



Luke 4:31-37

Jesus then went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee. He taught them on the sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue there was a man with the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out in a loud voice, "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are -- the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him and said, "Be quiet! Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down in front of them and came out of him without doing him any harm. They were all amazed and said to one another, "What is there about his word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." And news of him spread everywhere in the surrounding region.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, you have looked with favor on me. You have seen in my soul fertile ground, and you have sown your word in hope of an abundant harvest. I hope never to let you down by not responding in faith. I allow you to lead me to the fullness of my vocation as your disciple.

Petition: Christ, may zeal for your friendship consume me so much that I remove all sin from my life.

1. Great Hopes: Jesus had great plans for Capernaum — a big city, situated by the lake on the “way of the sea,” a thoroughfare open to travelers. It was an ideal hub from which to spread the Gospel. Would anyone from such a big town have interest in his message? Christ made his home there. He exercised the greater part of his public ministry in Capernaum and graced it with more than one-third of his miracles. It was quite different from Nazareth. Christ asks us to find our Capernaum — seeking that niche, using those talents, evangelizing that audience — where we can become the most effective apostles for him. This may demand a greater love from us, but we can see how Christ blesses this effort with his presence, teaching and healing.

2. Simple Faith: Christ chooses to cure a man on the Sabbath in Capernaum and

nobody raises an eyebrow! How different this is from Jerusalem! These people here have a simple faith, unconcerned about the legalities of ritualistic orthodoxy. "Here I can preach. Here I can heal. Here I can work!" Christ feels at home and welcomed. Here Christ finds vocations: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew. Here Christ finds faith even among the pagans: the centurion who asks for a cure. One can sense a special predilection of Christ toward this city. From those who have been given more, more will be expected.

3. Generosity Pushed to Its Limits: Once a soul responds in generosity, Christ opportunely draws it to the fullness of its vocation. Encouraged by Capernaum's faith, Christ asks more of it; just as he asked of the rich young man. As we see later in the Gospel, what better place than faith-filled Capernaum for Christ to reveal to the world one of his most difficult teachings: presenting himself as the Living Bread come down from heaven? In the end, the majority leave him. "Will you go away too?" The present-day ruins of Capernaum testify to the truth of Christ's warning: "As for you, Capernaum, 'Are you to be exalted to the skies? You shall go down to the realm of death!' If the miracles worked in you had taken place in Sodom, it would be standing today. I assure you, it will go easier for Sodom than for you on the Day of Judgment" (Matthew 11:23-4).

Conversation with Christ: Lord, you know me and you know everything about me. Let me not become blinded by the arrogance of my own opinions and ideas. Help me to keep you always before me as the goal of my life, the pearl of great price, for which I joyfully sell all I own to possess.

Resolution: I will use one of my talents to help somebody today.