SEVEN-DAY DEVOTIONAL

WHO ARE YOU, LORD?

ENCOUNTERING JESUS ON THE DAMASCUS ROAD



"As he neared Damascus on his journey,
suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.
He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,
"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

— ACTS 9:3–6 (NIV) —

A seven-day journey through Acts 9, discovering how Jesus interrupts, reveals Himself, restores us and sends us on mission through His power.

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The Bridge Church
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MONDAY

DAY 1

The Atmosphere I Breathe

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON

Werner began Saul's story by slowing down over a phrase we can easily rush past: Saul was still 'breathing out murderous threats' against the Lord's disciples. Saul was not casually opposed to the church; hostility had become the atmosphere of his life. From there the sermon followed him toward Damascus, a strategic gateway city, and asked a deeply personal question: since I met Jesus, has my way actually changed? This week we follow that movement from certainty and accusation to encounter, surrender, transformation and mission.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:1-2 (NIV)**
>
> *Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

1 Werner described Saul as living inside an atmosphere he had built around himself. Every thought, conversation and plan carried the same edge: stop these people and silence this movement. He then brought the picture close to home. Greed can make every conversation drift toward money; ambition can make every relationship about getting ahead; bitterness can colour every story; hopelessness can make us draw the curtains on life. The warning was simple: be careful of the atmosphere you create around your life. What I repeatedly breathe in eventually becomes what I breathe out.

2 Damascus mattered because Saul was trying to stop the gospel before it spread farther. Acts has already shown the movement Jesus described in Acts 1:8: Jerusalem and Judea, then Samaria, and outward toward the ends of the earth. Persecution scattered believers, but instead of killing the message it carried the message

into new places. Saul believed he was defending God's will while placing himself directly in the path of what God was doing. Sincerity and zeal are not enough if my understanding of God's way is wrong.

The believers were known as people of 'the Way'. Werner stressed that following Jesus was not only a different set of ideas; their way of living changed. Saul was convinced he knew God's will but did not yet understand God's way. I can be sincere, disciplined and convinced while still resisting God in practice. So the question is personal: 'Since I met Jesus, has my way changed?' What atmosphere follows me into home, work, friendship and church - and what does it reveal about what is shaping me?

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What atmosphere am I creating through what I repeatedly think about, talk about and pursue - and what does it reveal about what is shaping me?
2	Where might I be sincerely convinced I am right while needing to ask whether I have understood God's way rather than only my own view?
3	If someone looked at the practical 'way' I live, what evidence would they see that meeting Jesus has genuinely changed my direction?

PRAYER

Father, search the atmosphere of my heart. Show me what I keep breathing in and breathing out. Where my zeal is misplaced, correct me; where my way has not yet changed, lead me into Your way. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

What I breathe in repeatedly will eventually become the atmosphere I carry.

TUESDAY

DAY 2

Who Are You, Lord?

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday we saw Saul completely consumed by an atmosphere of hostility and heading for Damascus to stop the gospel from spreading. Today the road itself is interrupted, and the man who thought he was defending God is confronted by Jesus personally.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:3-5 (NIV)**
>
> *As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Saul nears Damascus with authority in his hands, but a light from heaven brings him to the ground. Then comes the sentence Werner would not let us pass over: Jesus does not say, 'Why are you persecuting my people?' He says, 'Why do you persecute me?' Jesus identifies Himself so closely with His church that what Saul does to believers, Jesus takes personally. That gave the sermon a serious warning about the atmosphere of accusation. It is easy to make a ministry out of exposing every fault - this worship is wrong, that preacher is wrong, this church is wrong. Werner was careful to say that churches and leaders can indeed be wrong, but he also warned that God has not called us to become the accuser of the brethren. If accusation becomes the main thing I breathe out, I need to ask whose work I am really doing.

Saul's answer is the question at the centre of the sermon: 'Who are you, Lord?' In a single sentence he both recognises authority and admits ignorance. He knows he has encountered someone greater than himself - master, ruler, Lord - yet he does not know who this Lord is. Werner pointed out that many people can live in exactly that gap. We may recognise Jesus as important, even as the highest authority, while still knowing surprisingly little of Him personally.

Saul had enormous biblical knowledge, rigorous theology and impressive religious credentials, but the centre was wrong because he did not truly know Jesus.

