

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

苦口良藥。這是華人的老人家告訴小孩的事。但是，即使我們長大了，我們仍然會問為什麼藥不能是可口一點。當我小時候生病時，媽媽會為我煮些涼茶。那是人發明最難喝的飲料。媽媽會警告我：「你不喝就好不了。」因此，我必須要做個選擇，要苦死還是病死。還好有陳皮梅這個偉大的發明，可以中和草藥的苦味。大多數孩子會一小口慢慢地喝，而一邊喝還一邊呻吟甚至哭泣。這一招很笨！我是盡快地大口的把藥灌進去，然後馬上把陳皮梅放到嘴裡。它的甜味掩蓋了可怕的藥味。陳皮梅甜的感覺令人對苦藥更加厭惡。耶穌基督的救恩也是如此。如果你感覺不到罪是如此的可怕和令人反感，那麼你就不會欣賞神恩典的美好。上週我們提到了保羅希望向任何人傳福音的熱情。保羅明白耶穌是我們得救的唯一途徑。但是，如果人們沒有意識到自己處於絕望的景況，他們就不會被福音吸引。因此，保羅在接下來的幾章經文中闡述了罪的問題。我在此提醒大家，接下來的幾堂信息可能聽起來很令人沮喪。我們將反復談論罪。但是請記住，這個好消息確實很棒，因為那個壞消息真的很糟糕。耶穌來是為了拯救罪人，而不是救完美的人。沒有耶穌的話，我們將永遠沉淪。我們今天信息的主題是：罪的本質就是人把自己看作神。

The more bitter to the mouth, the better the medicine. That is what the older Chinese folks tell little kids. However, even after we have grown up, we still wonder why medicine cannot be more tasteful. When I fell sick as a little boy, my mom would cook some herbal tea for me. That was the most awful beverage people ever invented. Mom would warn me: “You won’t get well if you don’t drink it.” Therefore, I had to choose between feeling sick of the disease or feeling sick of the taste of the medicine. Thankfully, there is dried plum to neutralize the bitterness of the herbs. Most kids sip the medicine bit by bit, while groan and even cry as they do so. Poor strategy! I simply finished the medicine as quickly as I could, then popped the plum. Its sweetness covers up the terrible taste. The pleasant sensation from the plum also causes a stronger disgust toward the bitter medicine. The salvation work of Jesus Christ is like that too. If you do not feel that sin is so horrible and repulsive, then you will not appreciate the goodness of God’s grace. Last week we mentioned Paul’s passion to preach the gospel to everyone. Paul understood that Jesus is the only way through which we can be saved. However, people will not find the gospel that attractive if they do not realize that they are in a desperate situation. Therefore, in the following few chapters, Paul elaborated on the problem of sin. Here is a heads up for you, the several upcoming sermons may sound quite depressing. We will be talking about sin repeatedly. But please keep in mind that the good news is truly awesome because the bad news is really awful. Jesus came to save only sinners, not perfect people. Without Jesus, we will be condemned forever. Our lesson for today is this: the essence of sin is to make oneself a god.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 神的啟示 Revelation of God (v. 18-20)

