

INTRODUCTION 引言

There are certain things in daily life that must be broken before they will be fully functional. We have many gardening experts here. Seeds will be transformed to flowers or vegetable only when they break open the seed coats and germinate. You have to wear new jeans or new shoes for a period of time before they are broken-in and become more comfortable. Twenty years ago, I bought a brand-new car for the only time in my life. The manual says I have to drive the first 1,000 miles under 40 mph to allow the engine to be broken-in. It took much time and patience to finish the challenge. Let us apply that principle of broken-in to spiritual matters. There is a common question both non-believers and Christians often ask: why did Jesus have to die on the cross? A simple answer is that Jesus sacrificed Himself for the sins of mankind. Can the Father not declare from heaven that everyone is forgiven? God can do anything in any way He wants. In our message today, we will try to understand why Jesus had to die to complete the salvation plan. As we shall see, God displays His wisdom and love through the cross. We find new life in Jesus' death. This will be a revision course for our brothers and sisters. It will prepare our hearts for the communion later. As for our seeker friends, I hope this study will help you know more about the gospel.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Corrupted in Sin 在罪中敗壞

Paul is not shy to inform us that we are corrupted in sin. We have to accept the bad news before we will appreciate the good news. COVID may lead to serious health issues. But the vaccine is effective to protect us from an infection. You have to decide whose advice to follow and make a decision whether or not to take a needle. Paul tells us there is a more serious problem than sickness. He says in **verse 23**: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By saying "all," it means every person. That includes everyone ever lives from every country and race. We are all born with this problem. Parents want to hear "mama" or "dada" as the first word from their infant. But soon "mine" will become the most frequently used word. "This is my snack, my toy, everything is all mine!" Who will teach their kid to be self-centered? It comes with the package. Someone jokingly said that every child has the same middle name of "no." When parents see their toddlers doing something dangerous, they will say: "Johnny no!" Why do we have the urge to break the rules to speed or even steal? It is because it feels good. People may ask: "What is the big deal if I don't hurt anybody?" Paul tells us it does matter because sin ultimately damages God's glory. Parents will feel shameful if their children were caught in a crime. How much more heart-broken our God will feel when He sees us fall in sin? We are supposed to reflect His glory. The problem is not that we do not know the rules. Rather, we lack the interest and the strength to obey God. Very often we just meet the minimum requirements, or even try to find loopholes to beat the system. I heard a rumor when I first drove a car in the U.S. The police will not stop you on a highway as long as you do not exceed 10 mph of the speed limit. At one time, I asked a brother who used to be a cop if that was true. He replied: "Well, in the past the radar trap wasn't that accurate." Some policemen will let you go unless you are

really driving too fast. Please do not use that as an excuse to speed. Do not blame me if you get a ticket! Fines and even imprisonment can scare people from breaking the law. But people may do as they wish when there is no one to enforce the rules. In my upbringing, I often saw officials in uniforms chasing after merchants on the street. Those vendors sell stuff without a license. However, those inspectors will have a few days off during the Chinese New Year. Then you will see mobile retailers everywhere. Even the police will not bother them unless they do something bad! People are not considered guilty unless they are prosecuted. Many criminals go free because they lay low or the court cannot find enough evidence to prove the charge. But sin is different from crime. God keeps all our records – our actions, words and even thoughts. He will hold us accountable for how we conduct our life. **Hebrews 9:27** reads: Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. Even if a person can escape an earthly court, everyone will appear in the heavenly court. No one wants to think about death, but it will come eventually. Denial of God's existence does not make Him disappear either. God will demand a compensation because we smear His glory. When we share the gospel, we must bring up the severity of sin. Seeker friends must admit that they are sinners before they realize that they need a Savior. The traditional strategy of "Believe in Jesus or you will go to hell!" may not be the most acceptable approach. We do not want to scare people out of hell, or lure people into heaven. We can quote some tragic historical events or the problems in our society as a start. Why is there so much pain and suffering? Why is there greed, conflict, slander, envy, theft, murder and the rest? There is a deeper problem than inequality or power struggle. We know we should live a noble life. But why do we choose to do bad things instead? We long for a perfect world where people can trust and love each other completely. In the discussion process, you will guide non-believers to realize that sin is the core issue. It is a universal problem that affects every person. If we cannot solve the problem with our own effort, then we need an external help.