That led Werner into Christology - the lifelong attempt to know and understand who Jesus is, His nature and His work. His point was not to make the sermon academic. It was the opposite: if Jesus is the cornerstone, then every other belief is aligned from Him. If the cornerstone is wrong, the whole building can look impressive while leaning in the wrong direction. Paul would later write about Christ with wonder: the image of the invisible God, before all things, the One in whom all things hold together; the One who humbled Himself and was exalted above every name. The man who once asked, 'Who are You, Lord?' never stopped discovering the answer. I should not either.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	When I speak about the church or other believers, where do I need to distinguish honest discernment from an atmosphere of accusation that tears down rather than serves?
2	What does my own answer to Saul's question - 'Who are You, Lord?' - reveal about whether I merely recognise Jesus' authority or am actually growing in knowing Him?
3	If Jesus is truly the cornerstone of my faith, what belief, habit or assumption in my life may need to be realigned around who He is?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I do not want to settle for knowing things about You while failing to know You. Guard me from becoming an accuser. Correct what is crooked in my understanding, and deepen my love for You and for Your people. Keep the question alive in me: Who are You, Lord? Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Do not rush past the question: "Who are You, Lord?"

WEDNESDAY

DAY 3

Get Up - and Be Told What to Do

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Saul met Jesus and discovered that the church he was persecuting belonged so closely to Christ that Jesus said, ‘You are persecuting me.’ Today the question ‘Who are You, Lord?’ moves immediately toward obedience: ‘What shall I do, Lord?’

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:6-7 (NIV)**
>
> *‘Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

1 Acts 22 adds Saul’s next response: ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ Werner highlighted the movement between the two questions. First: ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then, once Jesus is recognised, ‘What do You want me to do?’ That is the natural language of Lordship. Yet Jesus does not hand Saul a complete life plan. He tells him to get up, enter the city and wait to be told what to do. For a man accustomed to authority, education and giving orders, this is a profound first lesson. Saul’s encounter immediately requires obedience before he has all the details.

2 Werner pressed the uncomfortable part: Saul will receive direction through other people. The man who arrived with official letters must now be willing to listen to believers he came to arrest. Throughout Acts, God repeatedly chooses to involve ordinary people in what He is doing. He brings one person to another; someone has to speak, someone has to lay hands, someone has to preach, someone has to obey. Later Ananias will be sent to Saul, despite the very real fear attached to that assignment. God could act without us, but He regularly chooses to work through willing people. That means humility is required on both sides - humility to be sent, and humility to receive from the person God sends.

[3]Werner connected this directly to Acts 1:8. The Holy Spirit's power is not given merely so that I can enjoy spiritual experiences privately. The purpose is witness: here, there and everywhere. Saul is being turned from a man who uses his energy to stop the gospel into a man who will spend his life carrying it. The shift begins with a simple posture: 'Lord, tell me what to do.' That question challenges the version of Christianity in which I keep control and ask God to bless my plans. Lordship means I am available for His plans - including the next step I do not yet understand, the person I would not have chosen, and the instruction my pride would rather resist.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Where am I asking God for a complete plan when He may simply be asking me to obey the next clear step?
2	How teachable am I when God chooses to guide, correct or encourage me through another believer rather than in the way I would prefer?
3	If the Spirit empowers me to be a witness, where is my life currently moving outward toward others - and where has faith become mostly private or self-focused?

PRAYER

Lord, make me teachable. I surrender my need to control the next step or receive every answer directly on my own terms. Give me humility to listen, courage to obey, and willingness to be used in the lives of others. Let my confession that You are Lord become visible in what I do. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Lordship becomes real when "Who are You?" turns into "What would You have me do?"

THURSDAY

DAY 4

Eyes Open, Yet Seeing Nothing

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Saul's encounter moved from recognition to obedience. The confident man who arrived giving orders was told to go into the city and wait to receive direction. Today his open eyes see nothing, and his certainty gives way to dependence.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:8-9 (NIV)**
>
> *Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

1 Werner paused over one of the most vivid lines in the story: Saul gets up, opens his eyes, and sees nothing. Here is a man who had been certain that he saw everything clearly. He understood the law, had arguments, training, status and conviction. Yet on the Damascus road his confidence is exposed as blindness. The physical blindness becomes a picture of the spiritual reality that had been there all along. It is possible to be certain and still be wrong; to know much and still miss Jesus; to speak with authority and still need God to open my eyes.

2 The journey into Damascus now looks completely different from the journey Saul planned. He intended to enter as the man in control, carrying letters that authorised him to seize others. Instead, others lead him by the hand. For three days he cannot see, and he does not eat or drink. The sermon's point was not that every hard season is the same as Saul's, but that dependence can become a place where false certainty is stripped away. Sometimes before God gives new sight, He allows the old way of seeing to fail. Saul has to be led before he can lead. He has to receive before he can become the one who gives.

