SEVEN-DAY DEVOTIONAL

IT'S NOT ABOUT A HAM SANDWICH

THE WALL THAT CAME DOWN

ACTS 10



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The Bridge Church

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ABOUT THIS WEEK

THE SERMON AND OUR SEVEN-DAY JOURNEY

Acts 10:1–28; Ephesians 3:6; Ephesians 2:14–15

Grant opened Acts 10 with a deliberately unexpected title: It's Not About a Ham Sandwich. His point was that Peter's vision reaches far beyond a discussion about food. It reveals the mystery he introduced from Ephesians 3: through Christ, Gentiles are welcomed into the family of God.

The sermon followed Cornelius in Caesarea and Peter in Joppa. Prayer, generosity, a messenger, a tanner's home and a rooftop vision all became part of the unfolding story. Grant invited us to read attentively and to ask the Holy Spirit to make familiar truth alive in our hearts.

As Peter wrestled with what he had seen, the men sent by Cornelius arrived. God's instruction led him beyond inherited boundaries, into hospitality and then into a Gentile home. Grant's memory of the first Black pupil arriving at his previously all-white school brought the challenge of deeply rooted cultural divisions close to home.

The message reached its conclusion in Ephesians 2: Christ is our peace and makes the two groups one. Grant called us to rest in Christ's righteousness, recognise one another as family and rise into the priestly calling of serving so that others may come to know God through Jesus.

Days 1–6 follow that progression. Sunday gathers the whole journey without adding a new message. Read the Scripture slowly, work through the three questions, and let the prayer and carry-thought shape your response. The small lowered markers in each reflection point back to the material behind Questions 1, 2 and 3.

How will Christ's welcome change the way I see and serve people?

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NIV passages verified against BibleGateway.com. Cover artwork is a thematic illustration.

MONDAY
DAY
1

A Mystery That Includes Us

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON

Grant began by asking us to look beyond the familiar food debate in Acts 10. The story reveals God's welcome through Christ. As we follow the sermon this week, we ask the Holy Spirit to make that truth personal and life-changing.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Ephesians 3:6 (NIV)**
>
> ***6*** *This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Grant's opening title was deliberately playful, but his concern was serious. We can become so occupied with what Peter's vision permits us to eat that we miss what it reveals about Jesus. Before entering Acts 10, Grant took us to the mystery described in Ephesians 3. Something once hidden is now being made known through Christ, and it concerns our place among God's people.

[1]The mystery is that Gentiles are included through the gospel: sharing the inheritance, belonging to one body and receiving the promise in Christ Jesus. Grant wanted us to feel the weight of that welcome. We are reading about something that concerns us personally. The story is larger than dietary arguments because it announces that people once regarded as outside can become part of God's family through Christ.

[2]Grant also compared the chapter to a mystery filled with clues. Details that seem incidental can help us notice the movement of the story. He could not explore every detail in one sermon, but he invited us to pay attention rather than hurry past them. That invitation is ours as we begin: let the passage speak, listen with an open heart, and be willing to receive a fuller understanding of what Christ has done. We begin with gratitude that the mystery includes us, and with a prayer that this familiar truth will become a lived reality.

He then asked how this truth reaches our hearts. Grant used the words logos and rhema to distinguish the written word we encounter from truth made alive to us by the Holy Spirit. He described reading a familiar passage repeatedly before suddenly grasping something that brings change. His

prayer was that the congregation would receive more than an explanation delivered by another person.

That gives us a posture for the week: read carefully and ask God to show us what He is teaching. Grant mentioned conversations with young people preparing to preach. Some parts of a passage were making sense while others remained unclear. His encouragement was to keep engaging with the written word and trust God for understanding. We do not need to pretend that we already see everything.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	How does being included in God's family through Christ affect the way I see my place among His people?
2	How could I read Acts 10 more attentively this week, allowing its details to challenge what I assume I already know?
3	What familiar truth do I need to bring before God for deeper understanding and a changed response?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for welcoming us through Jesus. Help me read Your Word with attention and humility. By Your Spirit, make its truth alive in my heart. Where my understanding is incomplete, keep me listening and willing to change. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

I belong through Christ; I will listen for what His Word is showing me.