2. Corrected from Sin 從罪中解救

Every person is corrupted in sin. But here is the good news: God comes to our rescue to correct us from sin. Read **verse 22**: This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference. The word "righteousness" means meeting a standard. God's requirement for His children is perfection. He loves sinners but hate sins. We cannot approach God on our own. Therefore, God paves the way to declare us as righteousness. It is by believing that Jesus died for our sins on the cross. Also, God's grace is available to people of any background. But how was Jesus' death able to take away our sins? Paul introduces three words to explain it. Look at **verse 24**: And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Here we see the first two words: "justified" and "redemption." Justified, or the noun, justification is a legal term, meaning acquitted. A suspect is pronounced not guilty if a court cannot find enough evidence to indict him. I am guilty as charged in front of God. But Jesus made up for my failing grade. Say I was checking out at a grocery store. The cashier told me that total was \$20.01. I gave him \$21 in cash. Instead of giving me 99 cents in change, he pulled out a penny from his pocket and dropped it into the cashier machine. He then returned the one-dollar bill to me and let me go. He justified for what I was lacking. Similarly, Jesus did everything for us. We only have to exercise the faith God gives us to receive His grace. The second term in verse 24 we will look at is "redemption." It is a word used in slave trade. A slave could be set free if someone came up with a ransom. A gasoline pipeline company was held hostage a few weeks ago. Some hackers intruded into the computer system and stole some

computer data. They demanded a ransom. The company was forced to shut down the network. It caused gas shortage in some states. Finally, the ransom was paid. We owe God a sin-debt because we fall short of His glory. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our ransom. Those who put their faith in Jesus are thus redeemed. Paul introduces the third word in **verse 25**: God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood... The phrase “sacrifice of atonement” is used in animal sacrifice. The Bible tells us that our sins stir up God’s wrath. In the Old Testament, a priest slaughtered a bull or a sheep, then burned it on the altar. The animal died in place of the worshippers. It would quench God’s anger. It is like we do something to make up for an offense. A husband may buy some flowers for his wife, or kids may cook breakfast for their mom. It is hoping that the person who receives the gift or the service will forgive the wrongdoer. But there is a serious flaw in the animal sacrificial system. Its cleansing effect is only temporary. Therefore, a priest had to repeat the offering over and again. But Jesus offered a perfect remedy. **Hebrews 10:12** says: But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Jesus was both the perfect High Priest and the perfect sacrifice. The cross was His altar. Jesus’ death is so effective that it does not have to be repeated. The sins of those who put their faith in Jesus have been removed. Jesus justified us, redeemed us and neutralized God’s anger on us. How should we respond to such a wonderful grace we do not deserve? Christians should keep it a habit to think of Jesus’ death. It will keep us humble. Also, we should take pride of our status as God’s children. Most ladies show off their engagement ring. Young people will brag about their driver’s license or diploma. Those are big milestones in life. How much more should we witness to others that we are followers of Jesus? Do not feel embarrassed to say grace for lunch in public, or refuse a friend’s invitation on Sunday because you choose to worship God, or give glory to God for your good performance at work or in school. There is one more important thing. The moment we put our trust in Jesus, all of our sins – past, present and future – have all been forgiven instantly. But we will continue to sin in this life. Jesus had covered the eternal consequence for those sins. Even though believers cannot be sinless in this life, they should sin less by relying on God. He wants us to live a holy life. Pray for strength when you face temptations.

