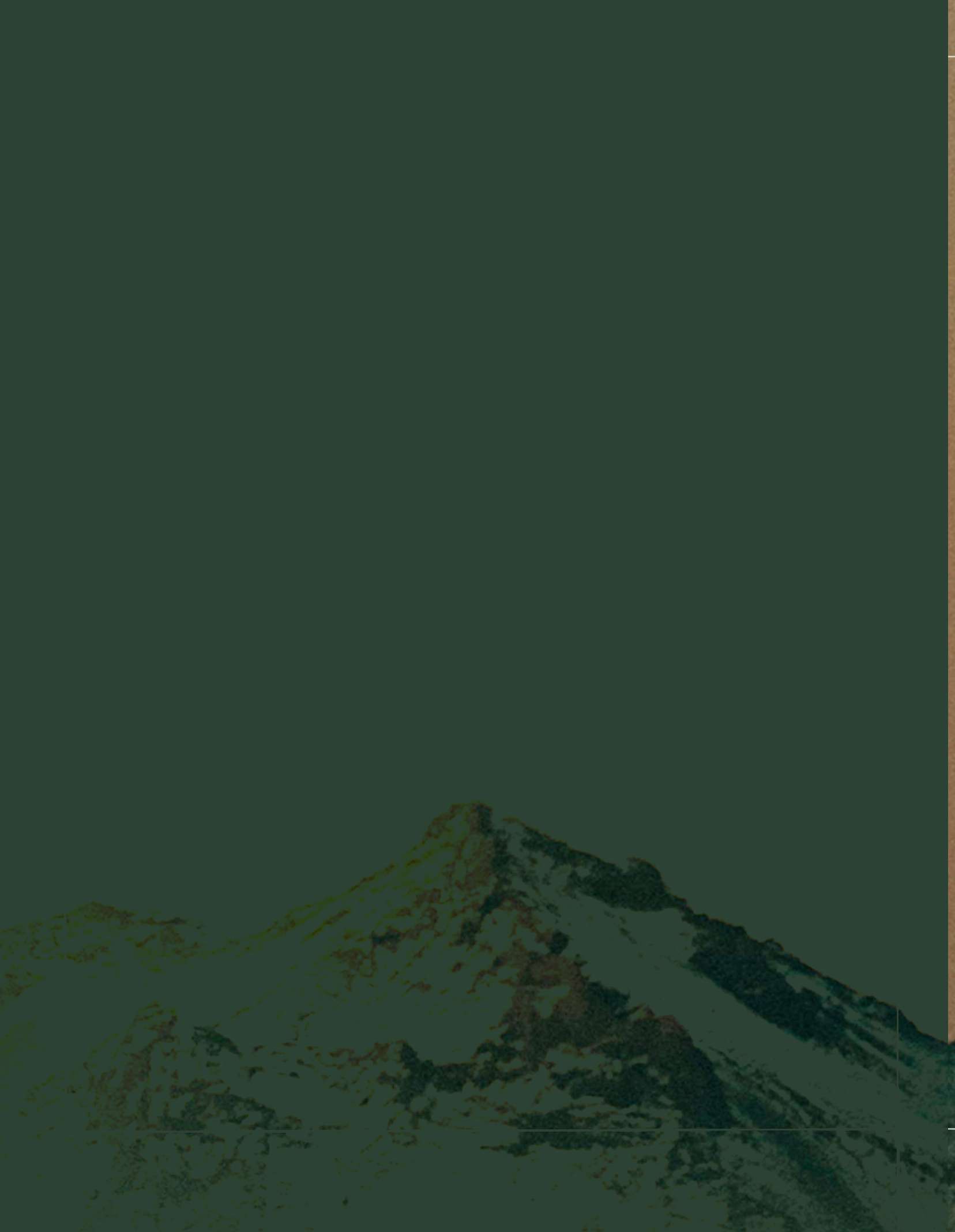


# Days of *Prayer*

**January 13-26, 2025**

[centralcc.ca/daysofprayer](http://centralcc.ca/daysofprayer)



# Day 01 – *January 13*

**Bill Markham**

**Devotional Title: Confidence in God's Care**

**Key Verse: John 11:41-42**

**“So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.’ – John 11:41-42 (NIV)**

One of the most powerful moments in Jesus' ministry was when He raised Lazarus from the dead, and at the heart of that miracle was a simple yet profound prayer. In John 11:41-42, we see a unique glimpse into the relationship between Jesus and His Father—a relationship grounded in trust and unwavering confidence. Before calling Lazarus out of the tomb, Jesus didn't begin His prayer with a plea for God to act. Instead, He started with thanksgiving, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.” Jesus was already certain that His Father had heard Him before He even uttered the prayer. This shows us that prayer is not about convincing God to listen, but about aligning ourselves with the truth that God is always attentive to the cries of His children.