TUESDAY
DAY
2

A Life Ready to Listen

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

We began with the mystery of Gentiles included in God's family through Christ. Grant asked us to read with attention and seek understanding that changes us. Today the story introduces Cornelius and the habits that shaped his response to God.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 10:1–4 (NIV)**
>
> ***1*** *At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.* ***2*** *He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.* ***3*** *One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"* ***4*** *Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Cornelius enters the story as a centurion in Caesarea, part of the Italian Regiment. Grant paused over those details because they locate him outside the Jewish people and show his responsibility and influence. He was accustomed to leading others. Yet the most important description of his life is not his military position. The text turns our attention to his devotion to God and the life of his household.

[1]His faith had a visible expression. Cornelius gave generously to people in need and prayed regularly. Grant treated these as ordinary expectations for Christian living, rather than exceptional achievements reserved for a few. He also noticed the household dimension: this man's influence reached beyond his public role into the people closest to him. Devotion was shaping both his relationships and the use of what he had.

[2]Grant asked us to consider the relationship between our prayer lives and what we see happening around us. Cornelius was praying, and the story was about to move in a way he could not have arranged himself. This was a searching question about how we position our lives before God. Do prayer and practical generosity belong to the rhythm of our days, or do they remain occasional intentions we seldom act upon?

At about three in the afternoon, Cornelius saw a vision of an angel of God. The visitor addressed him by name. Grant lingered over the beauty of that moment: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew this Gentile individual. Cornelius was frightened by the unfamiliar encounter, yet he responded by asking what the Lord wanted. His fear did not prevent him from listening.

The message connected his prayers and gifts to the poor with what had come before God. Grant described faith and works together, and reminded us to remain open to God using human messengers in our own lives. The angelic encounter is part of Cornelius's story; our response is to become attentive, prayerful and ready to hear. Today we can examine the pattern of our devotion without trying to copy an extraordinary experience. There are people near us who need generosity, a household touched by our example, and time we can give to seeking God.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	What do my household and the people around me see of my devotion in the way I give and live?
2	How does Grant's question about prayer challenge the actual rhythm of my days?
3	What might make me overlook a message God brings through another person, and how can I listen more humbly?

PRAYER

Lord, let my devotion take practical shape in prayer, generosity and the way I influence those close to me. Teach me to listen when You speak, including through other people. Make me ready to respond with a willing heart. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

I will make room for prayer, practical generosity and a listening heart.

WEDNESDAY
DAY
3

Restored to Welcome Others

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Cornelius's devotion was visible in his prayer, generosity and household. God knew him by name and gave him a message. Today we follow the instruction to send for Peter and notice where Peter was staying.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 10:5–6 (NIV)**
>
> ***5*** *Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.* ***6*** *He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

The instruction to Cornelius was specific: send men to Joppa for Simon, called Peter. Grant paused here to recall Peter's restoration. The disciple who had turned away and gone back to fishing had been met and restored by Jesus. Now that restored man would be drawn into the next part of God's work. Cornelius needed to hear from someone whose own life had already been touched by Christ.

[1]Grant described Peter as a conduit of restoration and applied that picture to us. Receiving Christ's restoring work opens a life to helping others find restoration too. Peter's past had not removed him from usefulness. The sermon invited us to recognise a purpose beyond our own recovery: what God has done in us can become part of how He reaches another person. The instruction to send for Peter gives that calling a very human shape.

The address carries another detail: Peter was staying with Simon the tanner, whose home was beside the sea. Grant explained the work of a tanner in terms of contact with animal carcasses and the concerns about ritual uncleanness that accompanied it. In his reading of the story, Peter's presence in that home was already a sign of boundaries being challenged. God was preparing him for a welcome wider than he had known.

