



1 John 3.¹⁶⁻¹⁹

¹⁶Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

We are justified— born again, forgiven, receive a remission of sins—solely through faith in Christ and his grace—his generosity or beauty of character and soul. There can be no thought of working our way to forgiveness or birthing ourselves. We are wholly dependent upon the merits of Christ.

However, having been justified without money and without price, we do have a part to play in retaining our remission of sins. While still in need of help—and much of it—we do have a role to play in our sanctification. With help, we exercise our will and exert our energy in striving to imitate Jesus, the first of sanctified men. Like him, we seek to be of maximum benefit to the individuals that surround us and the societies of which we are a part by laying down our lives to raise others up.

With the apostles warning that “whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion,” we are reminded that one important aspect of our lives that heavily influences and determines our sanctification is economic—how we use our personal economic resources and what we do to influence society's use of economic resources to benefit the less advantaged. As we open up our hearts to those who “hath need,” we follow Jesus in “taking upon ourselves others' infirmities, and feel the assurance of God's pleasure and our sanctification. Thus are we better prepared to face whatever challenges face us in the world to come.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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