

Trinity XXIV

Colossians 1: 3-12 - Matthew 9: 18-26

What do you do when everything you try to solve a problem fails? Whom do you turn to for help? Where do you find peace for your soul? Who do you talk to when your own world turns upside down?

It is natural that when things start happening in our lives to turn to man for advice or guidance.

Today's gospel gives us an idea of how to properly handle our situations. In each of the two stories we find the same three stages through which the people find completion in and through Christ:

1. We first see how they are unable to solve their problems
2. We see them turning to Jesus
3. We see them healed and restored by Christ

Both the woman suffering for 12 years as well as the girl (Mark told us that she was 12 years old) are images of our human limitations.

First the woman

She has been looking for help for 12 years. She spends all her money on doctors, but nothing works. Slowly she is bleeding out, life is running through her fingers. She is cast out from society. She is desperate. She needs help. I see this as an image of a man spending all his energy looking to fill the empty void in his soul that is his deepest desire – for fulfillment, happiness, searching for meaning – but not finding it.

How many people do we know in our society today who are in the same kind of situation? They run and keep running from one desire to another; from one ambition to another; from one experience to another; they try this, and it doesn't work; they try that, and it doesn't work. And everything turns out empty.

We see ourselves failing our own expectations and that of our society. Like the women – we feel cast out. What comes out of that is depression or we burn out.

Secondly, the girl

She was sick and later we heard that she died. It looks like her father made that trip to Jesus for nothing. Death separates her from her family. She is now unclean. Her parents can't even touch her, just like the woman who has been separated from society, because of her uncleanness.

The real question at this point (and for us as well) is where do we find help when all that we try fails?

Turn to Jesus

In the gospel, they go to Jesus: there is no better place to go. That's where we find solace and peace. In Jesus, we have answers to all our questions, we find meaning for our longings, and we can be sure that everything will be just fine. If we don't have all our problems solved the way we want to, we must understand that there is a reason for it. We need to remember that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Psalm 37: 23-24).

The other lesson that we learn today is that we too have many people in our relationships who don't know Christ yet. They are separated from God. We need to turn to Jesus and pray for them. And Jesus not only heals our physical or emotional wounds, but he also connects us to God and our fellow men, by ending the separation. This is the main point of the gospel.

As Christians we are called to have a faith that is unshakable, one that is built upon a solid rock, not on a shifting sand.

In Psalms 91:15 God says to you and me, "When they call on Me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them."

I pray that God heals you and restore you to him and your fellow men as you ask Jesus for His touch upon your life today.

Prayer

O GOD, merciful and compassionate, who art ever ready to hear the prayers of those who put their trust in thee; Graciously hearken to us who call upon thee and grant us thy help in this our need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.