

CHAPTER 4. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

4.1 Christ is the only Righteous One

When the Bible says that all men were sinners in Adam, it is not only to the people before that time, nor to the people of that time, but also to the people of every age in the last days, that everyone is a sinner, whether they are Greeks, Romans, Jews, Americans, Indonesians, or Chinese. Because all the people of the earth are the descendants of Adam, therefore Adam sinned, and all mankind sinned, and the end of sin is death and a terrible judgment, from which no one can escape, and which no one can bear and has to bear. This age will divide people into country people and city people, common people and intellectuals, primitive people and civilized people, Oriental people and Westerners, there is no difference in their essence, they are all sinners. The president is a sinner, the governor is a sinner, the teacher is a sinner, and the thief is a sinner. The white man is a sinner, the black man is a sinner, the yellow man is still a sinner, and the sinner is a label for everyone, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, culture, region or era. It is an absolute fact that everyone is unjust, that no one is just, and no matter how religion, culture, or philosophy tries to conceal and relativize this absolute fact, it will be of no avail. In the world as we know it, in the great men of history that we know, there is not one who is not a sinner. Therefore, when it comes to mankind itself, it is hopeless, and the future is bleak and irrelevant. However, the incarnated Christ is the only righteous one, which is like a thunder blast

shaking the dead world, and like lightning piercing the dark home, mankind finally has hope and breakthrough, which is not only the most important information for people to face life in the time of Paul nearly 2,000 years ago, but also the urgently needed life-saving truth for people in the era of continuous development of material civilization. There are no any righteous people in this world besides Jesus.

Can anyone be righteous except in Jesus Christ? Absolutely not! The kind of man that the Greeks had always admired as an example, a gentleman, a man of the great virtues of wisdom, righteousness, courage, temperance.¹¹⁸ One sentence in the Bible denies that no one knows the secret wisdom, the saving wisdom of God. Therefore Greek wisdom is not true wisdom, but is still the wisdom of sinners, which can neither bring them the forgiveness of sins nor the knowledge of Jesus Christ, therefore, even if they think that the model of the gentleman is a perfect hero Odysseus such as in Latin variant *Ulysses*¹¹⁹ if he is a real person, he is still a complete sinner, facing eternal death and judgment. In the great ideas of Greece there is no idea of salvation, no idea of holiness, and no standard of righteousness, so that man in the Greek cultural and religious system is a man without hope. This total depravity of ignorance could not be resolved in the Roman system which integrated most of the

¹¹⁸ Stephen Tong, Sin, *Righteousness and judgment*, Simplified Chinese Version, Published by STEMI, Printed by Printmate SDN BHD, 12-13.

¹¹⁹ Robert P. Gwinn, Board of Directors and Peter B. Norton, President and Philip W. Goetz, Editor in Chief, *The New Encyclopedia Britannica 15th Edition*, Vol 8 Micropedia, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 877-878.

Greek heritage.

For thousands of years, China in the East has honored Confucius as "Model Teacher of every age"(万世师表) which I can only regard as a great compliment, but not its essence. Although the Confucianism founded by Confucius can probably be summarized as "benevolence, righteousness, rites, wisdom and faith", which had a profound influence on the Chinese of later generations, without exploring the nature of sin, their benevolence and righteousness became false benevolence and false righteousness. They thought that through education they could change people and reach the point of perfection, which was very optimistic and blind confidence. As a result, Confucius died, Mencius died and so on. Generations of followers have died, and their deaths tell us a sobering truth: they underestimated sin and overestimated human action! Although later generations have continued to respect Confucius believers, they only see The greatness of Confucius, but do not think about Confucius's own limitations, even Confucius himself lamented "Heard the Tao (logos) in the morning and died at night",¹²⁰ "unknown life, Who knows death? ",¹²¹ but Confucius used death to show the absolute fact that he was a sinner. He can't solve sin. He did not know Jesus Christ, who came to earth 500 years after him and lived 10,000 kilometers away from where he lived.

¹²⁰ Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius chapter Li Ren*, Translated by Edward Slingerland, Hackett Publishing Company, 32.

¹²¹ Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius chapter Xian Jin*, Translated by Edward Slingerland, Hackett Publishing Company, 111.