How often do we pray with that same confidence? Life's struggles can sometimes make us feel like we're not being heard or that God is distant. Yet, Jesus' prayer at Lazarus' tomb reminds us that God is constantly aware of our needs and that we can approach Him with bold assurance.

The second part of Jesus' prayer reveals that this confidence in God's care wasn't just for His own benefit; it was meant to strengthen the faith of those around Him. Jesus spoke aloud

so that others could witness the connection between His prayer and the Father's power, so that they might believe. This teaches us that our prayers have the potential not only to bring us into closer communion with God but also to be a testimony of faith for others.

In our own prayer lives, we can reflect on the care and consistency of God. Whether we're facing difficulties, waiting on answers, or simply offering thanks, we can trust that God hears us. Our prayers, like Jesus', can be rooted in thanksgiving and in confidence, knowing that God is always at work—even when we can't yet see the outcome.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

How does Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving before the miracle of Lazarus challenge the way you approach God in prayer?

Are there areas in your life where you need to trust more in God's constant care and presence?

How can your prayers inspire and strengthen the faith of those around you?

## **PRAYER:**

Father, thank You that You always hear me. Help me to pray with the confidence that You are ever-present and attentive to my needs. Strengthen my faith in Your care, and let my prayers be a testimony to those around me of Your love and power. Use my prayers to draw me closer to Your heart and to lead others to trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Day 02 – *January 14*

**Conrad Huggins**  
**May I Glorify You**  
**Key Verse John 17:1-5**

**“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”**

There are many times in the Bible when we find Jesus praying. Think of all of the times Jesus, “gives thanks” before a meal. How many times have you read the phrase, “Jesus was praying” or “He was alone praying” or even when Jesus, “went to a solitary place” to pray? Jesus prayed before someone was healed. He prayed after someone was healed. Jesus prayed about important decisions. There is a verse in the book of Thessalonians that encourages followers of Christ should, “pray without ceasing,”. It certainly seems like Jesus was constantly in ‘prayer mode’ doesn’t it? Even when the Bible does not mention Jesus was praying . . . we can read when He teaches about the importance of prayer. Are you familiar with the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6? Jesus started that prayer by saying, “this is how you should pray.”

John 17 is a very interesting and unique

portion of the Bible because we have the opportunity to read and experience a full-on prayer of Jesus. This was not a one-line prayer! Jesus intentionally prayed in such a way that it was overheard and could be recorded so believers throughout all of time could read and reflect on it.

Our Scripture starts off with the words, “after Jesus said this,” and so I think it’s important we look back on what Jesus said. Right before this prayer, Jesus says to His disciples some of the most encouraging words in the entire Bible. “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33). Even before they would become aware of the fact they would need a reminder, Jesus tells them that His victory would be certain – even if they would soon become convinced that it was lost.

This was a pivotal moment in all of history. Earlier in the book of John (John 2:4), Jesus says to someone that His, “hour has not yet come.” Now, however, we’ve come to the end of Jesus’ time on earth. He was preparing to go to the cross. This was it. The time to complete what He was on earth to do had arrived. Jesus became a man so that He could live a perfect life, die in our place, experience a bodily resurrection and give us eternal life. Now, Jesus was preparing to return home.

This part of Jesus’ prayer is very similar to the beginning of Lord’s Prayer. “Our Father in

heaven, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done.” This is what Jesus has done on earth. He has “hallowed” His Father by obeying Him fully with His life. He has glorified God through His life. To hallow means to devote one’s life fully to God. This is what brings great glory to God. For us to glorify God, we need to live our lives centred around living in a way that demonstrates our full devotion to God.

What does that look like in real life? How we use our words. How we serve others without complaining. How we respond to adversity. How we treat our possessions. How we think about others. How we look forward to the future. Let’s glorify God by demonstrating our faith in action.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

Do you find it easier or harder to devote yourself fully to God at this point in your life?

What words/actions (to others) do you need to drop because they don’t glorify God?

What is one thing you can do today that would demonstrate your faith in action?