[2]Grant connected the tanner's home with the dividing wall that had kept people apart. The story asks us to notice whom we regard as unsuitable company and what lies behind that judgement. Peter was being drawn into God's purpose in a place that carried uncomfortable associations. It is worth allowing that detail to question the boundaries we have learned to take for granted in our own lives.

,Cornelius responded by calling two servants and a devout soldier, explaining what had happened and sending them to Joppa. Grant emphasised the care with which he communicated the message. He did not leave the instruction as a private spiritual experience. He acted on it and helped others understand their part. Today's movement is simple but searching: restoration becomes service, a difficult boundary begins to loosen, and a heard instruction becomes an obedient step. We can ask where that same movement needs to become visible in us.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	How might Christ's restoring work in my life help me serve someone else who needs restoration?
2	What learned boundary or judgement is challenged by Peter staying in the tanner's home?
3	What instruction have I understood but not yet acted on, and what would a clear next step involve?

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for restoring people and giving them a place in Your work. Help me serve from what You have done in my life. Challenge the boundaries that keep me distant from others, and give me the willingness to act on what You show me. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Christ's restoration in me can become a welcome and a help to someone else.

THURSDAY
DAY
4

Hungry Enough to Be Changed

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

We followed the instruction to send for the restored Peter, already staying in a home that challenged familiar boundaries. Today the scene moves to the rooftop, where prayer and a troubling vision prepare him for a new response.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 10:13–15 (NIV)**
>
> ***13*** *Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."* ***14*** *"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."* ***15*** *The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

While Cornelius's messengers travelled, Peter went onto the roof to pray. Grant noticed prayer in both places and asked us to see it as part of ordinary Christian life. Peter became hungry while food was being prepared. Grant used that physical hunger as a picture of a deeper question: how much do we hunger for God and for a personal encounter with Him?

[1]The challenge was to seek God ourselves rather than be content to talk about someone else's experience. Grant pictured prayer as bringing what God wants to do into the reality of earthly life. Peter's ordinary rooftop became the setting for a vision that would unsettle him. A desire to hear God includes a willingness to discover that His leading may challenge the patterns with which we are comfortable.

Peter saw something like a large sheet descending by its four corners, filled with animals. Grant illustrated his reading of this image with a borrowed tallit, a Jewish prayer shawl. He explained it as a picture of coming under God's covering and entering an intimate place of listening. He explicitly said that we do not all need to buy a shawl. The application concerned the heart's posture before God.

[2]In that intimate picture, Grant invited us to consider whether we make space for God to communicate something that changes us. The vision's animals were presented together, crossing the familiar distinctions Peter knew. Then came the instruction to rise, kill and eat. Grant drew from this a picture of rising into a priestly role: restored people serving so that Gentiles could come to know Christ and His atoning work.

Peter protested that he had never eaten anything impure or unclean. The voice answered that he must not call impure what God had made clean. ,Grant brought the meaning back to people: Gentiles welcomed through the blood of Christ must not be treated as common outsiders. Jesus came for the salvation of people across those divisions. The encounter happened three times before the sheet returned to heaven. Grant's question presses beyond whether we enjoy hearing something fresh. Are we willing for God's Word to change our response to people? The prayerful hunger he encouraged leads us towards that costly, practical openness.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Where am I living on other people's experiences of God, and what would seeking Him personally look like?
2	How could I make more attentive space for God to challenge and change me through His Word?
3	Which response to people needs to change if I take seriously what Christ has made clean?

PRAYER

Father, awaken a hunger for You in me. Draw me into prayer that listens as well as speaks. Let Your Word challenge my comfortable assumptions, and help me welcome those You bring into Your family through Christ. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

I will seek God with a heart willing to be changed in how I see people.

