

PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS

A sermon for growing in the Lord

By Gootla Dorababu and Richard Kirby

SERMON FOR SUNDAY 27TH APRIL, 2008

Text: Proverbs: 11:3, Proverbs: 2:7

Place Written: Andhra Pradesh, India and Edmonds, WA, USA

Theory: Faithfulness is the way to righteousness.

Purpose: There are many blessings when we obey God and walk in the Way of perfect righteousness.

This sermon was written first by Pastor Gootla Dorababu in Andhra Pradesh, India, received new material from Dr. Richard S.C. Kirby near Seattle, WA, USA, to form a new ecclesial method of co-creation of regular father-and-son sermons; and was edited and transmitted by Dr. Gordon Arthur near Vancouver, B.C., Canada. To God be the glory.

Outline

- Introduction
- What is perfect righteousness?
- What is not perfect righteousness?
- What would happen if we did not have perfect righteousness?
- What would happen if we did have perfect righteousness?
- Conclusion

Introduction

Greetings to you in the most precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would like to introduce myself to you. My name is Rev. Pastor G. Dorababu, son of Dr. Richard Kirby, Indian Academy of Christ, South India. Praise the Lord for this privileged harmony in my life. To share God's word with you, let's enter into our sermon and receive the meaning of God's words for us by meditating on them as we are instructed in Psalm 1:

- 1 Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3 (New International Version)

Dear brothers and sisters, nowadays it is rare to find genuinely saintly personalities or persons of perfect righteousness in our society. Still, this is our Lord's command: *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48).*

Social values of mainstream society do not often aim at perfection. Instead, they settle for second-best or third-best. Or they oppose the perfections of beauty and health by deliberate or inadvertent actions such as pollution. Wherever we go, we can understand and recognize that society has been polluting our social settings, our landscapes, our personalities and – if they could – our very souls, day by day. As we mentioned the word *society*, we want to explain what society is. There is no society without people, and there is a saying in the Telugu language by pundit Gurajada Apparao that, “*Country* means not dust; but country means *people*.” The main cause for using the word *society* and concentrating on society is to awaken ourselves to the threats to the coming generation. For newborn babies are innocent at the infant stage, but when they start to grow and mature, what happens is tragic. The polluting society automatically influences them with tawdry, false values. Babies are raised to be deceitful, hurtful, crooked. They are taught that breaking the Commandments is attractive and even glamorous. It is the permanent task of Holy Mother Church worldwide to think about this. And thanks be to God who can make the crooked places straight!

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Isaiah 42:16, King James Bible.

Some people say that as long as we have this flesh and blood nature, we have to compromise with the imperfections of those around us, but is there justice in that statement? Our Christian answer is no, for we live in the life of Him Who is perfectly just: humans can live as perfectly righteous people while being enfleshed; we can lead perfect righteous lives, because of Christ, Who died to make us alive, and make this possible. There have been such people. We call them Saints! So there are people who have been living righteously.

20 A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he leads justice to victory.

21 In his name the nations will put their hope.

Matthew 12: 20-21 (New International Version)

Christians must obey the commandments and walk with Christ, and not throw away their life and virtue by compromising to the imperfections and false values of society. We choose to follow Jesus to be lights of the world according to the Savior's promise. We are the New People. Things have to change in our society, changing has to take place at least in the visible lives of you and me, and our family, our relatives, our church, perhaps even our friends. Our witness may not seem to mean much, but one day it will influence the whole of society. Brothers and sisters! Be careful, please! For just earning money is not success in life; having many friends is not enough for successful life; having a lot of influence is not a successful life. Trying to follow Jesus with our own authenticity – becoming like the saints, possessing all virtues, aiming at perfect righteousness – is a great goal for a successful life.

What is perfect righteousness?

If we ask ourselves, or if others ask us what is perfect righteousness, we can give a simple answer: perfect righteousness means expressing outwardly what is inside the heart, for there should not be any difference between our inner personality – and deeper even that, our soul and spirit – and our outward personality. If some one asks me to be more precise, I can say that these are the important things: love, belief, habits, family life, fellowship with others.

There are three important things to practice without fail for perfect righteousness in our life.

- (1) There should be no conflict between our beliefs and our words,
- (2) There should be no conflict between our beliefs and our deeds,
- (3) There should be no conflict between our beliefs and the way we behave either privately or publicly. In other words we are to live in complete harmony with God, following our vocation, carrying our Cross, being to the world a light of Christian authenticity, a true human following in the footsteps of the Son of Man.

What is not perfect righteousness?

This is a most important question, for if someone understands what perfect righteousness [or *holiness*] is not, either he or she will become a spiritually successful person – and know the superlative happiness promised by Jesus. I want to mention some of the main dangers: they are, hypocrisy, deceitfulness, lying, compromise, watching bad movies, flattery, injustice, double mindedness.

What would happen if we did not have perfect righteousness?

Dear brothers and sisters! It really matters! It controls our eternal destiny! It affects our family and our world! If we do not have righteousness, we will lose our real, our very self; we collapse into sinfulness as a habitual way of being. God hates sin not people, but we must renounce sin both for all time and every day. God loves us so much that when people become as slaves of sin, God shows his worth (John 3:16). He is the Redeemer. We all know what God had done in the age of Noah: when people did not have righteousness and ran instead after worldly things, God destroyed them.