首先，保羅告訴我們神藉著祂的創造啟示了自己。神學家稱此為神的普遍啟示。讓我們再來看第 20 節：自從造天地以來，神的永能和神性是明明可知的，雖是眼不能見，但藉著所造之物就可以曉得，叫人無可推諉。神創造了宇宙和其中的一切。我們可以通過觀察神創造的世界來揣摩祂的存在和本質。我們中間有些人喜歡欣賞藝術。可能是電影、畫或是音樂。當你研究一些作品時，你會對那位藝術家的風格有一點點的認識。從一些跡象，你會看到這是斯皮爾伯格 (Steven Spielberg; 史匹堡) 的電影、畢加索的繪畫或貝多芬的交響曲。同樣，當你觀賞自然界時，你也可以對神有所認識。神創造了美麗的事物，例如花朵、蝴蝶和日落。神是有智慧和秩序的主。四季分明。我們或許會抱怨孟菲斯的冬天太陰冷，夏天又太熱太長。兩週前的龍捲風警報也提醒我們，神藉著天氣展示了祂的能力。通過欣賞可見的被造之物，人們可能會同意也許有一位看不見的神。我們可能認同大衛在詩篇 8:3-4 中所寫的：3 我觀看你指頭所造的天，並你所陳設的月亮星宿，4 便說：人算什麼，你竟顧念他？世人算什麼，你竟眷顧他？在英文新國際譯本中，「天」(heavens) 這個字的意思是指天空。這不是指神為那些相信祂的人準備的天堂。我鼓勵你看看繁星點點的夜空。你就會驚嘆宇宙的浩瀚，並意識到自己是多麼的渺小。許多人記得尼爾·阿姆斯特朗 (Neil Armstrong) 在 1969 年成為歷史上第一個登陸月球的人。他的隊友巴茲·奧爾德林 (Buzz Aldrin) 是繼阿姆斯特朗之後的第二個踏上月球的人。奧爾德林是一名教會的長老。在返回地球的飛行中，奧爾德林遠遠地看到一顆叫做地球的藍色小彈珠，他便引用了詩篇 8:3-4 來讚美神。創世記第一章告訴我們，我們是按照神的形像而被創造的。這並不是說神擁有與我們相似的身體。這意味著神在創造我們時與我們分享了祂的一些特質。我們中間的父母知道我在說什麼。我的大兒子長得像我，但他遺傳了我太太的個性。他比較外向，而且自以為很聰明。相比之下，我小兒子的外表像媽媽，但他卻像我一樣害羞膽小。我們在什麼方面像神？作為神的創造，我們有跟神相似的性情。我們愛我們的家人和朋友，因為神就是愛。我們為社會上的不公義感到憤怒，因為神是聖潔和公義的。我們也有良心分別是非，儘管我們經常埋沒良心，選擇去做神禁止的事情。此外，我們有追求屬靈事物的渴望。不管一個人擁有多少金錢和物質，他的內心都會有一個空洞。新的玩意享受了一段時間之後，我們很快會覺得那個東西乏味。你家中的寵物從來不會感到無聊。它只關心吃、玩和睡覺。原因是神創造我們是要與祂建立永恆的關係。這個世界上沒有任何東西可以帶給我們持久的滿足感。我們會問現實世界之外有沒有更超越的東西。你的寵物不會向神祈禱，也不會催你帶它去教堂。我們與動物不同，因為神賜予我們榮耀和尊嚴。我們看到烤鴨時會流口水，但是參加葬禮時我們會感到悲傷。這位大能的造物主愛我們到一個地步，祂讓耶穌為我們而死。祂主動地恢復了我們與祂的關係。通過觀察神的創造我們可以知道祂的存在。這是與非信徒談論信仰的一個很好的切入點。例如，你可以拿起手機作為道具。手機的存在，是因為有一些設計它的工程師。同樣，在被造的世界背面必然有一位充滿智慧的設計師。我上面分享的幾方面都可以成為與福音朋友交流的好話題。

Paul began his argument by telling us that God reveals Himself through the creation.

Theologians called this the general revelation of God. Let us look at **verse 20** again: For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. God created the universe and everything in it. We can discern His existence and nature by observing the created world. Some of you like to appreciate art. It can be movie, painting or music. When you study the works, you can know something about the artist. You see some signs that it is a