CONCLUSION 結論

We find life in Jesus’ death. The cross on which Jesus was nailed was a tool for death. In God’s divine wisdom, it became an instrument that gives new life. Let me close with a true story. Pastor Phillip started a new church in Texas years ago. God blessed the ministry and people came to know Christ. One day, pastor Phillip was about to conduct a baptism ceremony. An inflatable pool was bought as a baptism tub. Suddenly, people realized that they did not have a hose to fill up water. The pastor was heading to the hardware store when a guy named John stopped him. Therefore, pastor Phillip went back to his office. John wanted to verify what the pastor preached in a recent sermon was true. God loves us, even though He does not agree with everything we do. Pastor Phillip assured John. John explained that he had been in a sinful lifestyle. He tried another church a few months ago. Even after he came clean, the leaders asked him not to come back. Pastor Phillip affirmed that John was accepted because God loved him. Before he left, John told the pastor that in fact he had decided to take his life. He bought a hose. He intended to drive to a secluded area, then attached the hose to the muffler to divert the exhaust air into the cabin. The hose he bought was supposed to be a tool for death. It was now used to fill up the pool to baptize people who had a new life. Similarly, the cross of Jesus is now a symbol for our new life.

INTRODUCTION 引言

日常生活中有些東西必須被打破才能完全發揮功用。我們中間有很多園藝高手。種子只有在破殼並發芽後才會變成花朵或蔬菜。新牛仔褲或新鞋必須穿一段時間，然後穿起來才會更舒服。二十年前，我一生中唯一一次買全新的汽車。說明書說我必須以每小時 40 英里以下的速度行駛 1,000 英里才能磨合引擎。我需要花一些時間和耐心才完成挑戰。讓我們把這個原則應用到屬靈的事情上。非信徒和基督徒經常問一個共同的問題：為什麼耶穌必須死在十字架上？一個簡單的答案是耶穌為人類的罪犧牲了自己。天父難道不能從天上宣告每個人都被赦免了嗎？神可以用任何祂想要的方式做各樣事情。在今天的消息中，我們將嘗試了解為什麼耶穌必須死才能完成救恩計劃。我們將明白，神通過十字架彰顯祂的智慧和愛。我們在耶穌的死之中找到新生命。對弟兄姐妹來說，這篇信息是真理的複習課程，藉此預備我們的心迎接待會的聖餐。我也希望這篇信息能幫助福音朋友多一點了解我們的信仰。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Corrupted in Sin 在罪中敗壞

保羅毫不害羞地告訴我們，我們都在罪中敗壞。我們必須先接受壞消息，然後才會欣賞好消息。新冠病毒可能會導致嚴重的健康問題。但是疫苗可以有效地保護我們免受感染。你必須決定聽從誰的建議，並考慮是否去打針。保羅告訴我們有一個比疾病更嚴重的問題。他在 23 節說：**因為世人都犯了罪，虧缺了神的榮耀。**說到「世人」就是指每個人。這包括來自任何國家和種族的每個人。我們生下來就有這個問題。父母希望聽到嬰孩學會說的第一個單詞是「媽媽」或「爸爸」。但是很快「我的」便成為他們最常用的詞語。「這是我的零食，我的玩具，一切都是我的！」誰會教他們的孩子自我中心？他們生下來就是那副德性。有人開玩笑說，每個孩子中間的名字都是叫「不可以」。當父母看到他們的孩子做危險的事情時，他們會說：「強強，不可以！」為什麼我們會有違反規則的衝動，比加開快車，甚至偷竊？那是因為犯規使人感覺很爽。人們可能會問：「我又沒有不傷害他人，為什麼不可以？」保羅告訴我們事關重要，因為罪最終侵犯神的榮耀。如果孩子犯案被抓到，父母一定會感到沒面子。當我們的神看到我們陷在罪中時，祂豈不是更心碎？我們本應該反映祂的榮耀。問題不在於我們不知道規則。我們乃是缺乏順服神的興趣和動力。很多時候我們只想要滿足最低的要求，或是試圖鑽漏洞來偷雞摸狗。我第一次在美國開車時聽到一個謠言，只要你超速不過於每小時 10 英里，警察就不會在高速公路上抓你。有一次，我問一位曾經是警察的弟兄，這是不是真的。他回答說：「嗯，過去的雷達並不是那麼準確。」意思是有些警察會放過你，除非你真的開得太快。請不要以此為超速的藉口。拿到告票別怪我！罰款甚至坐牢也許會使人不敢犯法。但是，當沒有人執行規則