### **PRAYER:**

Father God, I thank You for giving me opportunities to point others to You. I pray that You will help me with my words and my actions so that I may glorify You and not myself. I want to live a life that glorifies You. I want to live a life that is fully devoted to You. I ask that You would give me the strength and the courage to connect with You daily and demonstrate to those around me how much I love you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

# Day 03 – *January 15*

**Jeffrey Tuffour**

**May They Have My Joy**

**Key Verse: John 17:13-14**

**John 17: 13-14** “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. (John 17:13-14, NIV)

As part of the very last dialogue between Jesus and his Father, Jesus asks for his disciples to experience the joy he had. In reading this I could not help but ask what joy is he talking about here? And from where can anyone experience this joy. As I was reflecting on the words of Jesus, coupled with these questions it dawned on me the joy we experience during our difficult experiences here on earth is not of our own doing. It is one in which we participate.

As I read John 17, it's clear to see that His followers then and today are bound to face challenges because of our profession of faith in him. If the masses did not understand him why would or should we expect otherwise? I found this very encouraging. As I live my life in accordance to his words (the way prescribed by him), he protects me. He, Jesus is very much aware of the troubles his followers will face. John 17, I see the realization that the battle is not for me to win.

There is a joy in knowing. And for us as Christians, we know how 'the story ends.' Jesus encourages us despite our challenges, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b). Similarly, the author of Hebrews encourages us. Since we are being cheered on by those who have gone before us “let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance

the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2, NIV). The end speaks more and should shape us, as remain faithful to him. Our experience, although difficult and very disabling at times is not much when it faces the supremacy of Jesus. And so, he asks his father, to give us a similar joy. The joy that keeps us enduring to the end where we become overcomers.

As overcomers, we point to him, because it is he who has given us the victory. We have joy in our struggles and difficulties because we are aligned with the victor. Asking for joy or walking in joy during challenging times does not mean I am blind to the pain I will experience. In the story told by John (John 16-18), we find Jesus describing the difficulties the disciples will face. I am struck by Jesus' words asking his father to preserve them (John 17:16). Having joy in and as him mean we continue to look to him to fulfill our need.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

How would you define joy?

What brings you the most joy in the world and why? How do you navigate joy amid trouble?

## **PRAYER:**

Dear Lord, please help us as we look to you for our joy. Please God, let us experience joy among our trials. Help us to look to you for joy. In our troubles, oh Lord help us know the joy you have placed in us. You are our champion, let us live like champions. In Jesus name we pray, amen.

# Day 04 – *January 16*

**Yajaira Gomez**

**Protect Them**

**Key Verse: John 17:15-17**

**John 17:15-17 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

Theme: The Importance of Protection

Today, let's delve into the vital topic of spiritual protection. As believers, we navigate a world fraught with challenges and temptations. Jesus, in His High Priestly Prayer, underscored the significance of this protection, praying for His disciples and all who would believe in Him.

Consider some of these Scriptures that speak as to why we need protection:

- Temptation: Satan and his demons tempt us to disobey God. (Mat 4:1-11, 1 Cor 7:5)
- Evil Influences: The world can exert negative influences on our lives. (1 Jn 5:19)
- Spiritual Warfare: We are engaged in a spiritual battle against evil forces. (Eph 6:10-18)
- The Scriptures also guide as to how we can receive protection from God. Consider the following:
  - Faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31)
  - Prayer (Phil 4:6-7)
  - Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14)
  - Armor of God (Eph 6:10-18)
  - Community (Heb 10:25)
  - God's Word (Ps 119:105)

In a world rife with uncertainty and danger, we find solace and security in the spiritual protection God provides. By understanding the threats we face, seeking guidance through His Word, and relying on His promises, we can navigate life's challenges with courage and confidence.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

How do you experience the spiritual battle in your own life? What are some of the challenges you face?

Are you diligently seeking God's protection? What steps can you take to put on your spiritual armor?

How can you deepen your understanding of God's Word and apply it to your daily life?

## **PRAYER:**

God, help me to remember, my ultimate protection lies in my relationship with Jesus Christ. Through faith in Him, prayer, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the armor of God, I am equipped to resist the enemy and live a victorious life. Help me cultivate a deep connection with you, Heavenly Father, and trust in your unwavering love and care. Amen.

# Day 05 – *January 17*

**Jonathan Collins**  
**Sharing Your Faith with Others**  
**Key Verse: John 17:20**

**“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.” John 17:20**

Have you ever found a recipe for the most amazing chilli/Meat Loaf or Spaghetti Sauce that you wanted to share? How about great advice on how to deal with an issue? You know what I mean. We all have had an experience that we want to share. You get excited and want to share with everybody.

How about Jesus? Has He changed your life? Are you excited to share your Jesus with others? I am convicted by asking the same question to myself. I find myself at times making a ton of rational reasons for not sharing my faith to others in our Canadian culture, in our unbelieving society. I know this is hard my friends. But good news, I think Jesus knew it would be hard too. Because He prayed for us. Not only did he pray for the twelve disciples, or the first generation of believers. But us too who have come to know Jesus through another believer.

