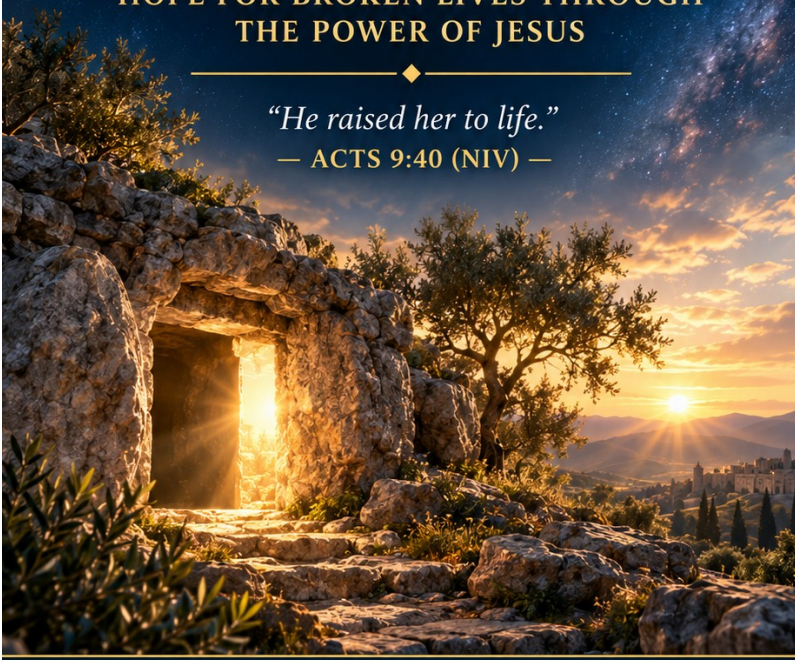
SEVEN-DAY DEVOTIONAL

THE MIRACLE OF RESTORATION

HOPE FOR BROKEN LIVES THROUGH THE POWER OF JESUS

"He raised her to life."
— ACTS 9:40 (NIV) —



A seven-day journey through the sermon, discovering how Jesus brings restoration, hope and new life today.

Pastor Grant Askham

The Bridge Church

13 September 2026

ABOUT THIS WEEK

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

Acts 9:32-43; Matthew 4:18-20; John 21:15-19;
Daniel 2:44; 1 Timothy 1:15

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Grant opened Acts 9 by asking us to receive the Word as a gift from God - not merely as a historical account, but as a torchlight shining across two thousand years into our own lives. The message that emerged was restoration: God's divine act of returning what has been broken, lost or ruined to His original design and purpose.

The sermon then followed three restorations in the order Grant preached them. First was Peter: called to be a fisher of men, yet later fearful, denying Jesus and returning to fishing, then patiently restored by Christ to love, feed and shepherd His people. Second was Aeneas: a believer who had been paralyzed for eight years, becoming a picture of what happens when the body stops responding to the Head, Christ. Third was Tabitha: outwardly full of good works, yet dead - a warning that even Christian activity can replace intimacy with the God of the work.

Grant's central encouragement was not that restored people become impressive. It was that restored people become responsive. Peter went 'here and there'. Aeneas rose and made his bed. Tabitha was raised and presented alive. Their restoration became visible, and others turned to the Lord.

This week follows the sermon in that same movement: from Peter's return to purpose, through Aeneas' paralysis and response, into Tabitha's busyness and dependence, and finally to the kingdom purpose of restoration.

The question running through this week is:

"Where is Jesus calling me to rise, respond and return to His purpose?"

MONDAY
DAY
1

The Great Restorer

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON

Grant began by saying that the events in Acts really happened to real people two thousand years ago, yet they still shine like a torchlight into our lives today. He invited us to ask, 'Lord, what are You giving me?' The gift in this passage is a fresh sight of God as the great Restorer.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:34 (NIV)**
> *"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Grant's picture of restoration came from his years in the motor trade. A neglected car can be stripped down, every damaged part dealt with, and each piece rebuilt until the finished vehicle is sometimes better than when it first left the factory. He said that, in a spiritual sense, this is exactly the ministry of Jesus Christ. Sin separates us from God, and Jesus restores us to fellowship. But restoration does not stop at conversion. Along the journey of sanctification we can drift, become hurt, lose responsiveness or move away from the purpose of God. Before unpacking the passage, Grant asked us to receive the Word as a gift and to ask, 'Lord, what are You giving me?' These real events, he said, still shine like a torchlight into our lives today. [1]The invitation remains: come – He is the great Restorer.

