

# Capernaum

“Places in the life of Christ”



“And Jesus said unto them, ‘I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.’” John 6:35

Some people refer to Capernaum as the second home of Christ. It was a small fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and according to Scripture; Christ spent a lot of time there.

When Christ heard that John was in prison, he left Galilee and went to live in Capernaum. It was at this time that Jesus really began to preach and tell people that the kingdom of Heaven was “at hand.” They didn’t understand, but He did warn them. He went into the synagogue and taught. The people were amazed at the way He taught with such authority and then when he healed the man who had an unclean demon they were amazed with His miracle. As a result of this His preaching became very popular and people began to take Him seriously.

One time when He was talking in the synagogue is especially familiar to many because it is often part of the communion service, but it must have been confusing at the time and it also upset the Jews who were having trouble with His popularity. Jesus told them that He had come down from Heaven. And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?” But He didn’t stop confusing them with that. He told them that He was the living bread and that bread they were to eat would be His flesh. Again the Jews questioned: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus answered “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” John 6:35-59 This passage is still confusing today. It wasn’t just for the people at Capernaum. That same message is for all of us. When we take communion, is it actually the body and blood of Christ, or does the bread and the wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ? The discussion on Spiritual food vs. literal food has continued to this day.

Five of the twelve disciples were from around Capernaum – Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew. Christ saw Peter and Andrew as He was walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee and called them to follow him. He called to James and John, also fisherman, while they were mending their nets. Matthew was a tax collector. Matt 9:9-13.

The miracle of healing for the man with palsy took place in Capernaum. So many people were gathered in the house that those who had taken him to see Christ couldn’t get in so

they removed part of the roof and lowered the man down to Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith He told the man “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were several doubters there and they said that only God could heal. But Christ heard them and said “Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.’ And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We never saw it on this fashion.’” Mark 2:10-12 The doubters were silent.

While many believed. Many also doubted. One strong believer was the nobleman who went to Christ when he was in Cana and asked for healing of his son who was sick at Capernaum. Jesus said to him “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” But the man begged for Christ to go back to Capernaum and heal his son because he was dying. Jesus told him to go home that his son was alive. The man believed and went his way. As he was going home, his servants met him and told him his son was alive. When the nobleman asked the time, he knew it was the same hour that Christ had told him his son was alive. He and his whole house became believers. This was the second miracle that Christ did. It was also in Capernaum where He healed a fever that Peter’s mother-in-law had. Luke 4:38-39.

One time Christ overheard the disciples discussing who would be the best among them. He waited until they were safe in Capernaum in a home and then asked them what they were discussing. When they told Him, He told them “If any man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.” They were trying so hard to understand, and Christ was trying to prepare them for what was about to happen. It must have been stressful for all of them. As we look back, we understand as much as we can, but we have the advantage of hindsight. Imagine yourself at this time and how confused you might have been.

The story is told of a man who was going on an ocean voyage. To save money he stocked up on cheese and crackers. As he neared his destination, everything was going stale and he decided to splurge and have one meal in the dining room before the ship docked only to find out that all the food was included in the cost of the ticket for the whole trip. Our way has been paid with Spiritual food. There is no cost; only our acceptance. The people at Capernaum didn’t understand what Christ was saying then any more than we can accept things today. We need to have the unquestioning faith of a child.

Prayer: God, You are our Rock and our Redeemer. You are the Beginning and the End. Help us to understand with our finite minds that Your love is always there for us and when we accept this love by Your grace we are guaranteed Eternal Life with You. Forgive our sins and help us to seek to live our lives according to Your will. Amen

1. How would you accept the preaching of someone who came to you and told you that you had to eat his body and drink his blood to receive a particular gift?
2. What does “He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst” mean to you?
3. Have you ever had an experience where you knew that a particular prayer was answered for you like it was for the nobleman?
4. Are we ever tempted to want to know who was the best at a particular thing or who was liked the most like the disciples were discussing when Christ overheard them?
5. Why does our faith have to be like that of a child?

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