FRIDAY
DAY
5

Go Without Hesitation

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Peter's vision challenged the categories he had lived by. Grant called us to seek God personally and let His Word change our response to people. Today the vision meets real visitors at the gate, and understanding begins to become obedience.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Acts 10:19–20 (NIV)**
>
> ***19*** *While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.* ***20*** *So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Peter was still trying to understand the vision. Grant reminded us that the gospel has Jewish roots. God's promise to Abraham included blessing the nations; the unfolding welcome of Gentiles belongs within that purpose. Grant was clear that the church had not simply replaced Israel. He pointed ahead to the two becoming one. [1]Peter's perplexity helps us feel how deeply this development challenged the world he knew.

It is easier to recognise God's purpose after the story has unfolded than to welcome it while our own assumptions are being unsettled. Then Cornelius's men arrived at the gate. Grant described the timing as a divine coincidence: God was at work in Caesarea and Joppa, bringing people to the right place at the right time. Peter was learning while the next step was already arriving at the door.

Grant then recalled his years at an all-white boys' school during apartheid. He remembered the arrival of the first Black pupil and an emergency assembly. He used that memory to illustrate how a change can confront a culture people have absorbed as normal. [2]His point was that racism has no place in Christ's family. The welcome of people we once kept outside can expose convictions we inherited without honestly examining them.

The Spirit told Peter to go downstairs and accompany the men without hesitation, because He had sent them. Peter went down, listened to why they had come and heard that Cornelius was waiting for his message. Grant returned to the idea of rhema: truth made alive by the Spirit and carried to others. He challenged a version of Christianity reduced to intellectual argument about who is right or wrong.

,The question became personal: what message do we carry, and how does our response make room for others to hear it? Peter invited the men into the house as guests. The vision was beginning to take shape in hospitality before the journey continued. Today's challenge is to recognise where our inherited boundaries resist God's welcome, and to respond to the step before us. We do not finish the story by admiring its timing. We follow Peter as he opens the door and moves towards the people God has brought near.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	How does Peter's perplexity help me recognise the assumptions I bring to God's unfolding work?
2	What inherited cultural attitude needs honest examination in the light of Christ's welcome?
3	How could a practical act of hospitality give expression to the message of Christ I want to carry?

PRAYER

Lord, expose the attitudes I have accepted without examining them. Help me recognise Your leading and respond without hesitation. Make the message I carry alive in my conduct, and teach me to open my life to people You bring near. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

I will let Christ's welcome become visible in an obedient, open door.

SATURDAY
DAY
6

One Family Through Christ

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Peter received the visitors and began turning revelation into hospitality. Grant challenged inherited barriers and asked what message we carry. Today we reach the sermon's conclusion: Christ makes one family, and we are called to serve within His reconciling purpose.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Ephesians 2:14–15 (NIV)**
>
> ***14*** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,* ***15*** *by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Cornelius was waiting in Caesarea with relatives and close friends when Peter arrived. He fell at Peter's feet, but Peter made him stand. Grant saw the priesthood of all believers expressed in that response. Peter was a man like Cornelius, and being used by God gave him no right to receive worship. The meeting showed a welcome that did not place one person above another as an object of devotion.

[1]Grant asked us to recognise that equality. Peter entered, found people gathered and explained what God had shown him: he should not call anyone impure or unclean. The rooftop vision had become a changed way of meeting people. Christ's atoning work was the basis of their welcome, and the restored Peter was serving in the unfolding of that welcome. Grant brought the whole account back to the removal of the dividing wall.

He then read from Ephesians 2. Jesus Himself is our peace; He has made the two groups one and creates one new humanity in Himself. Grant again stressed that this was not Israel being replaced by the church. The two become one in Christ. The message of Acts 10 reached beyond food to the family being formed through Jesus and the peace He brings.

