because of our human weaknesses, many people find themselves going back to old patterns of sinful behaviour, unable to generate the kind of change they desire long-term. I can relate. Before Jesus Christ saved me, I was enslaved in a cycle of addictive behaviour that I was unable to break free from. I found that I was incapable of getting free from my sinful behaviour and came to the realization that I needed Christ. We see a similar story in that Nicodemus, although a prominent religious figure in Jerusalem, was also dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). So, he came to Christ seeking the freedom that He offers.



**Justin Birks**

*Penticton Vineyard*

This is what Jesus promises in John 3, that if we look to Him as our only way to receive a new way of life; He promises to give it to us. However, it is totally a result of the work of the Holy Spirit and not because of our effort. We don't come to Christ born again; rather, we are born again in order to come to Christ. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9). This is a daily reminder for us as we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13). Day by day we rely on the Holy Spirit's power to become more like Christ and in doing so, God gets the glory and we get to experience the joy and freedom of our salvation.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For freedom from sinful behaviour, and joy in our new birth.

#### **For Penticton Vineyard Church:**

- That we will be more effective at reaching our community.
- For the direction of our church on a pastoral level we look to the future.
- That we will become more passionate about the lost.

## February 21

### John 4:1-26

The story of the Samaritan woman is a great, well-known passage. Although the story reinforces John's main theme, that Jesus is the messiah, there are a couple other interesting points that caught my attention when this woman encountered God at a well.



**Brett Harrington**

*Bethel Church*

The first is how Jesus interacted with a person of low social standing. There are a couple strikes against the woman at the well. Samaritans weren't viewed very highly by the Jews, in fact there was a lot of animosity between the two groups, so it would've been a breach in social practice for Jesus to even talk to her. She was likely a social outcast in her own community due to her relationship status, which would explain why she wasn't at the well earlier in the day with a group of women, as was the common practice. Jesus would've been completely justified to ignore this woman but instead he engaged with her, even revealing himself to her as the Messiah. As is human nature, it's easy to overlook the people who hold a lower social standing in our community, but God shows us here, and in many other spots in the Bible, that He cares deeply for the people that society has forgotten.

The second thing that stood out to me was how great the love is that God has for us. The woman at the well was far from perfect, but her story really gives a wonderful insight into our own story and how God views us as well. It shows me that no matter how far gone my situation is, God's love for me remains, and that instead of turning up his nose, he lovingly offers hope through his son.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- That God would open our eyes to see the forgotten and dismissed people in society the way He does.

#### **For Bethel Church:**

- That God would give me wisdom as I lead our teams and congregation in worship.
- For Bethel's Pastors and their families.

## February 22

### John 8:48-59

This is a very rich passage of scripture from which we can pull many great things. This passage starts in the middle of a conversation Jesus is having with some Pharisees, as mentioned in verse 13. As the focus of these daily devotions are encounters with God, I would like to look at two verses that will help us with that.



**Brenden Ferreira**

*New Beginnings*

Firstly, in verse 51, Jesus says that whoever obeys His word will never see death. The encouragement here is two-fold. One, to obey His word. Obedience to His word will naturally lead to more and more God encounters. The more we do for Him and with Him, the more encounters we will have with Him and the stronger our relationship with Him naturally becomes. In John 14:15, we see Jesus telling His disciples that if they love Him, they will keep His commands. For us, keeping His commands, obeying what He says, shows that we love Him.

We are also encouraged to spend more time in His word. We are to remain watchful, attentive and focused on His word. This does require some effort from the believer, but it will help us remain true to His teachings, and will certainly lead to more God encounters in our lives.

Finally, in verse 58, Jesus echoes the words spoken to Moses in Ex 3:14, "I am". The encounters we will have are with the great King, supreme above all things (Col 1:15-23), what could be more awesome than that!

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For strength to obey, and passion to spend time in the Word.

#### **For New Beginnings:**

- For greater effectiveness in advancing His Kingdom, and making Him known to our community.

## February 23

### John 18:28-40

Oh what a scene! Mere men with earthly titles deliberating on what is to be done to the Creator and King of everything! Jesus, able to call upon legions of heavenly armies, subjects Himself in complete grace to man's inventions of "due justice." Will this man, Jesus, be killed? Who will do it? Does the crime fit the punishment? What will this do to the Roman and Jewish relationship? All these things being weighed when ultimately, and amazingly, it was God Himself who put Jesus to death. This was the greatest act of divine justice ever carried out, done in "the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) and for the highest purpose.