Spielberg's film, Picasso's drawing or Beethoven's symphony. Similarly, you can learn something about God when you pay attention to nature. God made beautiful things like flowers, butterflies and sunset. God is the Lord of wisdom and order too. There are four distinct seasons. We may complain that the winter in Memphis is too wet and cold, and the summer is too hot and long. The tornado warning from two weeks ago also reminded us that God displays His power through weather. By looking at God's visible creation, people may agree that perhaps there is an invisible God. We can identify with what David wrote in **Psalm 8:3-4** – 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? Here in the NIV translation, the word "heavens" means the sky. It is not about the eternal home God prepared for those who believe in Him. I encourage you to behold the starry sky at night. You will be marveled by the vastness of the universe, and realize how finite you are. Many people remember Neil Armstrong was the first man to step on the moon in 1969. His teammate by the name Buzz Aldrin was the second man to do so after Armstrong. Aldrin was a church elder. On the return flight to earth, Aldrin praised God by quoting Psalm 8:3-4 as he gazed at a little blue marble called earth. Genesis chapter 1 tells us that we are created after the image and likeness of God. It does not mean that God has a body similar to ours. It means that God shared some of His characteristics with us when He created us. The parents among us know what I am talking about. My older son looks like me on his face, but he inherited my wife's personality. He is outgoing and (he thinks) he is smart. In comparison, my younger son bears resemblance of my wife, but he is shy and timid like me. In what ways are we like God? As God's creation, we have similar emotions like God has. We love our family and friends because God is love. We are angry at the injustice in our society because God is holy and righteous. We also have a conscience to distinguish right from wrong, though we often subdue it and choose to do things God forbids. Moreover, we have a desire to pursue spiritual matters. No matter how much money and material possessions a person has, there is a void in his heart. We quickly find the latest entertainment boring after enjoying it for a while. The pets in your home never feels bored. It only cares about food, play and rest. The reason is because God created us to have an eternal relationship with Him. Nothing in this world can bring us lasting contentment. We ask if there is anything transcendent beyond the reality. Your pet will never pray to God and nudge you to take it to the church. We are different from animals because God gives us honor and dignity. We will drool when we see a roasted duck, but we feel sorrow when we attend a funeral. This mighty Creator loves us to the degree of sending Jesus to die for us. He took initiative to restore our relationship with Him. We can know that God exists by studying His creation. It is a good entry point to reach out to non-believers. For example, you can hold up a cellphone as an illustration. The phone exists because there are some engineers who designed it. Similarly, there must be a wise Designer behind the created world. Those topics I shared above can trigger a good conversation with gospel friends.

## 2. 人的悖逆 Rebellion of Mankind

神不斷地藉著大自然向我們啟示祂自己。某程度上我們可以感覺到神的存在。但是為什麼大多數人不去認識祂呢？答案很明顯。這是因為人的悖逆。

God never stops to reveal Himself to us in nature. We can somehow perceive His existence. But why don't most people come to know Him? The answer is obvious. It is because of the rebellion of the mankind.

#### A. 罪的根源 The Root of Sin (v. 21-23)

首先，保羅解釋罪的根源。問題的核心是我們不把神看為神。保羅在第 21 節說：因為，他們雖然知道神，卻不當作神榮耀他，也不感謝他。他們的思念變為虛妄，無知的心就昏暗了。「榮耀」和「感謝」兩個字都與敬拜有關。任何敬拜的儀式都要求人的謙卑。崇拜者承認他敬拜的對象比自己更超越。儘管人們知道神的存在，但他們不把榮耀和感謝歸給祂。他們就像一個不孝子，忽略年邁的父母。他完全忘記了自出生以來父母就一直養育並供應他一切。但是，神不像我們年長的父母親，祂不需要我們照顧祂。相反，儘管我們多叛逆，神仍然向我們顯示祂的恩典和忍耐。事實是，即使人們目中無神，他們也不會對真理保持中立。保羅說：「他們的思念變為虛妄，無知的心就昏暗了。」希臘文中「虛妄」這個字的意思是「空洞」。當人們不追求認識神時，他們會尋找一些似是而非的答案來解釋生命的意義。我們中間許多人都是從無神論的背景中長大的。我們大多數人在學校都要學習進化論。為什麼呢？因為政府的官方立場不會主張神是真實的。當人們不把神視為創造主時，他們就必須以別的方式來解釋世界的存在。你看到了沒想到，進化論不僅僅是一種解釋宇宙如何產生的理論。它其實是變相的偶像崇拜，因為人們將萬物的起源歸因於某種未知的力量。非信徒不敬拜神時會敬拜別的東西。保羅在第 22-23 節中繼續說：22 自稱為聰明，反成了愚拙，23 將不能朽壞之神的榮耀變為偶像，彷彿必朽壞的人和飛禽、走獸、昆蟲的樣式。他們不敬拜造物主，卻敬拜受造之物。無論人們有多本事，他們內心深處都會意識到，有很多事情是他們無法控制的。他們不知道明天的天氣、股市或是自己的健康會是如何。人們無法預測未來時會感到沒有安全感。於是，他們便去倚靠一些他們以為可以去操縱的東西。許多人崇拜金錢和成就。但是，口袋裡的東西越多，你就越想要更多。有其他人敬拜假神。他們向偶像燒香，在家裡擺放神像或在身上戴個裝飾品。他們相信這些物件可以帶來安全感。人們花錢取悅他們的神明，希望這些偶像能保佑他們。他們以為可以控制那些假神，但實際上他們卻是被綑綁。當一個偶像不管用時，人們會轉移到另一個。但事實是那些假神甚至無法保護自己。在 2009 年，台灣發生了嚴重的颶風。建築物被破壞，很多地方都發生了塌方。我在新聞中看到了一張很有意思的照片。一座寺廟淹水，一直漲到佛像的脖子。我就想到中文一句俗語：泥塑菩薩過江，自身難保。那麼它如何保護它的信徒？弟兄姐妹：我們敬拜的是獨一的真神。他是宇宙的主宰。如果我們允許神以外的人或東西佔據我們心中的寶座，那麼我們就是拜偶像了。我們需要坦誠地問自己，我們有沒有看任何事物，比與神的關係更重要？我們是否崇拜我們的事業、銀行賬戶甚至是孩子？晚上你睡得安心嗎？還是你經常被焦慮困擾？當然，成為基督徒並不等於我們以後就一帆風順。我們可以關心很多事情，但不必擔心。你可以求主賜你平安。或是求主增加你的信心，使你知道儘管前面有許多未知數甚至是困難，但神給你安排了一個完美的計劃。我們該敬拜神，而且單單敬拜祂。