Without Jesus Christ, we cannot solve the fundamental sinful nature, that is to say, underneath Confucius's "Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faith" (仁义礼智信) is sin, which is only a thought within sin. Not only that, but those who followed him against him were all sinners. More than 2,400 years after Confucius' death, during the Cultural Revolution, his coffin was dug up, his bones were ruined, his bones were crushed and Temples of Confucius were destroyed everywhere! "Model Teacher of every age" plaque was burned.¹²² Although Confucius' thoughts have influenced future generations for thousands of years, he really cannot be the example of future generations, because sin cannot be eliminated, and all artificial "examples" are in vain, because all followers die in sin like him. Today, many Confucius Institutes have been set up around the world, Confucius statues have been erected, Confucius portrait have been hung, and Confucius is worshipped. I will not say where they got the image of Confucius, I just want to ask, a future generations revered as a role model of Confucius and such an end, how can they still superstition a person who can not even save himself?

Although there are so many countries in the world, so many religions, and so many cultures, it is impossible to list them meaningfully, but I have to ask, which country knows Christ? Is there a culture that is Christ-centered, a religion that worships Christ? Cultures and religions are merely a response to God's general

¹²² *During the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards destroyed the former residence of Confucius in Qufu*, https://news.ifeng.com/history/1/jishi/200903/0325_2663_1076307.shtml.

revelation, which in itself may be a positive response or a negative response, but either response is far from sufficient because there is no special revelation. Christ is the Special Revelation.¹²³ This is the revelation of the way to salvation,¹²⁴ not at all the play of human wisdom, nor the product of culture, but the secret wisdom of God, a revelation from God. Without special revelation, man will never know Jesus, will never trust Him, and will never be clothed with the righteousness of Christ and become righteous. Such a special revelation is not found in the thoughts of Confucius, not known to Laozi, not in the philosophy of India, not in the philosophy of Greek. The core of such revelation (Christ) is an impossibility found in Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, and hundreds of different folk religions, not in Indonesia, China, or the rest of the world, which can never have a special revelation of Christ Jesus. There is a Messiah in Judaism, but they don't recognize Jesus as the Christ (Messiah).

Islams recognize Jesus as a Great prophet, but do not recognize Jesus as the Son of God, do not accept the God of the Trinity, do not believe that Jesus Christ is incarnate, and do not believe that the blood of Jesus Christ can forgive sins, so the Jesus they preached is another Jesus, not the Jesus of Nazareth revealed in the Bible. The moral error of the Catholic Church is that they believe in the righteousness of a person other than Jesus Christ because Christ injects righteousness into the believers,

¹²³ Louis Berkhof, *Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology and Systematic Theology*, translated by A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 162.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 163.

which is totally unbiblical.

In addition to this, there are many new religions in this era, such as Bahá'í Faith¹²⁵, who believe in Jesus, but also believe in Muhammad, believe in Moses, believe in Buddha and so on. This is also very wrong! There is only one way that a man can be righteous by the true God, and that is through Jesus. Not by Moses, not by Confucius, not by Sakyamuni, not by Muhammad, but by Jesus Christ alone. They put Jesus Christ on an equal footing with the great men of the world and also with the sinners of the world, which is a big mistake! Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life, the only righteous One, the only righteous one who can share righteousness with us and make us righteous.

Thus it can be seen that in no kingdom, religion, or culture on earth is he freed from the bondage of sin, nor can he find the place of true righteousness, because the only righteous one, Jesus Christ, is from God, not from the earth. This also declares that the righteousness of Christ surpasses all this, and that He is the only way to be righteous.

Of course, we should also be careful in this era, because there are many crises in Christianity, such as the New Perspective on Paul, which has arisen in recent years, and they do not accept the imputation of righteousness. They emphasize that "ethnic identity is an important factor for salvation. Become righteousness is not about one's

¹²⁵ *Encyclopedia Americana International Edition*, Vol 3, Americana Corporation, 54.

salvation, but about being identified as a member of the covenant community. As for becoming righteous, the point is that the righteous God forgives the believers' transgressions and removes their sins, but it is not that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believers".¹²⁶ Obviously, this is very vague and wrong. Obviously, this is very vague and wrong, and very dangerous.