**Jordan Knorr**

*True North*

Jesus' death on the cross would secure the salvation of countless millions and provided the only way God could forgive sin without compromising His holiness and perfect righteousness. Those who see the bigger picture behind the encounter with Pilate see and submit to Jesus as not only the King of the Jews but the King of everything and everyone. Those who know Jesus know that the truth is not a what but a Who (John 14:6). Those who truly know that Jesus is the Truth act in accordance to the bigger picture.

When you go about your day today, do what Jesus did in front of Pilate; do all you do in accordance with the big picture. Ask God in your prayer today to give you eternal eyes to see all things in accordance to His perfect plan. Rest in that, rest in the Truth.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For the ability to live according to the "big picture", and eyes that can see all things according to God's perfect plan.

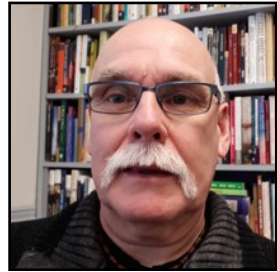
#### **For True North Community Church:**

- To do all they do in accordance with His big picture.
- To be bold in the war on darkness.
- To be be reliant on the King alone and not on their own deliberations.

## February 24

### John 20:11-18

I had just climbed to the top of an extinct volcano with a group of people and as the rest of the group scurried down the other side, back to solid ground, I remained taking in the scenic vista which played itself out in a panorama around me. On the top of this wind-swept rock I would experience what the early Celtic Christians would call a “thin place” – a place where heaven and earth meet. Here I would encounter God in a very real and sacred moment.



**Les Clarke**

*First Baptist*

I am not sure Mary Magdalene’s journey to the tomb was for her a ‘thin place’, however, her encounter with the living God was real and life changing.

John tells us of two trips that Mary Magdalene makes to the tomb early that first Easter morning. On the first trip, she discovers it empty and so runs all the way back to the city to tell Simon Peter and another disciple, the one Jesus loved. They, in turn, race to the tomb, followed by Mary, who after this second trip remains in the garden after the other two went back to their homes, presumably to ponder what they had just seen or not seen. Mary is by now, distraught and exhausted, afflicted by both grief and confusion. She is still too stuck in the shock of recent events to recognize her Lord. And then it happens. “Mary,” Jesus says, calling her by name, piercing the blanket of her grief to grasp hold of her and draw her into a whole new world.

Where have you encountered God? Where have you heard Him call your name? God is present, God is speaking, are we listening?

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Pray that God would grant you listening ears and responsive hearts as He speaks.

#### **For First Baptist:**

- Pray that God would grant us listening ears and responsive hearts as He speaks to our church.

## February 25

### Acts 2:1-21

"Wait", Jesus said, "and you receive power from on high and you will be My witnesses" (cf. Acts 1:8) The Comforter has come. He came and empowered His witnesses to be His witness, and the peoples asked, "what does this all mean?" (2:12).



**Blake Wagner**

*Grace MB Church*

Why all the ruckus? Why did God come in this way? Why explode upon the scene capturing everyone's attention? After all, people were without excuse already (cf. Rom. 1:20). General revelation continuously declares God's glory to this day. So why did everyone hear what was being said in a language that they comfortably understood from those who did not understand what they were saying? "What does this all mean?".

I was recently sitting with my 94-year-old father at his care home wondering, did He know the answer to that question asked so long ago? Had he witnessed the Witness in Christ's witnesses throughout his long life? Even after twenty plus years of a son ordained in the Master's service, telling him of powerful signs and awesome wonders we've witnessed along that journey, did he get it? As I sat there I wasn't sure he had come to know the answer to, "what does this all mean?" SO, I shared with him these very words once again, "...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21).

What about you? Have you experienced this power from on High? Have you called upon the Lord and received His Holy Spirit? Are you His witness too?

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower you to be his witness.
- Pray for those who are old and frail in our community that God will send His Spirit filled witnesses to bring them the Good News.

#### **For Grace MB Church:**

- To experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and be faithful witnesses of the Good News.

## February 26

### Acts 9:1-19

This passage is one of the most radical encounters with Jesus in the Bible. It shows the complete transformation of Saul from a persecutor of Christ followers to Paul, one who would “suffer for the sake of” Jesus’ name.