First, Paul explained about the root of sin. The problem is that we do not treat God as God. Paul said in **verse 21**: For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Both “glorified”

and “gave thanks” are related to worship. Any worship ritual should come a humble heart. The worshipper admits that the object he bows down to is superior to him. Although people know that God exists, they do not give Him honor nor their gratitude. They are like disrespectful children who neglect their elderly parents. They completely forget that their parents nurture them and provide for them since they were born. But unlike our senior parents, God does not need us to take care of Him. Rather, God keeps showing us grace and patience despite our rebellion. The fact is, even when people disregard God, they would not stay neutral to the truth. Paul stated that “their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” The Greek word for “futile” means “empty.” When people do not pursue after God, they look for a pointless answer to make sense of their life. Many of you grew up from an atheistic background. Most of us had to study evolution in school. Why is that so? It is because the government cannot claim an official position that God is real. When people do not see God as the Creator, then there has to be an alternative explanation for the existence of our world. You see, evolution is more than a theory to explain how the universe came into being. It is a form of idol worship, because people attribute the origin of everything to an unknown force. Non-believers worship something else when they do not worship God. Paul continued in **verses 22-23**: 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Instead of worshipping the Creator, they worship created things. No matter how capable people can be, deep down inside they realize that there are many things that are beyond their control. They do not know how the weather, the stock market or their health will be like tomorrow. People feel insecure when they cannot predict the future. Therefore, they resort to something they think they can manipulate. Many people worship money and success. But the more you have in your pocket, the more you want. Other people worship false gods. They burn incense to idols, they put a statue at home or wear an ornament on the body. They believe that those objects can give them peace. People spend some money to please their gods, expecting those deities to bless them in return. They think they can control those idols, but in fact they are held in bondage. When one idol does not work out, people will shift to another one. But the fact is that those false gods cannot even protect themselves. In 2009, there was a severe hurricane swept through Taiwan. Buildings were blown over, and there was landslide in a lot of places. I saw a quite interesting picture in the news. A temple was submerged in water, all the way up to the neck of a Buddha statue. We have a Chinese saying: a Bodhisattva sculpture made of mud trying to cross a stream. The meaning is that it cannot save itself from the water. Therefore, how can it watch over its worshippers? Brothers and sisters: we worship the one true God. He is the Sovereign Lord of the Universe. If we allow someone or something else other than God to occupy the throne of our hearts, then we worship an idol. We need to honestly ask ourselves if we treat any object more important than our relationship with God. Do we worship our career, our bank account or even our children? Do you go to sleep with ease at night? Or are you frequently plagued by anxiety? Of course, being Christians does not mean that we will live a trouble-free life. We can care about many things but we do not have to worry. Ask the Lord to give you peace. Pray to the Lord for more faith, knowing that He has a perfect plan for you despite all the unknowns and even difficulties ahead. Worship Him and Him alone.