[2]Grant defined biblical restoration as a divine act of returning something broken, lost or ruined back to God's original design and purpose, often making it better than before. That definition matters because Acts 9 contains more restoration than first appears. Most of us notice the healing of Aeneas and the raising of Tabitha. Grant said there is a third miracle already standing in the passage: Peter himself. A man who had denied Jesus and gone back to fishing is now the one going 'here and there', available to God and helping others encounter restoration. The man who has experienced restoration becomes the person through whom God can help others find restoration too; Peter is the conduit, but Jesus Christ is the One who heals.

This also changed the way Grant spoke about miracles. [3]He warned us not to treat the spectacular as the 'pyrotechnics' of Christianity – as if God must constantly prove Himself through dramatic signs. Creation already bears witness to Him, and every new life is extraordinary. The greater miracle is a wayward life turned around and restored to its created purpose in God. Each of us has been shaped, gifted and formed in particular ways, and God wants to use who we are within His plan on earth. Grant even spoke of family, personality and the quirks that make each person uniquely themselves. Restoration is therefore not merely about feeling better; it is about returning to the life for which God called us.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Where in my life do I most need to receive the sermon as a personal invitation to God's restoring work rather than only as an interesting Bible story?
2	How does Grant's definition of restoration change the way I think about areas that feel broken, lost or off course?
3	Am I more drawn to spectacular signs, or to the quieter miracle of a life being restored to God's purpose - and why?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You that You are the great Restorer. Shine the light of Your Word into the places where I have drifted, become hurt or lost sight of Your purpose. Help me receive what You are giving me this week and return to Your design with a willing heart. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

God's restoring heart reaches beyond what is broken and calls me back to His original purpose.

TUESDAY
DAY
2

Peter: Restored to Purpose

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday we saw restoration as God's act of returning what is broken, lost or ruined to His original design. Today Grant's first miracle comes into focus: Peter himself, restored from fear and retreat into the purpose Jesus first spoke over his life.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Matthew 4:19 (NIV)**
> *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

When Jesus first called Peter and Andrew, He took Peter's familiar identity as a fisherman and gave it a kingdom purpose: he would become a fisher of men. Peter then lived and travelled with Jesus for three years. [1]Yet when danger came, the bold disciple retreated. He fell asleep when asked to pray. He denied Jesus three times when fear of man and fear for his own safety rose. After the crucifixion, he went back to fishing. Grant highlighted this because calling does not mean we never retreat; it means Jesus does not abandon His purpose when we do. He said Jesus keeps coming after us again and again, even when we have turned our backs on Him or on His calling. Peter's return to fishing was not the end of his story.

John 21 shows Jesus coming after Peter again. Grant drew attention to the three denials and Jesus' threefold question, 'Do you love me?' The restoration did not begin with position, gifting or usefulness. It began with love for Christ. From there came 'feed my sheep', then the call to shepherd, and finally 'follow me'. [2]Grant told the leadership group that Christian ministry has this order: love Him first, feed people, then shepherd them. He also spoke of feeding ourselves as well as feeding others. We cannot truly shepherd people we have not fed, and we cannot rightly feed them if our own life is no longer rooted in love for Him. Otherwise, he warned, ministry can become hype rather than something flowing from love for Jesus.

[3]By Acts 9 Peter is going 'here and there'. Grant loved the phrase because it describes a man who is no longer passive. Post-Pentecost, Peter is responsive to the Spirit and functioning again in the purpose Jesus gave him. The first miracle in Acts 9:32-43 is therefore a restored man becoming a conduit of restoration to others. This is also a picture of 'Your kingdom come'. God's rule becomes visible in me when I respond to His will, ways and promptings. Then, through a restored and responsive life, His kingdom can touch other people too.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Where have fear, disappointment or retreat pulled me back toward an old identity instead of the purpose God called me into?
2	How healthy is the order Grant described in my life right now: loving Jesus, feeding others, and then shepherding or serving them?
3	What would a less passive, more Spirit-responsive version of my ordinary week actually look like?

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You that You continue to come after me when I retreat. Bring me back to love for You before every role, ministry or responsibility. Restore me to the purpose You have spoken over my life, and make me responsive enough that Your restoring work can flow through me to others. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Restoration brings me back to love for Jesus, then back into responsive purpose.