時，人們可能會為所欲為。在我的成長過程中，我經常看到穿著制服的官員在街上抓攤販，因為那些人在沒有許可證的情況下賣東西。但是，這些檢查員在春節期間會休息幾天。然後你便會看到四處都是攤販。連警察也不會管他們，只要他們沒有太離譜！除非被起訴，否則嫌疑犯也不會被定罪。許多壞蛋因為躲起來或是法庭找不到足夠的證據來指控他們而逍遙法外。但罪和罪行不一樣。神保留著我們所有的記錄 – 我們的行為、言語甚至思想。祂會追究我們一生所有的事情。希伯來書 9:27 說：**按著定命，人人都有一死，死後且有審判。**就算能逃得過地上的法庭，也逃不過天上的法庭。沒有人喜歡思考死亡，但它早晚總會到來。否認神的存在也不會使祂消失。神會要求賠償，因為我們玷污了祂的榮耀。當我們傳福音時，我們必須要提到罪的嚴重性。慕道的朋友必須先承認自己是罪人，然後才意識到需要救主。「信耶穌，否則下地獄」這種傳統的策略可能不是最有效的方法。我們不想把人嚇出地獄，也不想推人進天堂。我們可以引用一些悲慘的歷史事件或是社會上的問題作為引子。為什麼會有這麼多的痛苦和冤情？為什麼會有貪婪、衝突、誹謗、嫉妒、盜竊、謀殺等等？有一個比不平等或權力鬥爭更深層次的問題。我們知道我們應該過道德高尚的生活，但為何偏偏選擇做壞事呢？我們渴望一個完美的世界，在那裡人們可以完全信任和相愛。在這個談論的過程中，你將引導非信徒認識到罪是核心的問題。而且這是一個普遍的問題，影響到每個人。如果我們不能靠自己的努力解決此問題，那麼我們就需要尋求幫助。

2. Corrected from Sin 從罪中解救

每個人都在罪中敗壞。但好消息是：神來拯救我們，使我們從罪中得解救。請讀第 22 節：**就是神的義，因信耶穌基督加給一切相信的人，並沒有分別。**「義」這個字的意思是達到標準。神對祂兒女的要求是完美。祂愛罪人，但卻恨惡罪。我們不能靠自己的努力接近神。因此，神為我們鋪路，宣布我們為義人。那是藉著相信耶穌在十字架上為我們的罪而死。任何背景的人都可以透過耶穌獲得神的恩典。但為何耶穌的死能除去我們的罪呢？保羅用三個詞語來解釋。請看第 24 節：**如今卻蒙神的恩典，因基督耶穌的救贖，就白白的稱義。**在這裡我們看到前兩個用詞：「稱義」和「救贖」。「稱義」是一個法律的術語，意思是無罪釋放。如果法庭無法找到足夠的證據來起訴嫌疑犯，則那個人將被宣布無罪釋放。我在神面前是有罪的，但是耶穌彌補了我的不足。假設我在超市結賬。收銀員告訴我總共是 20.01 美元。我給了他 21 美元現金。他可以找回 99 美元的零錢，但是他從自己的口袋裡掏出一分錢，扔進了收銀機。然後他把一美元的鈔票還給我，讓我走。他彌補了我沒有的銅板。同樣，耶穌為我們付清了一切。我們只需要運用神賜予我們的信心來接受祂的恩典。在第 24 節中我們要看的第二個用詞是「救贖」。那是奴隸買賣中使用的一個術語。只要有人付出贖金，奴隸便重獲自由。幾週前，一家汽油管道公司被勒索。一些黑客侵入電腦系統，竊取了一些數據。他們要求贖金。該公司被迫關閉網絡，造成一些州氣油短缺。最後，公司支付贖金。我們欠神的罪債，因為我們虧缺了祂的榮耀。耶穌死在十字架上，為我們付上贖金。那些相信耶穌的人就這樣被救贖了。保羅在第 25 節介紹第三個用詞：**神設立耶穌作挽回祭，是憑著耶穌的血，藉著人的信...**「挽回祭」一詞用於動物祭