[2]Grant connected that peace with righteousness received through Christ. Salvation does not rest on our being good enough. Jesus is our righteousness, and dependence on Him brings joy and peace with God and with our brothers and sisters. This was an invitation to rest in what Christ has done and to recognise the people welcomed beside us. We do not earn our place by proving ourselves superior to them.

As the congregation prepared for communion, Grant closed with a call to rise into our priestly function. He asked whether we were fulfilling that calling and described a life of sacrifice so that someone else may come to know God through Jesus Christ. His final application moved from belonging to participation. The family Christ forms is a family in which we serve. Today we can receive His welcome with gratitude, refuse to elevate ourselves over another person, and ask what serving someone else will cost us. That is where Grant left the sermon: Christ has opened the way, and we are invited to take our part.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	How does Peter's refusal to receive worship challenge the way I view spiritual status and other believers?
2	Where do I need to rest more fully in Christ's righteousness rather than trying to prove I deserve my place?
3	What sacrifice of my time, comfort or resources could help someone else come to know God through Jesus?

PRAYER

Jesus, You are our peace and our righteousness. Thank You for bringing us into one family through Your sacrifice. Free me from pride and self-reliance. Help me take my place in serving so that others may come to know You. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

Welcomed through Christ, I will serve so that others may know Him too.

SUNDAY
DAY
7

Live the Welcome You Received

YESTERDAY IN ONE MINUTE

Yesterday the sermon ended with Christ as our peace and righteousness, making one family and calling us to serve. Today we gather the week's journey and consider how the welcome we have received will shape the way we live.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

> **Ephesians 3:6 (NIV)**
>
> *6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

We began with Grant's unexpected reminder that Acts 10 is about more than a ham sandwich. Ephesians 3 gave us the central truth: Gentiles share in God's family through Christ. We were invited to read with attention and to seek understanding made alive by the Holy Spirit. The week has asked us to let that truth move from something familiar into the way we respond to God and people.

Cornelius showed devotion expressed through prayer, generosity and the influence of his household. God knew him by name, heard his prayers and gave him an instruction. [1]We can return to that picture and examine our own readiness to listen and act. Cornelius did not keep the message to himself; he explained it and sent his men. Prayerful attention and practical obedience belonged together in the story.

The instruction led to Peter, a restored man through whom others would be helped. His stay with Simon the tanner already challenged familiar boundaries. On the rooftop, prayer and hunger became the setting for a vision. Grant's prayer shawl illustration called us to intimate, attentive listening, and Peter's protest exposed the strength of his settled categories. God was preparing him to see people differently.

[2]That challenge became concrete when the visitors arrived. Grant's school memory helped us recognise how inherited culture can make exclusion seem normal. Peter listened to the Spirit, welcomed the men and travelled with them. Revelation was taking the shape of hospitality. This week asks us to notice the difference between agreeing that Christ welcomes people and actually making room for them in our relationships and actions.

At Cornelius's home, Peter refused worship and stood alongside him as a fellow human being. The sermon reached Ephesians 2: Christ is our peace, making the two groups one. Grant called us to rest in Christ's righteousness and recognise those welcomed beside us. His closing invitation was to fulfil our priestly calling through service and sacrifice so that others may come to know God through Jesus. We finish by carrying that same invitation into daily life. The welcome we have received can shape our praying, giving, listening and serving. Let gratitude for our place in Christ's family become a willing response to the people He brings near.

THREE QUESTIONS TO HELP ME REFLECT AND REMEMBER

1	Looking back over the week, where do prayer, generosity and obedience need to become more closely connected in my life?
2	What difference will Christ's welcome make to one relationship or inherited attitude I have recognised this week?
3	Which act of service will help me carry Grant's closing invitation into the coming week?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the welcome we receive through Christ. Help me carry this week's truth into my habits and relationships. Keep me prayerful, generous and ready to obey. Let my service make room for others to come to know Jesus. Amen.

CARRY THIS WITH ME TODAY

I will live the welcome I have received through Christ.