

We Are Not God's Poem

I find it absolutely appalling. That even some respected Christian teachers are saying rubbish like this:

*Ephesians 2:10 says we are God's workmanship. The Greek is ποίημα (poiema). And this is where we get our English word "poem".
So this verse is saying, "You are God's poem."*

That is an absolute travesty. It is not true. It is an abominable translation. (It's a nice thought, but the Bible just doesn't say that).

English didn't even exist when this ancient Greek was written. It is illogical to take the meaning of a modern word in a different language, regardless of where it came from and then use that meaning to translate the original language.

In ancient Greek ποίημα (poiema) means the end result of some work, (from the verb "to work" ποιέω poieo). Basically workmanship, handiwork, something like that.

In modern English the derived word came to mean a poem.

But it is completely illogical to say that the original Greek author or his readers would even consider that poem was the meaning of that word.

In English we have the expression "white shirt". In Japanese they have the word ワイシャツ (waishatsu) which they took from our "white shirt" because back in the 60's all the clerical workers in Japan wore white business shirts to work.

So in Japanese it means "a business shirt", like the millions of office workers wear to work daily in Japan. But here's something interesting. In Japan it doesn't have to be white.

You could have a pink business shirt and it's still called ワイシャツ (waishatsu). Originally, when the word was first adopted, all office workers wore white business shirts, so it made sense to adopt those English words.

But that meaning has been lost and now the colour is irrelevant. Now in Japanese, it only matters if it's a business shirt or not.

Clearly it is ridiculous to say that when someone says in English "I see you are wearing a white shirt" that because in Japanese it could be a pink business shirt, that the English speaker really means that you might be wearing a pink shirt.

That's absurd.

But it's the same logic that lets these teachers say today that Ephesians 2:10 is saying that you are God's poem.

We need to be very careful when we try to change the meaning of the Bible. Even if we mean well. Even if what we say may actually also be true. If the original language doesn't say it, then neither should we when we translate it.

And we certainly shouldn't be using the meanings of modern English words derived from those languages as if they had anything to do with the original author's intended message.

In some way of thinking, we may be God's poem, but certainly Ephesians 2:10 does not say so.

READING
Ephesians 2:10

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