This passage is part of a prayer that happens after the Last Supper and before Jesus is arrested. Jesus knew what was coming before Him, while the disciples did not yet have a full understanding. Jesus did what commonly was done in Judaism by a leader or a prophet at that time. He had taught and left his last words with the disciples (John 16). This message would usually end with a public prayer which is Chapter 17.

Wow, Jesus is praying for us. With all the things that are yet to happen to Jesus. Jesus is still remembering you and me. That honestly blows my mind that we mattered that much to Jesus, even then. So, what was Jesus prayer for us? “I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

Jesus knew that to spread the gospel, we need first, to be in a relationship with God through Jesus. We also need to be in a relationship with each other. These Two truths are so important because in relationship with God fear is removed and love and boldness are its replacement. God gives all that you need to share the Truth. Because God does not want us to walk alone. Even the disciples were sent out in pairs. We need each other to be strengthened and edified to go out there and share the great news of Jesus Christ. So that we all have an amazing experience of Jesus that we want to share

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Pray and ask God if there are any barriers that prevent you from sharing the Gospel? If there is, what is the major roadblock from you sharing the Gospel?

When you pray, what is God asking on your part, for Him to remove those barriers so that you can share your faith freely?





**PRAYER:**

Almighty, and Powerful God. You have given us such a great gift of love through Jesus. We ask through Jesus that you remove any roadblock that prevents us from sharing your gospel. Fill us with courage, love for others, and wisdom on how to share. We pray that your love and grace flow through and around us. We pray that with your help, our actions and your words through us, will bring many people to know You and Your Son Jesus. So that we all have an experience of you to share and that we all can rejoice being in your presence for eternity. For your honour and glory through Jesus. Amen.

# Day 06 – *January 18*

**Les Markham**  
**Entrusted To the Father**  
**Key Verse: Luke 23:46**

**Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last. Luke 23:46 NIV**

Come with me to a place just outside the city walls of Jerusalem, to a place called Golgotha – “the place of the skull”. (It would later get the name “Calvary” from the Latin word for skull “calvaria”). It’s early afternoon but there is an eerie darkness over the land. It’s almost as if the sun is embarrassed or ashamed to behold the event unfolding in front of us.

The scene before us reveals three men suspended upon Roman crosses; it’s the one in the middle that commands our attention. He is identified as a political criminal, but everyone knows that it’s really a religious offence that has nailed Him to that wood. The underlying charge is blasphemy – He claims that He came from God. While the rulers mock Him, one of the thieves hanging there believes that His claim is true – He really is the Son of God.

But wait, He is saying something again. He has already made several significant statements from this tool of torture, but now He is calling out in a loud voice “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit”. These are His last words before He breathes His last breath. We often, and rightly so, assign special significance to a person’s last words so what do these words from Jesus (for that is His Name) mean?

Earlier on the cross, Jesus felt, for the first time in His life, spiritually alone, abandoned by His Father, because the sins of the world had been

placed upon Him (Isaiah 53: 4–6, II Corinthians 5: 21) and God is unable to look upon sin; but now Jesus is assured again of His Father’s faithfulness and He is entrusting His soul into the hands of His loving Father. Luke 23:46 is a beautiful expression of trust quoted from Psalm 31:5.

The lesson for us today is that we can trust the same Father that Jesus trusted in His hour of greatest need. God the Father was compelled to temporarily abandon His Son; but He will never abandon us (Hebrews 13:5-6), and if we call upon Him – He is always there for us. We don’t have to walk this journey alone or carry these loads by ourselves, we can commit everything we have and everything we are into the hands of our faithful heavenly Father. In our season of testing, sorrow, temptation or need we can “Cast all our cares upon Him because He cares for us” (I Peter 5:7).

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

Can you remember a situation where God came through for you. Have you thanked Him? Are you anxious about something that you need to trust God for? Can you entrust that need to God right now? Is there any area of your life that you have not surrendered to God, or anything you have that you have not committed to His care?

## **PRAYER:**

Father, I commit myself to you. May I rely upon your care for everything. In my hour of need, I know you will supply all that is needed. I also pray for those around me who may be in need. Use me to encourage others and point them to you.

