

341 More positive routes

The route that I and others are travelling is becoming more and more positive, and I'm becoming more and more excited about the landscape I see. This really is 'good news', and I'm definitely 'not ashamed of it'.

Today, I started from last time's question:^[340] Why do Christians so often come over as negative? I wanted to make it a positive response, and not just moan about what the church has got wrong. Then I was drawn to Rom 1^{16,17}. The contrast between Tom Wright's translation and the NIV epitomised the changes in my view of the good news. (The coloured bits highlight the differences.)

I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a **righteousness** from God is revealed, a righteousness that is **by faith from first to last**, just as it is written: 'The **righteous** will live by faith.' (NIV)

I'm not ashamed of the **good news**; it's God's power, bringing salvation to everyone who believes – to the Jew first, and also, equally, to the Greek. This is because God's **covenant justice** is unveiled in it, **from faithfulness to faithfulness**. As it says in the Bible, 'the **just** shall live by faith.' (NTFE)

The blue bits reminded me that, since 2021, I have followed Scot McKnight and Tom Wright's view that the good news of Jesus, as announced in the first century, is very different from the packaged 'gospel' we preach.^[181,182,184,187,188,190,191,270]

The red bits point to Tom's view that 'righteous(ness)' is much misunderstood.^[191,270,325,332] It's a big topic, but Tom's translation points to two themes that I've pursued. The first is that the good news is about **restorative justice**, not **retributive justice**.¹ (I no longer see the idea of penal substitution as wrong per se, but discussing who is going to be punished is not an approach I find helpful.) And the second theme is righteousness as a **covenant** relationship.^[135,136,168,225-227,325]

Not sure about the green bits, but 'faith' can too easily be associated with a set of beliefs. For me, it's more about **who** I believe **in**, like the parallel verse: *I am not ashamed, because I know the one I have trusted, and I'm convinced that he has the power to keep safe until that day what I have entrusted to him.*^{2 Tim 1:12} Faith is about a Person.

I'm definitely not 'right' in the stuff I cogitate on here, but I'm wanting us to challenge our own **interpretations** of the English texts of our Bibles, which are **translations** of the Greek and Hebrew texts, **translations** that are based on the theological **interpretations** of those who did the **translations**, and these are affected by their idea of what God is like.

Hopefully we're getting a little nearer to the **more positive roots** and shoots that sprang up and took the world by storm in the first century. Lord, let it be so!

Paul Bev. 28.7.24

¹ Thankfully, I discovered restorative justice early: 2,3,4,49,**57,61**,76,140,180,183,186,270,296,299,301,**325**,328,330.