4.2 To Live a Righteous Life

Today we have an extremely convenient way of life, mobile networks enable us to connect with the world, we can grasp the consultation thousands of miles away in the first time, we can click on the phone we want to see what we want to see, listen to what we want to hear, it can be said that we today enjoy some of the resources that the emperor could not enjoy. We can have breakfast in Beijing in the morning, rest in Hong Kong at noon, have tea in Singapore in the afternoon, and work in New York the next morning. Although we are not yet powerless, we can do almost anything we want, and with the click of a finger, our will can be carried out. Even, in the era of more and more developed AI, we now speak directly to the mobile phone, and it can be realized immediately, as if God said that there is, and destiny stands. We are more and more capable, like God, we don't seem to need God, even Christians, although we may believe that there is a God, we gradually love the world more than God, the

¹²⁶ Ligon Duncan, *N.T. Wright and the New Perspective on Paul*, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/nt-wright-and-new-perspective-paul>

world of people addicted to all kinds of Internet videos, games and tons of junk information, self-satisfaction in anesthesia, faith in superstition, forget in optimism the total depravity of man and the great sacrifice and redemption of Jesus Christ. So much so that in this paralysis, we don't seem to care about sin and righteousness anymore, we don't preach the Gospel like many churches do today, we just entertain ourselves and enjoy ourselves. We don't care about the lives of others, or the difficulties of other believers. What difference does this make between us and the church at Corinth?

The Times of today are like those of Corinth. They are extravagant on the surface, but empty and sinful on the inside! People today, sexual crimes, drunkenness, idolatry, theft, lying, and all kinds of evil. This are true even of believers, even of seminarian preachers, and even of evangelist pastors. Living an unclean and unrighteous life. And confusion: righteousness and unrighteousness intersect, faith and unbelief are yoked together, light and darkness are linked. There are disputes in the church, just as there were in the Corinthian church. In fact, Paul harshly criticized the Corinthian church for all its sins. So "Christ has become our righteousness", a theme that is very important to the church today. Because we began to forget the original, we began to think of ourselves as righteous, we began to be proud, arrogant, can own their own way! If we stray even a little from the Lord's teaching, we are fallen! We are in sin, there is no righteousness in us.

When Charismatics and Prosperity theology arose, we found that the church

spoke more about love, more about success, more about abundance, and less and less about sin, repentance, and righteousness. The lectern lacked the piercing faith that called for repentance, but a very sweet, very gentle speech that was right in the heart of one's heart. By not talking about sin for years, we were actually ignoring Christ's sacrifice on the cross for years, we were ignoring Christ's atonement, and we were downplaying the unique preciousness and greatness of his righteousness. In essence, they don't even believe, they are not Christians at all.

The Reformed pulpit is still very pure preaching of Christ, Christ-centered preaching, exalting Christ, preaching the righteousness and holiness of the love of God. That's good. But not enough! More and more academic preachers are not preaching and praying, but more and more pursuing academic achievements and academic hats, not more and more pursuing life and Christ union, not pursuing righteousness and holiness, and without love and compassion, their lives are like machinery, preaching cold, can not be said to be wrong, but have no power! They piled up a lot of knowledge, but they lacked spiritual fragrance, and the relations between them and their hearers were really cold, and the preachers and the pastors and the elders often quarreled and tired! These are not the manifestation of Christ's righteousness in life, but rather the manifestation of human sin! The Word of God is living and powerful, but in the mouths of many preachers, the Word of God seems to have no power, as if it were dead! You know a lot of theology, but you haven't read the Bible a few times. Isn't that ironic?! From this alone, I have a deep concern for

many pastors and preachers in Indonesia! For I do not wish the present decline of the theologically reformed Western Church to happen to the rest of the world. Christ is the power and wisdom of God, not theology! Theology is only a tool, only a body of knowledge, and compared with faith, theology itself cannot give us life, nor can it make us overcome sin, nor can it make us repent of our sins, nor can it make us righteous.

