

To Look, Reach, and Come unto Christ

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The Messiah extends His arm of mercy to us, always eager to receive us—if we choose to come to Him.

In Minerva Teichert’s magnificent painting *Christ in a Red Robe*, the Savior of mankind, with nail prints in His hands, stands majestically with outstretched arms. In tenderness and compassion He looks down upon the women straining to reach Him.

I love the symbolism of women reaching out to touch the Savior. We long to be close to the Lord, for we know that He loves each of us and desires to encircle us “eternally in the arms of his love.”¹ His touch can heal ailments spiritual, emotional, or physical. He is our Advocate, Exemplar, Good Shepherd, and Redeemer. Where else would we look, where else would we reach, where else would we come but to Jesus Christ, “the author and finisher of our faith”?²

He pronounced: “Yea, verily ... , if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive.”³ His promise invites us not only to reach towards Him but also to take the all-important next step: to come unto Him.

This is such a motivating, cheering doctrine. The Messiah extends His arm of mercy to us, always eager to receive us—if we *choose* to come to Him. When we do come to the Savior with “full purpose of heart,”⁴ we will feel His loving touch in the most personal ways.

A “certain woman”⁵ made that choice and felt His touch. “And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

“Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

“And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

“And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

“And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

“And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.”⁶

I have asked myself what might have happened if this woman with the issue of blood had not believed in the

Savior enough to make whatever effort was necessary to touch the border of His robe. In that throng I imagine getting even that close to Him took some doing. Yet, “nothing wavering,”⁷ she persisted.

In like manner, we must demonstrate that faith in the Lord has penetrated our hearts deeply enough to move us to action.

A friend told me of an instance when she was inconsolable. She felt such sorrow over a family tragedy that on one day she could not even leave her home. Unannounced, a Relief Society sister came to her door and said, “I had the feeling you needed me.” The sister did not probe or ask for details but rather enfolded my friend in her arms and asked, “Would you like to have a prayer?” After their prayer the sister left. That kind touch and sensitive approach did much to heal my friend’s broken heart.

This loving Relief Society sister not only listened to the Spirit, but she acted upon that prompting. In a real sense, she showed that the virtue found in the doctrines of salvation had touched her so profoundly that she worked daily to be Christlike. Her actions reflected her personal understanding that “charity never faileth.”⁸

Of the millions of you faithful Relief Society sisters who, like this compassionate sister, reflect that everlasting love of Christ,⁹ which is charity, President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “Innumerable are the deeds of these remarkable and wonderful and unselfish women in succoring those in distress, in binding up the wounds of those who have been hurt, in giving cheer and comfort to those in distress, ... in lifting up those who have fallen and giving them strength and encouragement and the will to go forward.”¹⁰

That very will to go forward toward our Savior sometimes requires on-the-spot repentance. It’s recognizing we’ve made mistakes or haven’t done what we could to encourage or help someone. These personal course corrections in thought, action, or word are essential for all who desire to come unto Christ. They represent individual choices about how we will touch each other literally and figuratively.

We draw closer to the Savior as we encircle others in loving arms. Or we don’t. We balm emotional or physical wounds. Or we don’t. We look at each other with a loving rather than a critical eye. Or we don’t. We ask forgiveness for harm we have caused, even if it was unintended. Or we don’t. We do the hard spiritual work of forgiving those who have given us offense. Or we don’t. We quickly correct our errors or oversights in personal relationships when we become aware of them. Or we don’t.

Like you, I know what it means to make essential course corrections. I remember a time when, without any intent to do so, I offended a sister in my ward. I needed to reconcile this issue, but I must admit that my pride kept me from going to her and asking for her forgiveness. Family, other commitments, on and on—I found ways to postpone my repentance. I was sure things would work out on their own. But they didn’t.

In the stillness of not one night but several, I awoke with a clear realization that I was not taking the course the Lord would want me to take. I was not acting on my faith that His arm of mercy was truly extended towards me—if I would act aright. I prayed for strength and courage, humbled myself, and went to the sister’s home and asked for her forgiveness. For us both, it proved to be a sweet, healing experience.

Sometimes a personal course correction is as immediate as retracing our hurried steps toward the exit after Church meetings and instead crossing the foyer to greet a lonely sister who we know will talk long. Often it will be as long-term as regularly rising above feelings of resentment for family members who treat us thoughtlessly—all

while we are trying to build positive relationships. Regularly, these individual course corrections, which are crucial instances of repentance, yield “the peaceable fruit of righteousness.”¹¹

Seeking that fruit of righteousness, it is no wonder that we, like the women in Minerva Teichert’s glorious artwork, stretch with longing and adoration toward the Savior, for we know He extends “the arm of mercy towards them that put their trust in him.”¹² Because this glorious promise is true, where else would we look, where else would we reach, where else would we come but to Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, the Lamb of God, our Messiah?

I know that “the Son of Righteousness arise[s] with healing in his wings”¹³ not only for that certain woman with an issue of blood, but also for each one of us. He would guide and bless and gather us—if we will *choose* to come unto Him. May we do so every day of our lives.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. 2 Nephi 1:15.

2. Hebrews 12:2.

3. 3 Nephi 9:14.

4. 3 Nephi 10:6.

5. Mark 5:25.

6. Luke 8:43–48.

7. James 1:6.

8. Moroni 7:46.

9. See Moroni 8:17.

10. “*Mormon* Should Mean ‘More Good,’” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 54.

11. Hebrews 12:11.

12. Mosiah 29:20.

13. 3 Nephi 25:2.

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