WEDNESDAY
DAY
3

When the Body Stops Responding

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Peter showed us what restored purpose looks like: love for Jesus, then feeding and shepherding, expressed in a life that is no longer passive. Today the sermon moves to Aeneas and the spiritual danger of becoming disconnected from Christ our Head.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:33 (NIV)**
> *There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Peter found Aeneas among the saints in Lydda. At this point Grant described restored Peter as moving around, meeting what he called divine coincidences and divine appointments - being in the right place at the right time. He also noted that Acts is not describing wall-to-wall miracles every day. Years had passed since Pentecost. People had come to Christ and then simply lived life. Aeneas had been paralyzed for eight years, and the wording mattered to Grant because the paralysis was not from birth. [1]Something had happened along the way. He used that detail to describe a spiritual reality: no one is reborn as a spiritual paralytic. We can become unresponsive through events, pain, hurt, sin, offence, disease, burnout or brokenness. Grant also noted that this was about eight years after the outpouring of the Spirit: time had passed, believers had lived ordinary life, and dysfunction had developed along the way.

Physical paralysis involves a disconnect between the brain and parts of the body that should respond to it. The body can look complete while certain parts no longer function. Grant drew the parallel directly to Christ and His body. Christ is the Head. When His direction is no longer producing responsiveness in us, something has become spiritually paralysed. [2]All the 'parts' may still be visible - church attendance, Christian language, knowledge, gifts - yet the life is not moving in response to the Head. Grant's picture was stark: everything can look normal, yet the body still needs to be carried because the parts are no longer responding. That is why spiritual paralysis can be difficult to notice from the outside.

Then Peter says something Grant wanted us to hear carefully: 'Jesus Christ heals you.' Not 'I heal you', and not merely 'Jesus healed you once'. Grant emphasized the present, ongoing force of the statement. His point was pastoral: however long we have been Christians, if paralysis has developed in an area of our lives, redemption is still available. Jesus Christ is not only the One who saved us at the beginning; He is the One who continues to restore and heal as we walk with Him. Grant described the wording as a statement of fact and ongoing action - Jesus heals you. [3]The invitation is present, not locked in the past: Jesus Christ heals you.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What 'since then' moment – hurt, offence, loss, burnout, sin or disappointment – may have reduced my responsiveness to Christ over time?
2	Where do I still look spiritually complete on the outside while knowing that a particular area is no longer responding to Christ as Head?
3	What difference does it make to hear 'Jesus Christ heals you' as a present invitation rather than only a truth about the past?

PRAYER

Jesus Christ, You are my Head and my Restorer. Show me where pain, offence, sin or weariness has interrupted my responsiveness to You. I receive Your present mercy and ask You to restore function, movement and obedience where I have become stuck. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

A life can look complete and still be paralysed; Jesus Christ restores responsiveness today.

THURSDAY
DAY
4

Rise and Make Your Bed

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Aeneas showed us how spiritual paralysis can develop after we have begun the Christian life: a disconnect between Christ the Head and our responsiveness. Today Grant focuses on the decisive instruction that turns restoration into movement: rise and make your bed.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:35 (NIV)**
> *All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Grant paused over the instruction Peter gave Aeneas. He did not simply say, 'You are healed; carry on.' [1]He told him to get up and make his bed. Grant heard in the wording a call to personal responsiveness: get up yourself. Where there has been a disconnect between the Head and the body, restoration begins when the body responds again to what the Head is saying. The journey out of paralysis therefore includes a concrete act of obedience. Somewhere, at some point, we have to respond to something God is saying. Grant said the journey toward redemption and restoration starts with responsiveness - with receiving an instruction from God and actually acting on it.

Grant spoke candidly about living for ten years in a victim mindset after offence. When we stay there, everything can begin to be interpreted negatively through what happened to us. [2]For him, 'make your bed' became a picture of dealing with that phase of life, putting it aside and entering fully into the new season God was giving. Grant used the language of casting the old phase away and immersing ourselves in the new reality. Restoration does not deny the pain of the old season. It refuses to let that old season keep carrying and defining the new one. Aeneas' response was immediate: he rose.

Aeneas rose immediately, and the change became visible. People in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. Grant linked this to the prayer, 'Your kingdom come.' The kingdom is an authority issue. God's kingdom comes in my life as I respond to His rule, will, ways and promptings. [3]Then my changed life can become evidence to someone else. Grant said people observe restoration and can find faith to go the journey themselves and live with and for God. Restoration is not merely private relief; it becomes visible testimony. The change, the new beginning and the restoration were obvious, and that visible evidence helped others turn to the Lord.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What clear instruction from God have I heard but delayed responding to because I am waiting to feel more ready first?
2	What old 'bed' – a season, offence, identity or story – do I need to put in its proper place so I can enter the new season fully?
3	If my restoration became visibly obvious, what might the people around me see changing in the way I live, speak or respond?

PRAYER

Lord, give me courage to respond. Where I have remained passive, show me the next act of obedience. Help me put the old season in its place and enter the new one without carrying a victim identity forward. Let Your kingdom come in the way I respond to You. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Restoration becomes movement when I respond: rise, make the bed, and enter the new season.