## B. 罪的泛濫 The Rampant of Sins (v. 24-32)

罪的根源是沒有尊崇神為神。如果人們不尊重神，那麼他們就會依循自己的標準。這就導致各種罪的泛濫。保羅用兩個重複的詞語來形容人類的悖逆。在第 23、25 和 26 節中出現

了「變為」這個字。在第 23 節中，人們將不能朽壞之神的榮耀變為必朽壞的被造之物的形像。在中國的傳統信仰中，人們敬奉某些動物、偉人、甚至祖先，以為他們具有神奇力量。在第 25 節中，「他們將神的真實變為虛謊」。偶像崇拜者提出了各種儀式的根據。如果你問他們：「為什麼會是這樣的？」他們的回答可能是：「因為是別人告訴我的。」相比之下，基督徒相信聖經。神的話語有權柄改變我們的生命。然後在第 26 節中，一些婦女「把順性的用處變為逆性的用處」。我們稍後將詳細討論關於同性戀的事情。從三個「變為」的使用，我們可以得出罪的定義。罪是用神禁止的方式來滿足合理的需要。例如，任何負責任的男人都應該努力工作並養家糊口。但是，如果他透過打劫銀行得到金錢，那就是罪。除了「變為」之外，這段經文中另外一個出現了三遍的用詞是「任憑」。在第 24 節中，「神任憑他們逞著心裡的情慾行污穢的事。」在第 26 節中，「神任憑他們放縱可羞恥的情慾。」然後在第 28 節中，「神就任憑他們存邪僻的心，行那些不合理的事。」當非信徒堅持一意孤行時，神只好放手讓他們為所欲為。在座的父母們可能經常使用這一招。你警告富有冒險精神的孩子一千次不要在床上跳，他們都不會聽你的。但只要一次撞到頭就會有效得多。痛楚和受傷會使他們記住危險。現在，我們來討論同性戀這個具爭議的話題。首先，同性戀不是 21 世紀的發明。舊約的律法明確地指出這是一種罪。神在利未記 18:22 中說：「不可與男人苟合，像與女人一樣；這本是可憎惡的。」上下文中提到神禁止人與自己的母親、姐妹和其他親戚發生性關係。因此，毫無疑問神在第 22 節中提到的是同性戀。一些科學家長期以來一直假設一個人的性取向受基因影響。去年，麻省理工學院和哈佛大學的一所聯合研究中心調查了五十萬個人，結果否定了所謂「同性戀基因」的存在。那些專家認為，環境和文化因素也影響一個人的性取向。媒體誤導我們，以為同性戀者無處不在。根據 2017 年的一項統計，自稱是同性戀的美國人只佔總人口的 4.5%。相比之下，美國有超過 12% 的非裔美國人。為什麼很多人關注同性戀者的福利，過於重視非裔的美國人？簡單的答案是，有些政客把事情誇大來達到他們的政治手段。我只想給你們一些事實，使你們知道如何與別人進行客觀的討論。但是，不管人們犯了什麼罪，神都會以同樣的方式看待他們。神厭惡罪，但祂卻愛罪人，我們也應該如此。基督徒可以整天譴責別人，犯這樣那樣的罪應該得到神的審判。但是，我們在他們的掙扎中，是否表現出足夠的同情心，並指引他們到唯一的解決方案，就是耶穌基督？有些人可能會想：「我對同性戀沒有興趣。因此，聖經所說的話對我不適用。」他們必須繼續閱讀第 29 節至本章的結尾。保羅列舉了其他 21 種罪。它們包括我們思想、言語或行為上所犯的罪。這個清單沒有列出一切的罪。我們可以想到我們犯下的許多其他的罪。我不想花時間定義每個項目。他們中的大多數應該是不言而喻的。聖經對我們就像一面鏡子。如果我們誠實地面對自己，我們必須承認自己是難逃罪責。保羅早些時候說過，我們沒有藉口說神不存在。同樣，我們無可辯解地值得神的審判。

