

Forgiving Sins

by Troy Crain

After being expelled from His hometown of Nazareth (Matthew 4:13-16; Luke 4:16-31), Christ entered Capernaum and adopted it as His “own city.”¹ Mark 2 and Matthew 9:1 record that Jesus “got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.”² Some translations state that Jesus was at home. “House” is not preceded by an article, so it could very well mean that He was in His hometown of Capernaum.

The city of Capernaum is taken from two Hebrew words, (Kaphar) translated “village,”³ and (Nahum) translated “comfort.”⁴ Capernaum means “Village of Comfort.”⁵ This is the city in which the paralytic found comfort.

“There is no certain evidence that the name bears any relationship to the prophet Nahum, although an inscription found near the mouth of the Yarmuk refers to *Kephar Nahum*, ‘the village of Nahum.’”⁶

Capernaum—the most important city on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was here that Jesus established His headquarters for the major part of His public ministry (Mt. 4:13). In Mt. 9:1 Capernaum is called “his own city.” At least three of Jesus’ disciples came from there. Peter and Andrew, originally from Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44), had apparently moved to Capernaum (Mk. 1:29). It was from a tax office in the same city that Matthew rose to follow Jesus (Mt. 9:9). Many miracles were performed in and around Capernaum: e.g., the paralyzed servant of the centurion was healed (Mt. 8:5–13); a paralytic, carried to Jesus by four friends and let down through the roof, picked up his bed and walked (Mk. 2:1–12); and Peter’s mother-in-law was cured of a fever (Mk. 1:29–31).⁷

¹ M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 1996), Capernaum.

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is NKJV.

³ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), H3723.

⁴ *ibid*, H5151.

⁵ *ibid*, G2584.

⁶ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised, vol. 1, by R. H. Mounce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 609.

⁷ *ibid*.

The word “immediately” occurs three times in the first twelve verses of Mark 2 (vs. 2, 8, & 12). This is an interesting word to study. William D. Mounce says this in his book *A Graded Reader of Biblical Greek*:

Papias (AD 140) indicates that Mark was a close associate of Peter and that the gospel of Mark consists largely of Peter’s preaching organized by John Mark. Knowing what we do about Peter’s personality, is it any wonder that the Greek word *eujquvV* (“immediately”) occurs 42 times in Mark alone? Although *eujquvV* is occasionally used in a weakened form [as in Mk 1:3], it basically carries a sense of urgency and refers to an action that takes place without delay.⁸

Many believe the gospel of Mark is attributed to Peter. We can see Peter’s impetuous personality shining throughout the book. The word “immediately” occurs 42 in the book of Mark (59 times in the entire New Testament). Peter is known for rushing out and immediately doing things, many times without thinking. Picture him recounting this story to Mark, so he can recorded it for his readers. In his excitement, Peter quickly told how everything “immediately” happened and Mark penned it just as Peter said. As soon as Jesus entered the house in Capernaum, immediately it was full and there was no room for anyone else (vs. 2). As soon as the scribes murmured within their hearts (vs. 6) about Jesus response at the seeing the four men’s faith (vs. 5), immediately Jesus confronted the scribes to their face (vs. 8). When Jesus told the paralytic to “arise, take up your bed, and go to your house” immediately he gathered his belongings and departed from the house (vs. 12).

At the conclusion of Mark 2:2, it says, “and He preached the word to them.” Christ knew that some of the people were not in favor of Him, still He was faithful to preach the word to them. This is similar to what the apostle Paul commanded in 2 Timothy 2:2-5 when he said, “Preach the Word!” He was telling Timothy not to waiver because he knew that many would fall away and not endure sound doctrine. Christ demonstrated this in Mark 2. His desire for us to “preach the Word.”

The example of the four men who carried the paralytic man also serves as an example to us. They were persistent in getting their friend to Christ, even though the way was blocked by the religious skeptics, those who just wanted to see a miracle, and even unbelievers. These four men realized that Christ alone was capable of changing the condition of their friend. We should also overcome obstacles when bringing our unsaved family and friends to Christ.

⁸ William D. Mounce, *A Graded Reader of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 35.

Scriptures says in Mark 2:5, “when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’” Jesus taught the principle of forgiveness all through the Gospels. It is found in the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6. In Matthew 18, Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive an erring brother. Jesus responded by saying “up to seventy times seven” (22). The implication here is that one should not keep track of infractions but should always be willing to forgive.

With all of His teaching on forgiveness, the Gospels only records three times where Jesus forgave someone. One of those is recorded in Luke 23:34, where Christ was hanging on the cross. He asked the Father to forgive them for their ignorance of what they were doing.

The other two times Jesus forgave the sins of individuals. The first was this paralytic found in Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; and Luke 5:17-26. The Scriptures record that Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic when He saw the faith of his friends.

The other individual is recorded in Luke 7:36-50, where Jesus forgives the sins of a sinful woman—sins which Jesus said are many. Jesus looked at the sinful woman and said, “Your sins are forgiven.”

[There are similar incidents recorded in the other three gospels (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 11:1-2). It is hard to say with certainty if all four of these are accounts of the same incident. If there are, then the woman’s name is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. However, Luke 7:36-50 gives a more detailed description of the account.]

In Matthew 9:9, Scriptures records “as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him.” Mark 2: 13-17 and Luke 5: 27-32 record the same incident but this time the man’s name is Levi. Therefore it is determined that Matthew and Levi are the same person.

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