

#7 - Romans 1:17

Romans 1:16

- *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*
- The gospel is not just a story about Jesus; it is a transformative story because the gospel unleashes God's saving power for humanity. - Matthew Bates

How is the gospel message so powerful? Why does it have such a transformative and revolutionizing effect?

Romans 1:17

- *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

An Example of Gospel Transformation: Luther's Journey

- "I had already for years read and taught the Holy Scriptures both privately and publicly. I knew most of the Scriptures by heart and, furthermore, had eaten the first fruits of knowledge of, and faith in, Christ, namely, that we are justified not by works, but by faith in Christ."
- "Nevertheless, in spite of the ardor of my heart I was hindered by the unique word in the first chapter (of Romans): 'the righteousness of God is revealed in it.' I hated the word 'righteousness of God,' because in accordance with the usage and custom of the doctors I had been taught to understand it philosophically as meaning, as they put it, the formal or active righteousness according to which God is righteous and punishes sinners and the unjust. As a monk I led an irreproachable life. Nevertheless I felt that I was a sinner before God. My conscience was restless, and I could not depend on God being propitiated by my satisfactions. Not only did I not love, but I actually hated the righteous God who punishes sinners... Thus a furious battle raged within my perplexed conscience, but meanwhile I was knocking at the door of this particular Pauline passage, earnestly seeking to know the mind of the great apostle. Day and night I tried to meditate upon the significance of these words: 'The righteousness of God is revealed in it, as it is written: The righteous shall live by faith.'"
- "Then finally God had mercy on me, and I began to understand that the righteousness of God is a gift of God by which a righteous man lives, namely faith, and that sentence: The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel, is passive, indicating that the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: 'The righteous shall live by faith.' Now I felt as though I had been reborn altogether and had entered Paradise. In the same moment the face of the whole of Scripture became apparent to me. My mind ran through the Scriptures, as far as I was able to recollect

them, seeking analogies in other phrases, such as the work of God, by which He makes us strong, the wisdom of God, by which He makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. Just as intensely as I had now hated the expression ‘the righteousness of God,’ I now lovingly praised this most pleasant word. This passage from Paul became to me the very gate to Paradise.”

- Accessed through <https://lutheranreformation.org/theology/luthers-breakthrough-romans/>

For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed...

- "Is revealed" (Two options)
 - Jewish apocalyptic? (cf. Rom. 2:5; 8:18, 19)
 - Gospel communication?

The Righteousness of God

- Paul has inherited the term from the OT, where the Hebrew ts-d-q is used over 500 times. The term denotes being in accordance with a norm; fundamentally, with the character of God. Secondly it may refer to ethical conduct. - Anthony Thiselton, 76
- The Righteousness of God
 - An Attribute of God
 - Possessive genitive" "God's own righteousness"
 - *Ps. 7:8-11 - The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. 9 Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous—you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God! 10 My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. 11 God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.*
 - A Status given by God
 - Genitive of source: "righteousness from God"
 - We can get a pretty good handle on "righteousness" by thinking about the English word. What does it mean to be "right" with your company, your government or another person? It is a positional word—it means to have a good standing, to have no debts or liabilities that you owe the other person or organization. You are acceptable to the other party because your record has nothing on it to jeopardize the relationship. The other party has nothing against you. - Tim Keller, p. 20-21
 - An Activity of God
 - Subjective genitive: "the righteousness that is being shown by God"
 - The LXX usage, out of which Paul's use of the phrase grows, makes it likely that "the righteousness of God" is first of all the saving intervention

of God in history, predicted by the prophets, manifested on the cross, and constantly made effective in the preaching of the gospel. But God's righteousness never operates in a vacuum, and the OT occurrences often allude also to the situation or status of this who experience God's saving intervention. - Douglas Moo, 74

- "For Paul, then, the righteousness of God is *God's resurrection-effecting verdict that Jesus the wrath-bearing, sin-atoning, allegiant king is alone righteous— a verdict that all who are united to Jesus the representative king share.* This death-unto-resurrection-life verdict is made effective for us as an unmerited gift when we are united by allegiance alone to the death and resurrection of Jesus the king via the Holy Spirit" - Matthew Bates, p. 181
- "He righteously makes people righteous" - William Taylor, p. 30

From faith for faith

What is Faith?