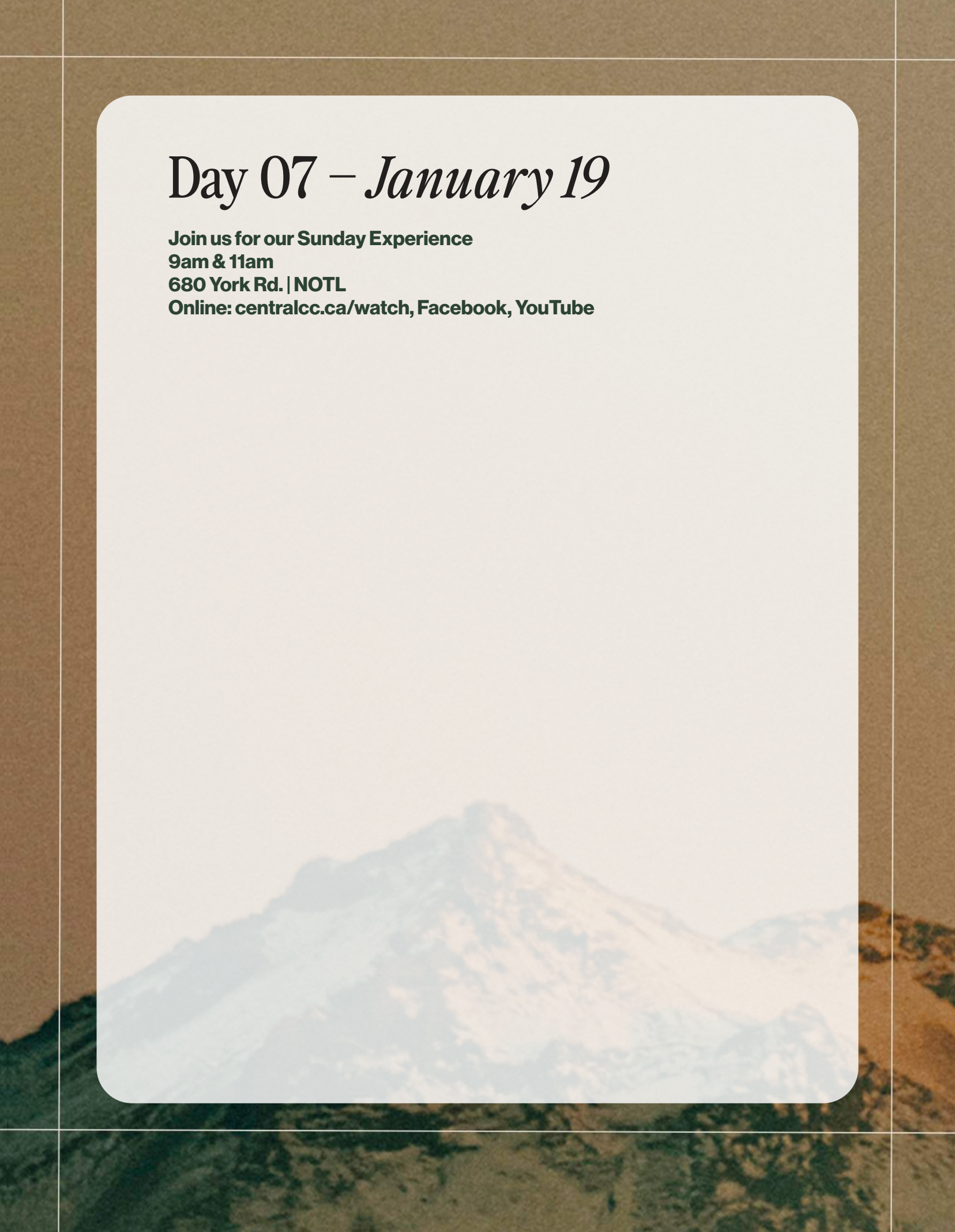
# Day 07 – *January 19*

**Join us for our Sunday Experience**

**9am & 11am**

**680 York Rd. | NOTL**

**Online: [centralcc.ca/watch](https://centralcc.ca/watch), Facebook, YouTube**



# Day 08 – *January 20*

**Tammy Palumbo**

**Faithfulness in Trials**

**Key Verse: Luke 22:31-32**

**Luke 22:31-32**

**“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”**

It is perhaps helpful to imagine the scene surrounding this prayer: Jesus and his disciples around a table, eating, talking and enjoying each other's company and companionship. But only Jesus knows the truth: this is his last supper with his disciples, and one person at the table will betray him that coming night. Jesus also knows that Peter will deny him three times before the rooster crows and so takes this moment to warn Peter about what is to come.

