The Hope Laid Up for Us

Trinity XXIV · 15 November 2026

The lessons appointed at Holy Communion: Colossians 1. 3–12 and Saint Matthew 9. 18–26

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

What does it mean to come to Christ in faith?

This morning's Gospel gives us two answers. A ruler comes openly and kneels before Jesus. His daughter has died, and he asks Christ to come and lay his hand upon her. The girl cannot come for herself, so her father carries her need before the Lord. Then a woman approaches silently from behind. She has suffered for twelve years. She says nothing aloud, but within herself she prays, *"If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole."*

One faith speaks; the other reaches. One person comes for another; the other comes carrying her own hidden suffering. Yet both place their hope in the same Lord. That is also how we come to Christ. We bring before him those who cannot come for themselves: the sick, the sorrowful, the discouraged, the absent, and those who have asked for our prayers. At other times we come like the woman, carrying wounds we cannot explain and sins or fears we are ashamed to name.

Christ hears both kinds of prayer. Prayer does not receive its strength from our eloquence. Faith does not rest upon the certainty of our feelings. Its strength rests in the One to whom we come. The woman's faith begins with an "if": *"If I may but touch his garment."* But Christ answers her trembling hope with his certain word: *"Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole."*

What, then, does Christ mean when he calls her "Daughter"?

Before she speaks with her lips, faith has already been written in her heart, and that inward faith moves her to reach for Christ. Her touch is not magic; it is faith made visible in action. Christ recognizes what is within her, receives her openly, and gives her the name of one who belongs. She came as a suffering stranger and departed as a daughter. And if a daughter, then an heir—one received into that inheritance which Saint Paul calls *"the inheritance of the saints in light."*

In both miracles Christ restores more than physical life. He restores people to fellowship: a woman to the household of faith, and a daughter to the father who loves her. Yet these miracles point beyond themselves. The woman who was healed eventually died. The daughter who was raised returned, in time, to the common end of mortal life. Their restoration was real, but it was also a sign of the greater healing Christ came to accomplish.

But what is the healing we most deeply need?

Today's Collect names our deepest illness. We ask God to absolve us from our offences and to deliver us from the bonds of the sins which, through our frailty, we have committed. Sin binds the will, disorders our loves, wounds our relationships, and separates us from God. We cannot release ourselves merely by trying harder. We must come to Christ.

Where do we come to receive that healing?

We come to this Holy Table. We do not come because we have made ourselves worthy. We come confessing that we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under his Table. We come trusting not in our own righteousness, but in his manifold and great mercies.

The woman reached for the hem of Christ's garment. Here Christ reaches toward us. He gives himself to his people in the sacrament of his Body and Blood—not as a reward for the perfect, but as grace for penitent sinners who believe his promise and desire his healing.

What kind of life should that grace produce in us?

Saint Paul prays that the Colossians may *"walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"* and be *"fruitful in every good work."* Grace comes first; the fruit follows. Christ restores us to fellowship so that we may become instruments of his mercy. Carried by the prayers of others, we learn to carry others. Having received forgiveness, we learn to forgive. Having been shown compassion, we learn to serve.

So let us take a simple rule into the coming week. Carry one person deliberately before Christ in prayer. Bring to Christ one hidden need of your own. Then perform one work of mercy that his grace places within your reach.

And what hope remains when earthly healing is incomplete?

We cannot know that every temporal prayer will be answered in precisely the manner we desire. But we know where Christ is leading his people. Saint Paul calls it *"the hope which is laid up for you in heaven"*—our inheritance among the saints in light.

Christ meets us in illness and leads us toward perfect healing. He finds us in despair and gives us hope. He receives our trembling faith and answers it with his certain promise. And the hand that raised the ruler's daughter will, at the last, raise all who have placed their trust in him.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.