**Adrian Bonin**

*Church of the Nazarene*

Saul was no minor persecutor of Christ-followers. Damascus was a six day journey by foot from Jerusalem. Paul was on fire to defend God but sadly his zeal was misguided and it had blinded him. He persecuted Jesus’ followers, which was like persecuting Jesus himself, because Jesus’ presence was with his followers.

When Saul encountered the glory and the presence of the risen Lord Jesus, he could not help but declare him “Lord.” This amazing encounter drove him to prayer and fasting where the scene then shifts to Ananias whom God used to heal and commission Saul.

The “scales” that fall off of his eyes when Ananias prays for him show how Saul had been in spiritual darkness. His physical blindness emphasized his previous spiritual blindness, but God in his grace restored his sight. By Ananias calling Saul his “brother”, he is recognizing that Saul’s encounter with Jesus has brought him into the family of God and that he will be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus longs for an intimate experience with each one of us and it is in these God encounters that our faith is formed and firmed in Jesus. Saul’s conversion is clear evidence that there is a way for all to come into the Kingdom of God.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Against spiritual blindness for yourself and our city.

#### **For the Church of the Nazarene:**

- That God would help us to reach more people with the Gospel message of hope.
- That we would be a people who are passionately on fire for Jesus.

## **February 27**

### **1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

Paul wrote many counsels to confused Christians in sinful Corinth. Now he returns to what is 'of first importance'. All good counsels and teachings are helpful, but they cannot save us. Paul here summarizes the gospel of Christ, which is "the power of God unto salvation" and enables us to live securely and to overcome as believers in Jesus.



**Karel Samek**

*Penticton Adventist Church*

God's love, manifested and poured out on unworthy people, changes and keeps human hearts in a saving relationship with Jesus. Paul experienced it. James, Christ's unbelieving brother, experienced it. The apostles even doubted and were discouraged at times, but Christ saved them. Have you experienced God's love?

The love of God touches guilty and selfish humanity. By nature we are at enmity with God and His law, then we are mysteriously touched and transformed. Jesus is the First-fruits from the death (verse 20) and the LORD of our new life. So we also 'being dead to sin should live unto righteousness'. Jesus died, rested in the grave and rose to life. He is the surety of our resurrection from death and the realization of life eternal.

Lord, help us keep the centrality of the gospel in our lives and in our witness.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- To keep what is "of first importance" in the place of pre-eminence in our lives.

#### **For Penticton Adventist Church:**

- To experience the love and presence of God, and keep the gospel central to their ministry.



## **February 28**

### **Revelation 1:9-20**

John gets knocked right off his feet as he turns to see where the voice was coming from. This is an encounter not with a humble Galilean country preacher, but with the glorified and risen saviour and Lord! It is important to supplement our image of Jesus from his time on earth with this image of Jesus, which represents his present state. He is no longer under the whips of oppressors, or under the feet of sinners. He is the name above every name, the king of kings and lord of lords. Amen!



**Dave Funk**  
*Bethel Church*

This, however, does not mean that Jesus is somehow distant from us. John describes him as being “among” the lampstands (v. 13), which are symbols of the church. Jesus is among us at all times. He is leading us, guiding us, protecting us, and he is deeply committed to our purity and success. He has not left us alone, but continues to speak to us. Of course, as we read the messages he sent the churches in Revelation 2-3, we recognize that he is not always affirming of everything that is happening among the communities that represent his body on earth.

As we represent the body of Christ in our various communities throughout Penticton, we must be diligent to remain true to Christ. Social pressures, enemy attacks, temptations and even persecution will come our way, but we must remember that we serve the risen lord who has overcome it all and he will return for us soon.

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- For the soon return of Christ.
- For Penticton Churches to remain true to Christ regardless of the challenges in the world.

#### **For Bethel Church:**

- To be faithful to Jesus, and represent him well to the community.
- For our lay leaders and volunteers to be encouraged and strengthened as they serve.
- For protection over marriages.

# Contributors

We are so thankful for the excellent contributions by the faithful pastors of Penticton who represent the **Penticton Ministerial Association**. This has been a true act of unity!

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Joe Bott - Bethel Church  
Curtis Collins - Cheers the Church  
Clark Taylor - First Baptist  
Les Clarke - First Baptist  
Blake Wagner (x2) - Grace MB Church  
Brenden Ferreira - New Beginnings  
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George Clarke - Penticton Alliance Church  
Laurence Johnston - Penticton Alliance Church  
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**DAYS OF PRAYER**

GOD ENCOUNTERS