The root cause for sin is not to honor God as God. If people do not respect God, then they will follow their own standard. Thus, it leads to the rampant of sins in every conceivable way. Paul used two repeated phrases to illustrate the rebellion of mankind. The word “exchanged” appears in verses 23, 25 and 26. In **verse 23**, people exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the images of the mortal created beings. In the traditional Chinese belief system people make animals, famous people and even deceased ancestors gods, thinking that they have mighty power. In **verse 25**, people exchanged the truth of God for a lie. Idol worshippers come up with all sorts of rationale for their rituals. If you ask them: “Why is that so?” Their answer may be:

“Because it is what others told me.” In comparison, Christians believe in the Bible. God’s Word has authority to change our lives. Then in **verse 26**, some women “exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.” We will talk more about homosexuality in a moment. From the three usages of “exchanged,” we can deduce a definition of sin. Sin is to use ways that God forbids to fulfill a legitimate need. For example, any responsible man should work hard to provide for his family. However, it is a sin if he robs a bank to get the money. Besides “exchanged,” another phrase that appears three times in this passage is “God gave them over.” In **verse 24**, “God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts.” In **verse 26**, “God gave them over to shameful lusts.” Finally, in **verse 28**, “(God) gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.” When non-believers insist on their own ways, then God simply allows them to do what they want. We parents use this tactic often. You warn your adventurous kids a thousand times not to bounce on the bed. It is far more effective for them to bump their heads once. The pain and bruise will remind them of the danger. Now we come to this debatable topic of homosexuality. First of all, homosexuality is not a 21<sup>st</sup> century invention. The Old Testament Law clearly states that it is a sin. God said in **Leviticus 18:22** – “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.” The context is about forbidden sexual relationship with one’s mom, sister and other relatives. Therefore, there is no ambiguity that God referred to homosexuality in verse 22. Some scientists have long postulated that a person’s sexual orientation is influenced by genes. Last year, research results from the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard on 500,000 people refuted the existence of the so-called “gay gene.” The authors suggested that environmental and cultural factors also influence one’s sexual behavior. The media misleads us into thinking that homosexual people are everywhere. According to one statistic in 2017, there were only 4.5% of the total U.S. population who claimed to be homosexual. In comparison, there are over 12% African-American people in our country. Why do a lot of people pay more attention to the welfare of the homosexuals instead of the African-Americans? A simple answer is that some politicians exaggerate the matter to achieve their agenda. I just want to give you some facts so that you know how to engage in an objective discussion with others. But regardless of what sins people commit, God treats everyone the same way. God hates sins but He loves sinners, and so should we. Christians can condemn people all-day that this and that sin deserve God’s judgment. But do we show enough compassion to them in their struggle, and point them to the only solution – Jesus Christ? Some people may think: “I have no interest in homosexuality. Therefore, what the Bible says doesn’t apply to me.” Just keep reading from verse 29 to the end of the chapter. Paul listed 21 other sins. They include wickedness in our thoughts, lips or deeds. The list is far from exhaustive. We can think of many other sins we commit. I do not want to spend time to define each item. Most of them should be quite self-explanatory. The Bible is like a mirror to us. If we are being honest to ourselves, we should admit that are guilty as charged. Paul said earlier that we are without excuse to say that God does not exist. Likewise, we are without excuse that we do not deserve God’s judgment.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

罪的本質就是人把自己看作神。當人們拒絕服從神的標準時，他們將就隨心所欲地定義什麼是正確和可允許的事情。保羅的論點針對我們的驕傲。他就像是一位誠懇的醫生與一名重病患者交談。對於一個病人來說，他需要聽到的不是動聽的話。他只需要聽到事實。如果他同意醫生的診斷，他便應該遵循處方進行治療。耶穌基督的救贖恩典是人類敗壞的唯一補救方法。只有祂才能把我們從罪的審判中救贖出來。

The essence of sin is to make oneself a god. When people refuse to submit to God's standard, they will make their own rules of what is right and what is permissible. Paul's arguments attack our pride. He was like a sincere doctor talking to a patient with severe illness. It is useless for a sick person to hear beautiful words. All he needs are the facts. If he agrees with the diagnosis, then he should follow the prescription for treatment. The saving grace of Jesus Christ is the only remedy for the depravity of the mankind. Only He can redeem us from the judgment of sins.