

330 Fear and domination – the solution?

(Gross oversimplification, I know, but I'm solving the world's problems in 500 words.)

Last time, I suggested that the reason humans (esp. Christians?) manage to get it so spectacularly wrong is that they think they are right, so right that they have the right to enforce their views on others. 'That's what the Bible clearly teaches'. No, actually it's what my church teaches from my church's translation of the Bible.

The solution? Well, starting 2018 I tried to analyse what was wrong and, if the gospel is the solution, what *is* the gospel? Here's how my thinking has gone.

The gospel is *not* a set of propositions about God/Jesus and a transaction we have to make (take Jesus into your heart); it's relational and mysterious. (*The Divine Dance*)

The gospel is *not* retributive; it's about God's *restorative* justice. (*Healing the Gospel*)

The gospel is God relentlessly pursuing us. (*A More Christ-like God*; and video *Gospel in chairs*)

Great, but this is all still about me and my relationship with God; then I started being influenced by Tom Wright's books.

The gospel is *not* about us leaving this evil world, getting away to heaven; it's about God coming back to restore this place where God and humans first met: thy kingdom come.

The gospel is not advice about how we can relate to God; it's an announcement about what God has done (the facts of Jesus's life, death, resurrection and ascension), what God is going to do (finally bring heaven to earth) and what God is doing *now* (restoring the earth – the people and the planet) through the Spirit's power.

To me, this is the answer to the narrowness that I've been feeling for a long while about our so-called 'gospel'. Can you see how holistic this view is? God wants a complete restoration, and it starts *now*.

The trouble is, we keep slipping back into F+D; we keep insisting that we know what's 'right' – because we've studied our Bibles. Currently, a huge and potentially destructive F+D is our risking splitting churches on the basis of saying that the Bible 'clearly teaches' what is 'right' if you are trying to follow the way of Jesus, and you're gay.

If Jesus is Lord (the gospel), can we not work together with people who have a different view of what the Bible teaches? For the sake of the kingdom, I will work with people who think women shouldn't lead churches, I will work with people who have a different view of communion, I will work with anyone of good will who seeks to make this world a better place, and I won't try to 'convert' them to my view of what the Bible teaches.

Too radical? Jesus was pretty radical.

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