Jesus attributes Peter's defection to the direct activity of Satan. But more important than who is influencing Simon Peter's behaviour, is who is encouraging him in his faith journey: Jesus himself. While Jesus acknowledges that Satan has asked to “sift all of you as wheat” implying that only those with a strong faith will persevere through the coming trials, Jesus reminds Simon Peter from whence his help comes: Himself. Here is the good news: Jesus knows that after these trials that he faces, Peter will return to his faith-filled life spreading the Good News. So instead of berating Peter, he encourages him by letting him know that not only has he prayed for him, but that there is a future after failure. Perhaps this is the best part of these short verses: that Jesus acknowledges that Peter is

going to mess things up – but he will still use him to advance the kingdom once he “has turned back.”

This turning back is sometimes referred to as metanoia “a Greek term that denotes a change of mind, a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook.” It implies that a person has recognized where they have gone wrong, chosen to ask God for forgiveness (repented) and then walked again in faithfulness doing God's business. Is this an area or season of life that you have experienced? For many, the difference between being a “new Christian” and being a “mature Christian” are experiences like this one. The key is recognizing that Jesus knows that you will mess things up – just like Peter – but that all you have to do is “turn back” and now you too can “strengthen your brothers.” You too can help other brothers and sisters in Christ seek God, grow in relationship with Jesus and spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith and witness.

So instead of being defeated as Satan clearly hopes, may you be encouraged as you face trials in life that you can turn to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, for understanding, forgiveness and encouragement.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

In what areas of my life am I more like Peter?

In what ways can I draw nearer to God with metanoia and repentance?

In what ways can I demonstrate faithfulness to God's call on my life?



**PRAYER:**

Dear Lord Jesus,

Today I humbly ask that you strengthen me for the days ahead. For the days of trials and ones where I am unable or unwilling to declare your sovereignty over my life. I ask for forgiveness for all the times I have denied you. Direct my thoughts to you and help me to seek Jesus – the pioneer and perfecter of my faith – to direct my actions and words. I ask the Holy Spirit to increase my faith and fill me with perseverance and courage no matter what today brings. I ask these things in Jesus' holy name, Amen.

# Day 09 – *January 21*

**Nico DeBruyne**

**Becoming an Encouragement for Others**

**Key Verse: Luke 22:32**

**“But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” Luke 22:32**

This passage reminds me of two very important aspects of prayer. One is that prayer is an opportunity to encourage those around you who are facing difficulty, and the second is to be reminded that with God all things are possible.

We have all had moments where we feel like we are reaching the end of what we are capable of. As we connect with God through prayer, we find encouragement, peace, and purpose. But prayer is also an opportunity for us to practically care for those around us who might be wavering. The comforting truth is that just as Jesus prayed for Simon while he was on earth, he continues to intercede for all of us (Rom 8:34) in heaven right now. We can rest on this truth and allow it to re-invigorate us for any future challenges, learn from it, so that we in turn, can strengthen those around us who feel like they are being pressed by the enemy.

Encouragement is vital in our journey with God because it strengthens both the giver and the receiver. In this passage, Jesus doesn't pray for Simon to avoid the challenges, but that his faith would remain steadfast through them. Encouragement is a powerful act of faith, helping to lift others up when they feel weak or overwhelmed.

When we pray for others, we invite God's strength and presence into their struggles, offering hope and guidance. In turn, we are also blessed by the act of encouragement, growing stronger in our own faith and dependence on God.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

What areas of my life need God's encouragement and guidance right now?  
When have I felt God's strength during difficult times, and how can I share that with others?  
How can I be more intentional in encouraging those around me through prayer?  
Who in my life needs encouragement today, and how can I pray for them?

## **PRAYER:**

God, thank You for the gift of encouragement that strengthens us and those around us. Help us to become vessels of Your love and support to those who are struggling. May our prayers lift others up and point them to the hope and peace found in You. Amen.

# Day 10 – *January 22*

**Mike Hicks**

**Your Will Be Done**

**Key Verse: Matthew 26:39, 42**

**Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” 42 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” Matthew 26:39, 42**

We can read over that very quickly, but it's important to take a moment to let it sink in. 'Not my will but your will be done'. What is a will? Our will is our ability to make choices that determine our behaviours despite what is going on around us. That is important to hear. We can and in fact should be making choices that are positive despite what is happening to us.

There is a lot of talk in our culture about willpower (usually as it relates to our diet and health). The definition of willpower is the choice to delay immediate gratification, resisting short-term temptations to meet long-term goals. In other words, for this context, we say no to our selfish desires to further the kingdom of God. To make good choices we need to surrender our lives to God. That is an easy statement to write and to read but it can be very difficult to figure out what it means and then live it out.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 16:24-25, “if any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.”

We need to surrender our choices, our time, our dreams, our desires. When we honour God with our life choices, He will bless our lives. My wife, Martha always tells me, you can't outgive God, and we can't. We may seem like we are giving up a lot, but we gain so much more.