3 Werner then filled in the background of the man being led by the hand. Saul had been born in Tarsus, enjoyed Roman citizenship, was raised in Jerusalem and studied under Gamaliel - the kind of education and pedigree that carried real weight. Even the ordinary details of his background, including the tent-making trade associated with his region, would later become useful in God's purposes. But none of those strengths could give him sight on this road. This is the tension I need to hold: God can use my history, education, skills and experience, but they are never substitutes for dependence on Christ. The question is whether I offer them to Him or use them as reasons to trust myself.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Where might confidence, experience or strong opinion be making it difficult for me to admit that I may not be seeing something clearly?
2	What does Saul being led by the hand say to me about receiving help and accepting dependence when I would rather remain in control?
3	Which parts of my background, skills or experience can I offer to God as useful tools without allowing them to become the source of my identity or certainty?

PRAYER

Jesus, open my eyes where confidence has become blindness. Teach me not to confuse knowledge, experience or achievement with true sight. When I have to be led, make me humble rather than defensive. Use everything in my past that serves Your purpose, but do not let any of it become more important than knowing You. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Sometimes the first step toward true sight is admitting that open eyes can still be blind.

FRIDAY

DAY 5

The Infinite Value of Knowing Christ

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Saul entered Damascus blind and dependent, stripped of the confidence that had once made him certain he saw clearly. Today the sermon looks at the impressive credentials he once valued and what happened to their worth after he encountered Christ.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Philippians 3:5-6 (NIV)**
>
> *circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Werner let Paul describe his own former life: circumcised on the eighth day, of Israel, of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee, zealous, and by his own account faultless in righteousness based on the law. Everything was in overdrive. He had pedigree, education, discipline, achievement and religious seriousness. Before Damascus, those things gave him confidence. After meeting Jesus, Paul did not deny that they had once mattered to him; he revalued them. Compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, the things he once counted as gain became loss. The centre of value moved from ‘look who I am’ to ‘let me know Him.’

Werner illustrated this with the familiar human instinct to keep retelling our trophies - the achievements, victories and stories that prove we once mattered. He spoke of an elderly family member who, near the end of his life, repeatedly returned to stories of being an exceptional marksman and the trophies that came with it. The point was not to mock achievement. It was to expose how easily old glory can become the treasure we use to tell ourselves who we are. Paul had plenty of trophies too, but after encountering Jesus he found a greater treasure. His language about Christ becomes almost lyrical because knowing Jesus has become of infinite value to him.

The rich young ruler gives the sermon its painful contrast. He was sincere, moral and interested in eternal life, but when Jesus touched the place he valued most, he went away sad because he had many things. Werner asked us directly: ‘What are your many things?’ The question is wider than possessions. It can include success, reputation, comfort, career, being right, control, a preferred future, even a religious identity I am proud of. Whatever I cannot imagine surrendering may be revealing what I still count as more valuable than gaining Christ. The invitation is not to despise every good thing, but to put every good thing in its proper place beneath the infinite value of knowing Jesus.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Which achievements, roles, possessions or stories do I most easily use to prove my worth - and how would Paul’s revaluation of his ‘gains’ challenge me?
2	What does it look like in ordinary life for knowing Jesus to become more valuable than the trophies I once depended on for identity?
3	What are my ‘many things’ - the parts of life I would find hardest to release if following Jesus required a real change of direction?

PRAYER

Jesus, You are worth more than everything I use to measure my life. Show me the “many things” I hold too tightly. Free me from needing achievements, possessions or reputation to tell me who I am. Teach me to say with increasing honesty that knowing You is of surpassing value. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

What becomes small when the value of knowing Christ becomes large?

SATURDAY

DAY 6

A Genuine Encounter Changes the Direction

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday we saw Paul's pedigree, achievements and religious trophies lose their place of highest value because knowing Christ became greater. Today the sermon reaches its final call: genuine Lordship must become visible in obedience, transformation and witness.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> Matthew 7:21 (NIV)
> 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.'

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

1 Werner brought the sermon to its conclusion by insisting that calling Jesus 'Lord' cannot remain a title on our lips. He challenged the shortcut in which faith is reduced to saying a prayer while nothing afterwards changes. Matthew 7:21 is uncomfortable precisely because Jesus connects the confession 'Lord, Lord' with doing the Father's will. Werner's question was not whether grace must be earned - he repeatedly said that salvation belongs to God and that Saul needed Jesus to step in and save him. The challenge was whether a real encounter with the One who saves has produced a surrendered response: 'What would You have me do, Lord?'

2 That is where Werner named four marks of Saul's encounter: personal, transformational, missional and supernatural. Personal means I cannot borrow someone else's encounter - not my parents', my church's or the atmosphere of a powerful meeting. Transformational means I am not simply the old person with a Jesus sticker added. Paul became known as the man who once persecuted the faith and now preached the gospel he tried to destroy. The change was not instant perfection, but there was unmistakable movement. Something happened that altered the direction of his life.