FRIDAY
DAY
5

Busy With the Things of God

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Aeneas moved from paralysis to responsiveness, and his visible restoration helped others turn to the Lord. Today the sermon moves to the opposite extreme: Tabitha, outwardly full of good works, yet a warning that activity for God can never replace intimacy with God.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:36 (NIV)**
> *In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Grant described Tabitha as the opposite end of the spectrum from Aeneas. He had been unable to act; she was 'full' of good works and acts of charity - always occupied, a total overachiever with a reputation for mercy. Yet in those same days she became ill and died. The disciples washed her body, as custom required, but then did something unusual: they laid her in an upper room instead of proceeding immediately with burial. Grant saw faith in that choice. [1]They had heard about Aeneas. Faith comes by hearing, and what they heard made them act differently, even against the normal cultural expectation of the day. The news of restoration created enough faith for them not to proceed in the usual way.

When Peter arrived, the widows stood around him weeping and showing the tunics and garments Tabitha had made. Grant also pointed out Peter's own responsiveness: when the disciples sent for him and urged him to come without delay, he rose and went with them. Grant heard in the widows' display the danger of justification by works - almost an argument that she deserved restoration because of all the good she had done. He was careful not to dismiss good works. They should be evidence and fruit of salvation. [2]The danger is when the works begin to carry the weight that belongs to relationship with Christ. We can become so busy with the things of God that we forget the God of the things.

That warning became very practical. [3]Grant said that when people come for counsel, one of his first questions is about their quiet time, Scripture reading and prayer life. Again and again the answer can be, 'I am too busy.' Outwardly we may look impressive - active, useful, compassionate, admired - while something inside is slowly dying. The greatest commandment begins with loving God, not with building a ministry resume. Good works belong in the Christian life, but they must flow from intimacy with the Lover of our souls rather than substitute for it. Do not love the works more than the God of the works.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What have I heard God doing in someone else's life that should stir faith and a different response in me?
2	Where am I tempted to measure my spiritual health by what I do for God rather than by the condition of my relationship with Him?
3	What is one practical change I need to make to protect prayer, Scripture and unhurried time with God from being crowded out by good activity?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for every good work You give me to do, but keep those works in their proper place. Forgive me where busyness has become a substitute for intimacy. Restore my prayer, my hunger for Scripture and my simple love for You, so that what I do flows from life with You. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Do not love the works more than the God of the works.

SATURDAY
DAY
6

Restored People Restore People

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Tabitha warned us that outward Christian activity can hide inward decline. Today Grant completes the sermon: restoration comes through Christ, reveals God's compassion, brings Him glory, advances His kingdom, and then flows through restored people to others.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:43 (NIV)**
> *Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Peter put everyone outside, knelt down and prayed. Grant pointed out that the original wording is forceful: he cast them out. [1]In the sermon picture, the idea that works could justify Tabitha had to leave the room. The way to restoration is Jesus Christ and Him alone. Then Peter kneels – a posture of dependence – and says, 'Tabitha, arise.' She opens her eyes, sits up, takes Peter's hand and is presented alive. The restoration is not credited to Peter's power or Tabitha's record. Christ is the Restorer, and His servant depends on Him.

[2]Grant then summarized three purposes of miracles. First, they demonstrate God's heart and compassion for individuals. Second, they bring glory to God. Third, they point toward His kingdom and the ultimate restoration that will be complete when His rule and reign are fully established. Until then we still live in a broken world where believers can go off course, become paralysed or even start to die inwardly. The good news is that there is no condemnation in Christ's invitation: come and be restored to purpose.

The final detail in the passage is Peter staying with Simon the Tanner. Grant said this is not incidental. A tanner handled animal carcasses and skins and was treated as ceremonially unclean. Yet restored Peter now stays in his house. Restoration is still working in Peter, breaking old cultural and religious barriers. Grant closed by turning the whole sermon toward us. Salvation is the first miracle of restoration, but the purpose is not to make me great. It is to make me a functioning part of the body through whom restoration can reach others. [3]He spoke honestly of offence, hurt, burnout and loss in his own story, and said those who have been restored are often best placed to help someone walking the same road. Repentance, he said, is simply agreeing with God when He highlights something – a way back to fullness. The invitation at the end was decisive: this can be a 'make up your bed' moment. Respond to the disconnect and let Jesus restore you.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What mindset, self-justification or reliance on my own record needs to be 'put outside' so I can depend on Christ alone?
2	Which of the three purposes of miracles - compassion, God's glory, or the coming kingdom - most corrects the way I usually think about restoration?
3	How might an area where God has restored me become a compassionate way of helping someone else rather than a chapter I keep hidden?

