Reconciliation and Justification

- Reconciliation
- Justification: the problem
- Justification: definitions
- The righteousness of God
- Justification

Justification: The Problem

- Significant developments in recent research.
- Complex terminology:
  - *Dikaiosune* - justice, righteousness.
  - *Dikaiosis* - justification.
  - *Dikaios* - righteous, just.
  - *Dikaioo* – justify; make/declare righteous.
- Some suggest “rightwise” for “justify.”

Reconciliation

- Matera shortchanges reconciliation by making it a result of justification.
- Justification may be the result of reconciliation.
- See Ralph Martin’s *Reconciliation: A Study in Paul’s Theology*.
- Reconciliation is an important model of salvation that speaks to people today.

Reconciliation

- See handout on reconciliation.
- God is the subject, not the object.
- God is not angry at us. See Romans 1.
- Reconciliation requires forgiveness.
- God reconciles the primary human division -- between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2).
- See Romans 5:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.
- See also making peace, adoption.

Justification: The Problem

- The primary way in which Protestants have understood Paul’s view of salvation.
  - Reformation slogan: justification by faith.
  - Understood in legal terms: sin as lawbreaking, justification as acquittal.
  - Declarative status, NOT character.
- Not THE central concept in Paul’s theology.
  - Appears mostly in Romans and Galatians.
  - Also used new creation, being in Christ, adoption.
Justification: Definitions

- Basic meaning of righteous = conforming to a norm.
  - Righteous scale weighs accurately.
  - Righteous human meets social expectations.
- For God and human beings, righteousness is in context of divine/human relationship (covenantal).
- God and humans show righteousness by their faithfulness to covenant relationship.

Justification: Definitions

- Covenant concerns in Galatians & Romans.
- It has moral/ethical implications.
- See this in living out the covenant.
- God’s people are to be obedient to his will.
- Obedience & ethics based on relationship.
- OT law was not how to gain entrance to the covenant people, but how to live as the covenant people (“covenantal nomism”).

The Righteousness of God

- Dikaiosune theou: a quality of God or a quality expected by God?
- This ambiguity creates various possibilities for understanding the expression...

The Righteousness of God

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<th>Distributive justice</th>
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Table by N. T. Wright.

The Righteousness of God

- Medieval ideas:
  - God’s retributive justice (punishes sinners).
  - God’s moral uprightness (parallel to the moral uprightness he expects from us).
- Luther’s new idea: the righteousness (legal standing) God gives to people.
- Recent scholarship: the New Perspective
  - “Works of the law” = ethnocentrism, not legalism.
  - God’s righteousness = his covenant faithfulness.

The Righteousness of God

- See handout on justification.
  - Ps. 71:2 - in your righteousness, deliver me.
  - Ps. 143:11 - in your righteousness, bring me out of danger.
  - Gen. 38:26 - Tamar is righteous because she acts in accord with covenant obligations.
The Righteousness of God

- Romans 3:3, 5 shows that God’s righteousness means his covenant faithfulness.
- Romans 3:21-26:
  - God demonstrates his covenant faithfulness apart from the law - although witnessed to by law.
  - God’s covenant faithfulness is demonstrated through the faithfulness of Jesus (v. 22).
  - Available to all who have faith in Jesus, without distinction (between Jew and Gentile).

The Righteousness of God

- Romans 1:16-17 - in the gospel (what God has done in Christ), God’s covenant faithfulness is revealed, which comes, by means of Jesus’ faithfulness, to those who respond with an answering faith(fulness).

Justification

- God brings people into covenant relationship or vindicates them as being his people.
- Has a forensic setting -- but we should think of covenant law, not statutory law.
  - Hebrew courts had judge, plaintiff, defendant.
  - The one who was judged to be in the right was righteous/justified. Vindication, not acquittal.
  - The guilty can be acquitted; vindication indicates that one is in the right.

Justification

- The issue of justification: who will be in the right at the last judgment?
- Jews expected to be justified/vindicated as God’s people. Law-keeping was “proof.”
- Paul’s gospel announces that Gentiles can be God’s people, too – without the Law.
- Justification/vindication now depends upon one’s response to God’s great act of covenant faithfulness in Christ.

Justification

- Justification is God’s objective act in Christ.
- It’s eschatological - to be experienced in the consummation, but available now.
- Faith is “reckoned” as righteousness.
  - Counted as righteousness although it isn’t?
  - The only basis on which one can have covenant membership and be vindicated; the only proper response to God’s act in Christ; the first act of trust in a relationship of ongoing trust.

Justification

- It’s linked with our union with Christ.
  - Christ is our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30).
  - We embody God’s covenant faithfulness as we share the gospel (2 Cor. 5:21).
- Justification has moral implications.
  - Sometimes suggests right living (Pastorals).
  - Living out our relationship with God in appropriate ways.
Justification

• What are the implications of a relational or covenantal understanding of justification?