Missional means the encounter overflows. Saul once breathed threats; after Jesus, his conversations and energy increasingly carried the gospel he had tried to silence. Werner compared it with coming home from an amazing holiday or waterfall experience and naturally wanting to tell people what you saw. If I have genuinely encountered the One who rescued me, witness should not feel like an unrelated religious task; it should begin to flow from what I have seen and received. And supernatural means the story does not begin with Saul's brilliance or choice. He tried his hardest to serve God and still missed it. Jesus had to interrupt and save him. The sermon ended with an invitation: do not miss an encounter with Jesus. Keep asking, 'Who are You, Lord?' and 'What would You have me do?' - and be ready for the answer to change your life.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What evidence of genuine transformation can I see in the direction of my life - not perfection, but real movement that would not make sense without Jesus?
2	Of the four marks Werner named - personal, transformational, missional and supernatural - which one most challenges the way I currently understand my own encounter with Christ?
3	Where might Jesus be asking me to move from merely saying 'Lord' to a concrete act of obedience or witness?

FINAL PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You that salvation belongs to You. I could never rescue myself by knowledge, discipline, achievement or religious effort. Meet me again with the reality of who You are. Make my faith personal rather than borrowed, transformational rather than cosmetic, missional rather than inward-looking, and dependent on Your supernatural grace rather than my performance. Keep the two questions alive in me: 'Who are You, Lord?' and 'What would You have me do?' Give me courage to obey what You show me. Amen.

THE THOUGHT TO KEEP AFTER DAY 6

A genuine encounter with Jesus does not merely add something to my life; it changes its direction.

SUNDAY
DAY
7

Who Are You, Lord - and What Would You Have Me Do?

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday the sermon closed with four marks of a genuine encounter with Jesus: personal, transformational, missional and supernatural. Today we gather the whole journey and carry its two central questions into the week ahead.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:3-6 (NIV)**
>
> *As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

The week began with Saul breathing threats - a man completely convinced that his zeal served God. Yet the atmosphere around him was accusation, hostility and control. He headed to Damascus to stop the gospel from spreading, only to discover that he had placed himself against the very One he believed he was defending. Jesus interrupted him personally: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' The encounter exposed the difference between being sincere and being right, between knowing religious truth and knowing God's way, and between confidence and genuine sight. It left us asking what atmosphere we are breathing and whether meeting Jesus has truly changed our way.

At the centre stood Saul's first question: 'Who are You, Lord?' He recognised authority but did not yet know the One speaking to him. Werner used that question to take us into the lifelong pursuit of knowing Christ. Saul had theology, pedigree, education and

discipline, but without a right understanding of Jesus the whole structure was skewed. Later Paul could scarcely speak about Christ without wonder - the One through whom all things were made, in whom all things hold together, the One humbled to the cross and exalted above every name. The man who once prized his own credentials came to count them as loss compared with the surpassing value of knowing Christ. That is the shift from ‘look who I am’ to ‘I want to know Him.’

Then came the second question: ‘What would You have me do, Lord?’ Jesus led Saul into humility, dependence and obedience. He had to be led by the hand, receive from Ananias, and accept that God would work through ordinary people. His encounter became personal, transformational, missional and supernatural. The persecutor became a witness. The atmosphere of his life changed direction. The sermon therefore leaves us with more than a dramatic conversion story. It gives us two questions to keep asking for the rest of our lives. Who are You, Lord? - because I never reach the end of knowing Jesus. What would You have me do? - because knowing Him as Lord must shape how I live, what I value, what I release, where I go and how I witness. The invitation remains: do not miss an encounter with Jesus; let Him open your eyes and change your way.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Looking back over the week, where have I recognised an atmosphere, value or certainty in my life that Jesus may be asking me to surrender or re-examine?
2	How has the question ‘Who are You, Lord?’ challenged me to move beyond religious knowledge into a deeper, lifelong pursuit of knowing Jesus Himself?
3	What is one specific way I can carry ‘What would You have me do, Lord?’ into the coming week through obedience, witness or a changed priority?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the way You interrupted Saul and revealed Jesus to him. Search the atmosphere of my life, open my eyes where I have been certain but blind, and loosen my grip on anything I value above knowing Christ. Keep me teachable and willing to be led. Let my encounter with Jesus be personal, transformational, missional and rooted in Your supernatural grace. As I move into a new week, keep me asking with humility and expectancy: 'Who are You, Lord?' and 'What would You have me do?' Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Keep both questions alive: "Who are You, Lord?" and "What would You have me do?"