Even the greatest theologians, such as Calvin, Martin Luther, and Augustine, were sinners, and they constantly reminded themselves that they were sinners, always looking to Christ for salvation. It is obvious that true theology is to make people more aware of God's greatness and their own sins, to make people more fearful of God and humble, rather than to make people self-sufficient and proud.

No theology is ignorance, no theology of conversion is a diversion. Do not think that because you have read theology, you have nothing to be proud of, or that you have become a doctor of theology or a theologian. For he cannot be justified by it. He's still a sinner at heart. You should know that many of those antichrists, murderous big devils have read theology, such as Marx,¹²⁷ Stalin,¹²⁸ etc., they bring endless disasters to the world. Do you see them doing righteousness? Have a part in the righteousness of Christ? Although we cannot judge whether a person is saved or not

¹²⁷ David McLellan, *Karl Marx Biography*, Palgrave Macmillan, 7-8.

¹²⁸ Ian Grey, *Stalin, Man of History*, Doubleday & Company, Inc, Garden City New York, 18.

by his deeds, none of the evil they have done in their life, nor the lies they have witnessed in their life, nor their end, makes us believe that they have a share in the righteousness of Christ.

As we aspire to a life of righteousness, we must fight against sin, for righteousness and injustice do not go together (2 Corinthians 6:14). There are so many people in this world who do not believe in Jesus, they do not believe in the Lord Jesus, they do not welcome the Lord Jesus, and they want to persecute the Church of the Lord. Therefore, it is impossible for a Christian to persist in the path of righteousness without suffering all kinds of persecution and suffering. In countries such as China and North Korea, it is the government that persecutions Christians, arrests preachers, restricts various church meetings, and shuts down local churches. It is not that the Church has made any mistakes, but that this is the way of the cross that the Church must take. Are the churches in the West persecuted? In many cases, it seems that the government does not persecute the church and that they have freedom of belief, but in fact, they also suffer terrible persecutions. Many leftists persecute the church, homosexuals persecute the church, and Antifa persecutes them. If the church does not follow the path of the cross, it will inevitably decline, the church will inevitably decline, the church will be closed, sold or converted into restaurants, hotels or even mosques. Jesus also said that every believer should take up the cross and follow the Lord (Matthew 16:24). He also promised that blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for they will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew

5:11-12). Is it possible to live a believer's life on Earth without going through persecution and suffering? There is no such promise in the Bible, or clinging to it may lead to a quagmire of success theology. Many times in the Corinthian Epistles Paul speaks of the various sufferings of believers, which are also the sufferings of Christ. Paul testified to the Lord, preached righteousness everywhere, and suffered so much (2 Corinthians 11:16-33) that he did not shrink back. Still, by the grace of the Lord, he continued serving the Lord until his martyrdom. In the general principle of the Bible, persecution is necessary to live a godly and righteous life (2 Timothy 3:12). And Christ's becoming our righteousness also establishes the premise and guarantees that we have the strength to walk the righteous way of the cross. In this way the righteous path of the cross was walked by the apostles, and most of them were martyred;¹²⁹ and many Church Fathers were martyred.¹³⁰ This has been the path of saints throughout the ages, and it must be the path of every Christian today. Paul tells each of us in 2 Corinthians 4:17 that our momentary and light sufferings will accomplish for us great and eternal glory.

Finally, Christ is the ultimate judge of righteousness, and believers should be careful in their words and actions and have good testimony. I think the preacher should be a good example of a righteous life. The fact that many preachers sin no less

¹²⁹ John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs Kisah Para Martir Tahun 35-2001*, Penerbit Buku dan Majalah Rohani, 4-8.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 13-15.

or no less than the rest of the world reminds us that no matter what degree we get or how much experience we have in service, we are still blessed sinners. If we leave Christ, we will not be justified at all. Man has nothing to boast about! All words and deeds of the world will face the judgment of God, because they do not believe in Jesus Christ, and therefore there is eternal death waiting for them. And believers must also face the judgment of Christ before the platform of Christ, and Christ judges every believer according to his righteousness. Not only can none of us in this age escape, but believers in all ages must face the judgment of Christ. Although it is not about salvation, such a judgment should not be taken lightly, because it is also a manifestation of God's righteousness. Whoever thinks he is standing firm must be careful that he does not fall (1 Corinthians 10:13).