

Finally My Mother Wanted to Know

By Treasure Elder Barfuss

As the funeral procession of cars turned onto the small road leading to the cemetery, memories ran through my mind. In my sadness over the untimely death of my father, I sought comfort in the gospel and the scriptures. Ecclesiastes 3:1 came to mind: “To every thing there is a season.”

My family did not attend a church regularly when I was young, but my parents manifested their faith in the Christlike way they helped those in need and in the way they let each of us children know we were loved. My parents had been a part of every season of my life except one, and that season brought great sorrow to them because they did not understand and would not listen to my testimony of what I had found.

When I was 17, some good friends introduced me to the Church. The restored gospel answered questions I had had for years, but my parents would have nothing to do with it. When I joined the Church at 18, only my grandmother attended my baptism. She was not a Latter-day Saint, but she seemed to understand my spiritual need, and she assured me

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that someday my parents would accept my decision.

I married shortly after my baptism and moved away with my husband. I shared news of my temple sealing a few years later in a letter to my parents, telling them of my joy and newfound faith. But I was unable to interest them in the gospel. Now my

father was gone, and my mother and little sister were left alone.

My thoughts were interrupted as the cars came to a stop. Immediately to our left I noticed a monument covered with foliage. An engraving on the stone seemed to beckon us, but we went to the graveside service without inspecting it.



After the service had ended, we expressed our gratitude to friends and relatives and said our good-byes. My husband, mother, and I then walked to the monument. Inscribed on it was a scripture that would change my family forever: “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

For the first time, 14 years after my baptism and confirmation, my mother asked questions. Because of the restored gospel, I could provide answers. She and my sister were baptized and confirmed shortly thereafter. A little more than a year later, my father’s temple work was completed.

More than 30 years have passed since that day at the cemetery. During that time, members of our extended family have been sealed together in the temple. My mother became a Relief Society president and gave several years of devoted service. My sister married, had children, and served many years as a Laurel leader, president of the Young Women, and worker for LDS Family Services.

To everything there is a season—including a time of joy and a time of sorrow. I am thankful for the knowledge that prayers are answered in God’s own season and that the scriptures offer us words of life as we search, ponder, and share them with one another. ■


How Could She Forgive Him?

By Thomas E. Horlacher

One day in 1961 while Elder Roger Slagowski and I were knocking on doors in Wilhelmshaven, West Germany, an elderly widow graciously welcomed us into her humble apartment. I was so surprised that I asked if she really understood who we were. She assured us that she did and that she had been waiting for us.

She told us that two Latter-day Saint elders had knocked on her door decades before, when she was a young mother. Because she was busy at the time, she had turned them away. Afterward she felt terrible about it and vowed that if Latter-day Saint missionaries ever knocked again, she would invite them in.

Emma Henke had a keen mind, and she listened to our message intently, but she often seemed to have a distant, far-off look. She was kind to us and was always eager to share her meager fare, but we wondered if she truly comprehended the importance



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of our message. Finally we decided to put her on our callback list and just drop by from time to time when we were in the neighborhood.

A few weeks later we stopped in again. As we visited, Emma suddenly announced, to our surprise, her determination to be baptized!

It was only then that she began sharing details from her difficult life. During the last days of World War I, her infant daughter had died. In 1924 a nine-year-old daughter had succumbed to diphtheria. During the winter of 1941–42 she had received her last letter from her 21-year-old son, who was fighting on the Russian front during World War II. She learned of his death a short time later.

Emma's husband, Hugo, had despised the policies of the Nazi government. She often pleaded with him to be more cautious. Early one day in 1944, after a government radio-beam locator tracked a British Broadcasting Corporation signal to the Henkes' home, the Gestapo broke down the door and arrested him. He was sent to a concentration camp near Hamburg, and Emma and their last surviving child, a young son, were left to fend for themselves.

Emma went to the local Nazi official responsible for her husband's imprisonment and pleaded on her knees for his life but to no avail. She learned of Hugo's death in March 1945. The official himself was subsequently sentenced to life in prison but had been released shortly before we knocked on Emma's door. She said she often saw him speeding along the streets of the city in an expensive new car. On the day she requested baptism, Emma said she had finally found the strength to forgive him for taking away her husband and rejecting her pleas for mercy. She had resolved to leave judgment in the hands of the Lord.

Emma became a faithful member of the Church and found great joy and comfort in discovering the truths of the restored gospel. In November 1966, while hurrying across a public square in Wilhelmshaven on her way to a Relief Society meeting, she collapsed and died of a heart attack.

Sister Henke refused to become embittered by the trials of her life, and she died free of the rancor of revenge. Surely this dear sister enjoyed a marvelous reunion with those she had loved and lost. ■

How I Found Christ in Capernaum

By Jason Jones

Following years of planning and preparation, I finally made my way to the Holy Land with family and close friends. As we approached the Sea of Galilee, we looked forward to seeing Capernaum.

The book of Matthew tells us that after the people had rejected Christ in His hometown of Nazareth, the Savior made Capernaum "his own city" (Matthew 9:1). It was in Capernaum and on the shores of the Sea of Galilee that Christ called Peter, James, John, Andrew, and later Matthew as disciples (see Matthew 4:18–22; 9:9).

Capernaum means "village of Nahum," or village of comfort or consolation. Christ indeed had compassion on the people of this city and comforted them by casting out devils, healing "all that were sick," and even raising the dead (see Matthew 8:16; Mark 5:35–42). Although He later rebuked the people of Capernaum for rejecting Him, Christ probably performed more miracles here than anywhere else.

In Capernaum we explored ruins and wandered down old city roads in awe of what this little village had witnessed (see Matthew 11:23). Later, I stopped and sat under a tree,

pondering and gazing out on the Sea of Galilee. My great expectations to feel the events of the scriptures come to life, however, remained unfulfilled. Despite my preparation for the trip, sincerity in seeking Christ, and determination that had brought us here at last, I felt an emptiness that weighed on my heart.

Why wouldn't this place where Christ blessed so many people also bless our lives? As I grappled with my feelings, I longed to read the scriptures. I checked with each member of our group, but sadly, no one had brought a Bible.


Fortunately, one member of our group had a personal digital assistant with an electronic version of the scriptures on it. We soon gathered around, listening as someone read verses in Matthew 4 and Mark 5 about the Savior in Capernaum.

As soon as our focus shifted to the scriptures, the emptiness that I had been feeling was replaced with a comforting witness of the love of the Savior and of the reality of the events of which the scriptures testify. We had come to Capernaum searching for Christ, but we didn't find Him until we searched the scriptures. It was not the physical

surroundings that bore witness to us but the Holy Ghost.

Scripture study can be supplemented by history, commentaries, linguistic insights, and occasional travel, but there is no substitute for learning directly from the Spirit as we immerse ourselves in the scriptures. The sons of Mosiah, who "had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God" (Alma 17:2), exemplified this principle.

May daily scripture study be central to our search for Christ, for the scriptures truly are the best place to find Him. ■



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