You may be struggling with an addiction, a bad habit? Wasting time on things not of God? This doesn't mean we are necessarily involved in a 'bad thing'. Our choice could be anything as simple as watching too much tv? Spending too much time shopping or watching sports? Any area of our lives that we have not given God permission to be Lord over is an area we need to examine. We should be spending our time on things that further God's kingdom. This journey begins with denying yourself and your instant gratification, for His glory. Once you make the first step it will get easier! Our desires grow as we feed them.

Having faith in God and a relationship with Him is the first and greatest need we have. If you want God to meet your needs, you need to believe what He says in His Word. Be generous with others, be generous with your words, your time, your talents, and be generous with your resources. What you believe determines how you behave. Jesus believed His father when God said the only sufficient sacrifice for our sin was a sinless life (that of Jesus himself). In Gethsemane he reached the point of decision in the garden and chose to surrender His will to His Father. Jesus gave EVERYTHING for you. Will you give everything for Him?

Here are a few habits to reflect on and start as you surrender your life to God:

- Get into the habit of reading God's Word (the Bible) every day.
- Pray for your family, our church, our country, your friends. (Driving in your car is a great time to pray).
- Give of your finances. 10% is what God spoke of as the tithe (study about tithing). Start with that, 10% of your income back to God.
- Be grateful for the blessings in your life (starting with the fact that you can be in relationship with God because of what Jesus did on the cross).
- Encourage one person every day
- Memorize scripture
- Dance before the Lord with worship music playing loudly.
- Find a way to serve a single parent or a child who needs help in your community
- Tell God you love Him out loud
- Talk with others about what God has done for you
- Love your spouse (honour your spouse and their desires)
- Husbands, lead your family well. Be the spiritual leader in your home (this is a very important responsibility)

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

What have you experienced when you surrendered your will to God instead of following your own desires?

What have you yet to surrender to God? Will you ask him for help?

What spiritual disciplines can you incorporate in your daily life?

## **PRAYER:**

Jesus, thank you. You gave the greatest gift you could give, when by an act of your will you chose to surrender your life for all of mankind. You sacrificed your life for people who by their own will may or may not choose the freedom you provided, yet you did it anyway. Help me to follow your example with the guidance of Holy Spirit in all areas of my life.



# Day 11 - *January 23*

**Janet Collins**  
**Father Forgive them-**  
**Key Verse: Luke 23:34**

**Luke 23:33-35** When they came to a place called **The Skull**, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified— one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” (NLT)

Imagine being tortured for hours, physically, mentally, emotionally, and then being left to die a long slow painful death, all the while knowing you did nothing to deserve it. I think of times in my own life when people have done things, or said things that really hurt me, I walk around in an emotional mess for a while, shedding tears, feeling broken inside, I may even feel anger towards them and want to cut them out of my life or avoid them so they can’t hurt me again.

Yet we just read the prayer of Jesus, as he looks at the ones who are inflicting the worst pain imaginable on him, and he says, “Father forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” Jesus did not just say “Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.” (Luke 6:27-28) He lived it out, and he asks us to live the same way.

Forgiveness is a choice. It is not based on whether the person is aware of the hurt or pain they caused or not. It is not based on their sense of remorse. It is a choice we make to

release the hurt to God and let him deal with it. This is a lot easier to say than to do, but when we choose to forgive, we are following the example of Jesus.

Forgiveness is an act of obedience. We are told to love our enemies. We are also told in Colossians 3:13 “Make allowances for one another’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” We cannot just say we are followers of Jesus we must live it out in how we treat others. This means even forgiving those who have hurt us, and those who don’t even realize how much they have hurt us.

The result of choosing to forgive, then living it out by being obedient, is freedom. By forgiving we choose to no longer live in the chains of unforgiveness and hurt but release it into God’s hands to deal with. He is the one who will bring us peace and will walk the journey with us, as well as the person who has caused the hurt. We must learn to trust him with all of it.

When I stop and reflect on my own life, I think of the times I have hurt others through my words or actions. I think of the way I have hurt God in how I have treated Him or those around me, yet He still forgives me. Forgiveness is the most amazing gift offered by Jesus to us. Having received that gift, and realizing what it cost Him, his very life, how can I not want to move past my hurt, my pain, to extend the same forgiveness to others that Jesus has extended to me.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

In what ways have you experienced the forgiveness of Jesus in your own life?

What hurts have you been hanging onto that you just need to give to Jesus right now.

In obedience, pray for those you need to forgive, and live in the freedom of letting go.

