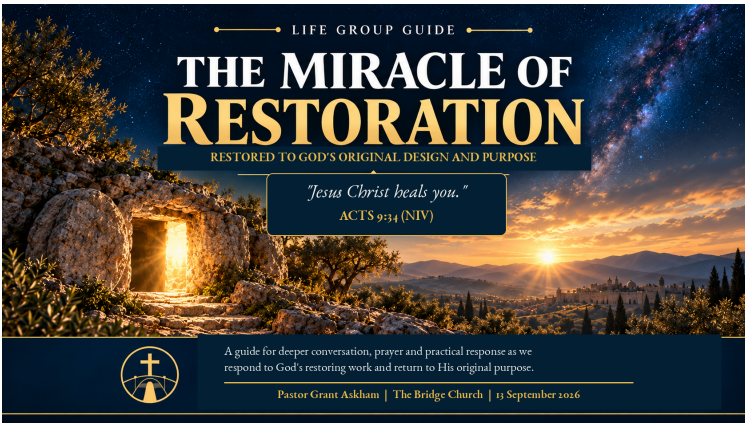



## WELCOME

This week Pastor Grant Askham preached from Acts 9:32-43 and asked us to see more than two historical miracles. He traced three restorations: Peter returned to purpose, Aeneas restored from paralysis, and Tabitha raised from death. Through all three, the invitation was personal: God is a God of restoration, and a restored life can become a means through which others find restoration too.

## THE WORD BEFORE OUR WORDS

READ ALOUD TOGETHER

Have one or more people read Acts 9:32-43 aloud. Listen before anyone comments. Notice the movement Pastor Grant highlighted: Peter restored to purpose, Aeneas told to rise and respond, Tabitha brought back to life, and people turning to the Lord as restoration becomes visible.

## THE SERMON IN A FEW MINUTES

Pastor Grant began by defining restoration with a picture from the motor trade: a rusted car can be stripped down, rebuilt and returned to its intended design. Spiritually, he said, this is the ministry of Jesus Christ. Sin separates us from God, but Jesus restores us to fellowship; and along the journey of sanctification, when we drift off course, the invitation remains: come to the great Restorer.

He then said Acts 9:32-43 contains three miracles, not only two. The first is Peter himself. Jesus had called him to be a fisher of men, yet fear led him to deny Jesus three times and return to fishing. Jesus came after him again, asked him three times, 'Do you love me?', and called him to feed and shepherd His people. By Acts 9, Peter is no longer passive: he is going 'here and there', responsive to God and restored to purpose.

Aeneas and Tabitha then show two different forms of brokenness. Aeneas had been paralysed for eight years; Pastor Grant used the physical disconnect between head and body as a picture of spiritual unresponsiveness to Christ, our Head. 'Jesus Christ heals you' is followed by a call to rise and make his bed - restoration requires response. Tabitha, by contrast, was full of good works. Pastor Grant used her story to warn that we can be outwardly active yet neglect prayer, Scripture and simple fellowship with God.

The sermon closed by showing where restoration leads. Works are the fruit of salvation, not the way of salvation; restoration is through Christ. Restored people are then able to help others rise. Miracles reveal God's compassion, bring Him glory and point toward His Kingdom, while Peter's stay with Simon the Tanner shows restoration continuing to break old barriers.

## WHAT WE HEARD THIS WEEK

- Restoration is God's act of returning what is broken, lost or ruined to His original design and purpose.
- Peter shows that failure and retreat do not have the final word: Jesus restores people to calling and purpose.
- For Pastor Grant, ministry begins with love for Christ, then feeding people, then shepherding them.
- Aeneas pictures a disconnect from Christ that can develop through hurt, offence, burnout, sin or brokenness - and restoration calls for a response.
- Tabitha's story warns us not to let good works replace intimacy with God; prayer, Scripture and fellowship with Him cannot be substituted by activity.
- Restoration is meant to flow outward: restored people help others find restoration, and visible change points people toward the Lord and His Kingdom.

## THREE CONVERSATIONS

Take your time. The aim is not to race through answers, but to let Acts 9 and Pastor Grant's sermon expose where restoration is needed and how restored people can help others rise.

**1**

### WHAT DOES RESTORATION TO PURPOSE LOOK LIKE?

Peter had been called to be a fisher of men, yet fear led him to deny Jesus and return to fishing. Pastor Grant emphasised that Jesus came after him again. Love for Christ came first, then feeding and shepherding. By Acts 9 Peter is no longer passive; a restored person becomes someone through whom restoration can flow.

*LET'S TALK: Where have fear, failure, hurt or a return to an old way made you feel disqualified? What does Peter's story say about Jesus continuing to come after us? How do we keep love for Christ ahead of position or ministry activity?*

FROM THE WORD: John 21:15-19; Acts 9:32

**2**

### WHERE HAVE I BECOME UNRESPONSIVE?

Aeneas had been paralysed for eight years, not from birth. Pastor Grant drew a spiritual parallel: when there is a disconnect between Christ the Head and our response, everything may still look present while it is no longer functioning as it should. Jesus' word to Aeneas was followed by a specific instruction: rise and make your bed.

*LET'S TALK: Without sharing more than you are comfortable with, where have you noticed a disconnect between what Christ is saying and how you respond? What could a practical 'rise and make your bed' step look like now? How can we help one another respond rather than remain passive?*

FROM THE WORD: Acts 9:33-35

3

## AM I BUSY WITH THE THINGS OF GOD, BUT FORGETTING GOD?

Tabitha was full of good works and acts of charity. Pastor Grant used the widows showing Peter her garments as a warning about relying on works to justify our relationship with God. He was clear that works matter as fruit, but activity can never replace love for God, prayer, Scripture and fellowship with Him. He described the danger as being outwardly active while inwardly dying.

*LET'S TALK: Where can good activity, ministry, work or responsibility crowd out simple fellowship with God? What signs tell you that you are outwardly active but inwardly fading? What would restoring prayer, Scripture and love for Christ look like this week?*

FROM THE WORD: Acts 9:36-42

## LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Invite several people to pray briefly. Keep the prayers rooted in the sermon rather than trying to cover everything.

Restored to purpose: Ask Jesus to restore places where fear, failure, hurt or retreat have pulled us away from His calling and purpose.

Responsiveness to Christ: Pray for areas of spiritual paralysis and ask for courage to respond to what God is saying - to rise and make the bed.

Intimacy before activity: Ask God to restore prayer, Scripture and simple fellowship with Him wherever busyness and good works have crowded them out.

Restoration flowing outward: Ask God to use restored lives to help others rise, bring Him glory and point people toward the Lordship of Jesus and His Kingdom.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

**God is a God of restoration.**

**He restores us to purpose, responsiveness and life.**

**Restored people can help others rise.**

## ONE LAST QUESTION FOR THE WEEK

*Where is Jesus calling me to respond now - back to purpose like Peter, out of paralysis like Aeneas, or back to intimacy through the warning Pastor Grant drew from Tabitha's story - and what is the next obedient step I will take this week?*

**Suggested flow: Scripture aloud • sermon recap • three conversations • prayer • take-home thought**

Scripture quotations marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version.