- Matthew Bates Translation of Romans 1:17 in *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*
 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who gives allegiance to Jesus as the Christ, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed by means of Jesus' allegiance to God; this righteousness becomes our through our allegiance to Jesus the king. For both Jesus and us, all of this accords with the prophetic word, "But the righteous one shall live by allegiance."
- The word "allegiance" is not my preference for translation, but it does capture a very important piece of the biblical use of "faith" or "faithfulness."
 - For example: *Matthew 7:21-23 - 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

Prepositions:

- "By Faith" - means ; "For Faith" - purpose
 - That is, Jesus' faithfulness to God was purposed toward facilitating our allegiance to Jesus [aka faith in Jesus] as the king." Bates, 43 (cf. Rom. 3:22 where the instrumental means and purpose of the preposition is used in the same verse. Bates says in a footnote: "This suggests a subjective/objective flexibility in Paul's *pistis Christou* constructions, as the *faithfulness of Jesus* and *faith in Jesus* are both in view in Rom. 1:17 and 3:22)
- God's faithfulness [to his promises, and in the life and death of Jesus Christ] always

comes first, and ours is never other than a response. - Tim Keller quoting John Stott, p. 21

- Faithful. The gospel announces the event through which God's divine faithfulness is enacted by providing the salvation that his covenantal promises bind on him (e.g. Deut. 7:9; Pss 31:5; 145:13) God's faithfulness means that he is true and trustworthy and that his Word can be taken as reliable (Pss 33:4; 145:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 1 Pet. 4:19) God's faithfulness guarantees that his plan and promise about the future will come to fruition (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23). The faithfulness of God is expressed in the faithfulness of Christ (Phil. 3:8; Heb 3:5-6; Rev 1:5). Human beings can be praised for their faithfulness before God (Rom 4; Heb 11), and faith is the appropriate response to divine faithfulness (Ps 18:25; Rom 1:17). God creates faith in persons so that their faithfulness reflects God's own fidelity to his creation (Phil 1:29). Faithfulness remains a cardinal virtue of the Christian life since it expresses a key trait of God's own character (1 Cor 4:2; Col 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22). - Michael Bird, p. 134-135

As it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

- Paul is quoting from the OT: Hab. 2:4
- "The one who is righteous by faith will live." (Moo and Kruse [among others])
 - Theme for Rom. 1-4 : "Righteous by Faith"
 - Theme for Rom. 5-8 : "Will Live" (although this might not quite capture Paul's emphasis through these chapters; see Moo fn.)

Faith and/or Faithfulness?

- When *pistis* (faith) is understood as '*trust*', better sense can be made of *both* the chief alternative forms of the text; that is to say, for Paul the counterpart of God's faithfulness is not man's *faithfulness*...but *faith*, his trust in, and total reliance upon, God. - James Dunn
- Faithfulness or faith is no longer observance of the law. It is trust in God's provision of righteousness and life through sharing in the crucified and risen life of Jesus Christ. - Anthony Thiselton, 80
- "Faith" [is] the quality of absolute reliance on God and his Word rather than on human abilities, activities, or assurances." Moo, 79

Side Note: Openness to the "Faithfulness of God/Christ" as the Main Aim of Paul in quoting Hab. 2:4

- "For Paul, Habakkuk had announced this future reality: "The righteous one, Jesus the Christ, will live by *pistis*"—that is, by his faithful loyalty to God." - Bates, p. 42
- "But also for Paul, the prophet Habakkuk, in a like manner, announces the future

reality of all who imitate the Christ pattern of faithful obedience to God through Jesus: 'The righteous one will live by pistis.' That is, the person who gives pistis (yields allegiance) unto Jesus as the king is declared righteous by God and will live (participate in eternal life by being raised from the dead). So: The righteous person will live by faithful loyalty." How is this righteousness acquired?...the righteous standing comes when we are declared righteous by pistis...when we are found to be "in" Jesus the Messiah—that is, when we are joined to his righteousness by being incorporated into him." - Bates, 43

Application

1. The righteousness of God is God's gift of His righteousness that we can access by being in Christ, the righteous one.

2. We get Christ's righteousness by faith alone,
 - o AND Luther...."We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone."
 - o "Authentic faith for Paul always involved obedience and faithfulness" (Kruse, p. 75 who footnotes Schreiner and Dunn)