

## 78. We Should Help and Befriend Our Neighbor in Every Bodily Need.

**Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.** *Matt. 5, 7.*

The Word of God calls woe upon those who give offense to others, causing them to sin and harming their spiritual life. But it also makes us responsible for the soul of our neighbor. If his soul is endangered and we do nothing to help him, we become the murderers of his soul. It is our sacred duty to take a sympathizing interest in our neighbor's woe, even though nothing appeals to us but his mute misery, his helplessness, his want. To convict us of gross negligence in the eyes of God, nothing is necessary but that we fail to help some poor Lazarus lying at our door, although we have the means to help him. God takes note of this and says: "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?" 1 John 3, 17. Again, Is. 58, 7: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him and that thou hide not Thyself from thine own flesh?"

Those in bodily need we have always with us, the poor, the sick, the afflicted. The needy may be wholly or in part themselves to blame for their distress; they may, moreover, have treated us basely, laughed and scoffed at us, slandered us, and injured us in many ways. Nevertheless it is the will of God that we should help them. To be sure, none of us has done his whole duty in this respect. Unless mercy prevails over justice, none of us will be saved. But let us not use this as a passport wilfully to pass by the poor and needy. It is truly blessed to give to those in need. To those who do so the Lord will say on the Last Day: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Oh, then, let us be merciful toward our neighbor!

## Prayer.

O God and Lord of all, grant that we may not in any way devise or do injury to ourselves or our neighbor, but by Thy Holy Spirit fill our hearts with true love of Thee and all men that we may seek to preserve what Thy hand has made and help our neighbor in his every need, help the needy with our gifts, but above all give them our sympathy, our love, which inspires even the most helpless and hopeless with new cheer and courage. Let us so live in this world that men may see our good works and glorify Thee, our Father in heaven, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Abide, O faithful Savior,  
Among us with Thy love;  
Grant steadfastness and help us  
To reach our home above.

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