FINAL PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I depend on You, not on my record. Thank You for Your compassion and for the restoring work that points to Your kingdom. Where You highlight something in me, help me agree with You quickly. Restore me to full responsiveness, and use what You have restored in my life to help others rise. Amen.

THE THOUGHT TO KEEP AFTER DAY 6

God does not restore me to make me great; He restores me so His life can flow through me to others.

SUNDAY
DAY
7

The Miracle of Restoration

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday Grant completed the sermon by showing that Christ alone restores, that miracles reveal compassion, glory and kingdom, and that restored people are uniquely able to help others. Today we gather the whole week and ask where God is calling us to respond.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 9:42 (NIV)**
> *This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

This week began with a picture from the motor trade: something worn, damaged or ruined being stripped back and returned to its intended design. Grant used that picture to describe the heart of Jesus. Restoration begins at salvation, where sin's separation is dealt with through the cross, but it continues as Christ brings us back from the ways we drift, retreat or become unresponsive. The sermon also began with a simple question: 'Lord, what are You giving me?' These events are history, but Grant wanted them to speak into our lives now. That is why Peter is the first miracle in the sermon. The fisherman called to be a fisher of men denied Jesus, retreated in fear and went back to fishing. Yet Jesus came after him again, restored love before ministry, and brought him back to feeding and shepherding people. By Acts 9 he is going 'here and there' – active, led and available.

Aeneas then showed us the other danger: all the parts can still be present while the body no longer responds to the Head. His eight years of paralysis became a picture of offence, hurt, burnout, sin or brokenness interrupting our responsiveness to Christ. The answer was both gift and response: 'Jesus Christ heals you' and 'rise and make your bed.' Grant emphasized that this healing is not only something Christ did in the past; His restoring work remains available when paralysis develops later in the journey. Grant's own testimony made that concrete. A victim mindset can keep an old season alive long after God is calling us into a new one. Restoration becomes visible when we respond, and visible change can help others turn to the Lord.

Tabitha showed us that the opposite extreme is also dangerous. We can be full of Christian activity while inwardly running out of life. Her good works were real, but they could not justify her. Peter put the crowd outside, knelt in dependence and called her to rise. Grant's warning was simple: do not become so busy with the things of God that you forget the God of the things. He brought the issue down to prayer, Scripture, hearing God and time with Him – the things busyness so easily pushes aside. Works are the result of salvation, not the way of salvation. Salvation is a free gift, and so is restoration.

Across all three stories, the same kingdom pattern appears. God restores a person; that person becomes responsive; and the evidence of restoration reaches beyond them. Peter crosses an old boundary by staying with Simon the Tanner. Aeneas' neighbours turn to the Lord. Tabitha is presented alive and many believe. Grant closed by saying that the kingdom is advanced not through perfect people, but through people who have known paralysis, inward death or failure and have been restored. Perfection, he said, is not the requirement; responsiveness is. That does not glorify brokenness. It glorifies the mercy of the One who restores and points toward the kingdom where restoration will one day be complete.

So the final question of the week is not whether my story has been perfectly consistent. It is whether I will respond now. [1]Where have I stopped listening to the Head? Where have I allowed offence or loss to carry me? Where has busyness replaced love? Where has fear returned me to an old identity? The hand of restoration is extended. Grant's final appeal returned to the picture of Peter giving Tabitha his hand: sometimes we may need a loving, compassionate hand to help us up. [2]The sermon ends with a call to agree with God, rise, make the bed, and step again into His purpose. Grant described repentance simply as agreeing with God when He highlights something - a way toward life and fullness. [3]That response is not the end of the story; it is how restoration begins to flow through us toward someone else. Restored people become fully functioning people through whom Christ can bring restoration to others.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Looking across Peter, Aeneas and Tabitha, which picture most clearly exposes where I need restoration right now - retreat, paralysis, or busyness without intimacy?
2	What specific 'rise and make your bed' response will show that I am agreeing with God rather than only admiring the sermon?
3	Who around me might God be preparing me to help because I have personally experienced His restoring mercy in a similar area?

FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You that Your heart is restoration. Thank You for coming after Peter, healing Aeneas, raising Tabitha, and continuing to restore people today. Show me where I have retreated, become paralysed or replaced intimacy with activity. I agree with You, I receive Your mercy, and I choose to respond. Restore me to purpose so that Your kingdom can flow through my life to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CARRY THIS INTO THE COMING WEEK

The great Restorer calls me to rise, respond, return to purpose - and help others discover the same mercy.