Satan always tries to pull away from God. The world, the flesh and the devil are three enemies of the Soul. Consider, for example, that for catching fish the fisherman uses a fishing rod. Whenever the fisherman goes out to catch fish he baits the hook, perhaps with an earthworm or some other item. And not only does he do this, he even shakes the fishing rod, for it makes the bait more attractive. So, when the fish see the way the bait is moving, almost all fish think that it is a potential meal. But after catching the bait, instead of gaining joy the fish loses its life. As in this illustration, if anyone catches the bait of the world's pleasures, instead of choosing the way of the Lord's perfect righteousness, surely she or he will lose their life. In Matthew 5:13 we can find images like this: if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Some people are considered good because they do not have the chance to take bribes! But that is not goodness. If we get to a high position in society and are offered bribes – but decline them, that is righteousness. Pretending is not perfect righteousness. In India, farmers used to put scarecrows in the midst of the harvest, and when birds first looked at the scarecrows, they saw them as real people, and did not come to the harvest – as long as they only looked at the scarecrow from long distance. When they got closer, they come to see that they were only scarecrows, and sit on them! Because they came to know that the scarecrows were not real, their fear vanished. For us too, the important truth will be revealed some day. Jesus never compromised in worldly things, and if we follow His teaching exactly, we shall become perfect in righteousness and become the ideal person we are meant to be in His strength: we also should not compromise in worldly things. In Matthew: 5:29-30 it says that, "...if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast in to hell. And if the right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from that one of thy member should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast in to hell."

What would happen if we did have perfect righteousness?

Dear brothers and sisters!

There are many blessings when we obey God and walk in the Way of perfect righteousness. The holy Saints and martyrs show that it is possible for us to become perfectly righteousness people. However, there is only one way to do so. If someone wishes to become a perfect righteousness person he or she has to look at Jesus, and follow Him impeccably [without sin].

So Hebrews 12: 2 says that, "...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

We can also see that Proverbs 11:3 says that, "...the integrity of the upright shall guide them but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them". Scripture teaches that people can lead perfectly righteous lives, because their righteousness will show them the right path.

When we see Proverbs 2:7 we can see the way to go, "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly". According to this Scripture we can understand that He will bless the righteousness person.

Dear brothers and sisters! What do you want? Think and pray – do you want God's narrow way or Satan's broad way? Satan way is attractive but leads to your soul and body being destroyed; God's way is narrow but leads to everlasting life. Praise His Name for ever and ever! [Psalm 149, 150]

When we become righteousness, our prayers will please God, and is there any thing greater than this? Listen to Proverbs 15:8: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord but the prayer of the upright is his delight". If we do not grow towards perfect righteousness, we shall not have the courage to talk of the things of God and mingle with people in the marketplace as bearers of Good News; instead we will have to face shame. But when we aim at perfect righteousness, we can talk boldly for Jesus.

An illustration will help to clarify this. There were four students, and they came to school very late for class. So instead of attending class at the right time they went to some other place for their own sake. The four students decided to tell the teacher that the bus was late because one of its tires needed repair. When the Teacher asked them why they were late, they gave their prepared answer. After listening to them the teacher gave them pieces of paper and asked them to write down which side of the bus had the flat tire. Was it either back or front, if front either left side or back side. They wrote down their answers. You can guess what happened! They all told different stories because they were all telling lies. When later the teacher compared their answers, of course their answers did not match. So with God: if we tell lies we are in big trouble!

Conclusion

Dear brother and sisters! Today we have learnt many things about perfect, holy, Christian righteousness; let us support each other from now on, to obey the heavenly commands given to us by our Father in Heaven for our own happiness and permanent safety. For God will not cast away a perfect righteous man (Job: 8:20). If you and I have perfect righteousness, surely one day God will recognize us. We are needed to share in the Redeemer's work. Police departments or Bollywood/Hollywood movie stars or political leaders will not establish perfect righteousness in society; Christians have to establish perfect righteousness. Here is our work, our duty, our high destiny and our happiness. May God bless us with the joy that comes with obedience to Him. Obeying His will is finding our peace.

God will honor His promise to us: He will send His spirit. We include a photograph of a recent rainbow in Edmonds, WA. USA Pacific NW to remind us of the Covenant, the New Covenant, the New Testament.



This sermon was composed partly in the East [Asia] and partly in the USA [West]. This proves the message of the hymn with which we close our words today:

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST

“Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 8:11

Words: **William Arthur Dunkerley [1852-1941]**

Dunkerley wrote these words in 1908 for the *Pageant of Darkness and Light* at the London Missionary Society’s exhibition “The Orient in London,” which ran from 1908 to 1914. Many hymnals credit the words to John Oxenham, Dunkerley’s pseudonym.

Music: St. Peter (1836), **Alexander Robert Reinagle [1799-1877]**

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord,
Close binding humankind.

Join hands, then, members of the faith,
Whatever your race may be!
Who serves my Father as His child
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In Him meet North and South;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

Rev: Pastor G. Dorababu M.A, B.L, B.Th.,
Rev. Dr. Richard S.C. Kirby
Indian Academy of Christ,
Door no: 4-1-33,
Gullavaripeta,
Ramachandrapuram – Pin: 533255,
East Godavari district,
Andhra Pradesh,
India.

Sermon Word Total: 2,473

Meditation Seed Thought: Our witness may not seem to mean much, but one day it will influence the whole of society.

Feedback/Comments: Please email your comments at:
sermons@newgenius.com

Please also visit www.wnrf.org & www.stuartcdoddinstitute.org