### **PRAYER:**

Lord, I pray you would forgive \_\_\_\_\_ even though they have hurt me. I acknowledge that forgiveness is a gift from you. I have received that gift and in turn help me extend that gift to \_\_\_\_\_. Today I choose to live in obedience and freedom, "Father forgive them, they do not know what they have done." I release this/ them into your hands.

# DAY 12 – *January 24*

**Andrew Rutledge**

**Do Not Forsake Me**

**Key Verse: Matthew 27:46**

**About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) Matthew 27:46 (NIV)**

No one wants to be alone. Worse yet is to be abandoned by those closest to us, the ones we love and trust the deepest. Most of us have experienced moments when it feels like the people, we need the most aren't there for us. We were made to be in relationship with each other. More importantly, we were made to be in relationship with God. But what do you do when you feel like even God has abandoned you? When you can't feel God's presence?

Jesus experienced this during the crucifixion. Jesus has been in the presence of God from before time began. Jesus is God. He and the Father are inseparable. Yet, at the height of the crucifixion, a moment when he needed God the most, Jesus cried out, asking why God had forsaken him. In the midst of immense suffering, Jesus could not feel the presence of God. Mercifully for Jesus, this was short lived. He soon was taken to be in glory, once again and for all eternity in the presence of God.

What should you do when you feel forsaken by God? Perhaps you are going through a difficult relationship, illness, job insecurity or loss. Maybe you feel like you haven't heard from God in a while. Remember this, what happened to Jesus on the cross was a unique moment in history when Jesus took on the sins of the world. It is a moment that will never happen again.

God has promised us that he will never leave us or forsake us. Even when you don't feel his presence, God is still right there with you. He does not promise to make the suffering go away, yet. There will come a day when God puts an end to all suffering. But until then, you can rest assured that He is with you, no matter what you face.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

Do you, or have you ever, felt abandoned by someone you trusted? What was that like? When was the last time you felt God's presence? What did you feel?

Is there someone in your life that may need you to help them feel God's presence again? What can you do today to reach out to them?

## **PRAYER:**

Father, thank You that You will never forsake us. Even when our suffering seems unbearable, You are always there. In those moments when I can't feel Your presence, remind me that You have not left me. Thank You for that confidence, and that I can face the uncertainties of life knowing I am never alone.

# Day 13 – *January 25*

**Jennifer Williams**

**May They Be One**

**Key Verse: John 17:20-23**

“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them, and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me”.

This was Jesus's last prayer - known as His “FAREWELL PRAYER”. As we read it, we can feel the weight of it. Jesus prays for all those who will come to believe in Him through the disciples' message. He prays for unity among future believers, that they would share the divine unity He experiences with the Father. He also prays that future believers will witness His glory. His Prayer leaves us with an invitation to deeper unity, faith, and love in our journey with Him.

Ephesians 4 teaches “And it was He [Jesus] who gave some to be Apostles, some to be Prophets, some to be Evangelists, and some to be Pastors and Teachers, to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we mature to full measure of the stature of Christ” (verses 11-13).

Jesus prayed for this in John 17 and made provisions for it to happen! It is God's design that we work together, whatever our cultural differences, status in life, rich or poor, old or young. There is one thing that unites us and that is love, the virtue that binds all other virtues together in perfect unity.

These words from John Fawcett sum unity like this: “Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in

Christian love, The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above”. These words capture the importance of a community connected to God and each other!

It is through the love of God and the cross of Christ that we are brought into this wonderful community, called the Church. And his Kingdom is within us, and he is our Sovereign King! His Kingdom is not of this world. This is where we become united, in Him. Jesus prayed in John 17 that we may experience such perfect unity that the world will know.... Unity in the church is important for others to see and know Christ! This is an awesome realization! We don't all have to be the same, but we must become like Him!

## **QUESTIONS**

Christian unity is defined as a state of oneness, harmony, and love among believers in Jesus Christ.

1. How can you participate to achieve the unity that Jesus prayed for?
2. Seek first the kingdom of God....(Matt. 6:33) Imagine if we all pursue Jesus, what would be the outcome? (Ephesians 4:14-15).
3. Read Acts 2:42-47. Are these the requirements or the effects of unity?

## **PRAYER:**

Father I pray that I grow in intimacy with you, and that this would affect my relationships with those around me. Use my life as I partner with fellow brother and sisters in Christ to see your kingdom established here on earth!

# Day 14 – *January 26*

**Join us for our Sunday Experience**

**9am & 11am**

**680 York Rd. | NOTL**

**Online: [centralcc.ca/watch](https://centralcc.ca/watch), Facebook, YouTube**