祀。聖經告訴我們，我們的罪會激起神的憤怒。在舊約中，祭司宰一頭公牛或一隻羊，然後放在祭壇上焚燒。這隻動物代替敬拜的人死去，於是便平息了神的憤怒。這就像我們做一些事情來彌補過失。丈夫可能會送鮮花給妻子，或者孩子們會為媽媽做早餐。希望收到禮物或服務的人會原諒得罪他的人。但動物祭祀制度存在嚴重的缺陷。它的果效只是暫時的。因此，一位祭司必須不斷地重複獻祭。但是耶穌提供了一個完美的解救方法。希伯來書 10:12 說：**但基督獻了一次永遠的贖罪祭，就在神的右邊坐下了。**耶穌既是完美的大祭司，又是完美的祭品。十字架是祂的祭壇。耶穌的死是如此的有效，以至於不必重複。那些相信耶穌的人的罪已被除去。耶穌稱我們為義，祂救贖了我們，祂消除了神對我們的憤怒。我們應該如何回應我們不配得的如此美好的恩典？基督徒應該培養一個習慣，常常想到耶穌的死。它會讓我們保持謙虛。此外，我們應該為自己作為神的兒女而感到自豪。大多數女孩子會炫耀她們的訂婚戒指。年輕人會吹噓他們的駕照或文憑。這些都是人生的重大里程碑。我們豈不是更應該向別人見證我們是耶穌的跟隨者嗎？不要因為你在公眾場所謝飯禱告，在工作或學校有良好表現時將榮耀歸給神，或是在周日選擇來聚會而拒絕朋友的邀約感到難為情。還有一件重要的事情。當我們相信耶穌的那一刻，我們所有的罪 – 過去、現在和將來的罪都立即被一筆勾銷。但我們在今生還是會繼續犯罪，但耶穌已經刪除了那些罪的永恆後果。雖然信徒在今生不可能不犯罪，但他們應該靠著神少犯罪。神希望我們過聖潔的生活。當你面對試探時，可以向神支取力量。

CONCLUSION 結論

我們在耶穌的死之中找到新生命。釘耶穌的十字架是個死亡的工具。但是在神的智慧中，它成為賜予新生命的工具。讓我以一個真實的故事作結束。菲利普牧師幾年前在得克薩斯州建立了一間新的教會。神祝福那個事工，福音朋友陸續地接受基督。一天，菲利普牧師要舉行浸禮儀式。教會買了一個充氣的水池作為浸禮池。忽然，有人發現他們沒有水管來加水。牧師正打算去五金店時，一個名叫約翰的人攔住了他。因此，菲利普牧師回到自己的辦公室。約翰想確認牧師在最近一次講道中所說的內容是否真實。神愛我們，縱使祂不同意我們所做的一切。菲利普牧師向約翰保證。約翰解釋說他一直處於罪惡的生活方式中。幾個月前，他去了另一間教會。雖然他已經脫離那個罪，但是領袖們要求他不要回去。菲利普牧師肯定約翰是被接納的，因為神愛他。在約翰離開之前，他告訴牧師，事實上他本來決定結束自己的生命。他買了一根水管。他打算開車到一個僻靜的地方，然後將水管連接到排氣管上，將廢氣引入車內。他買的水管本來是用作死亡的工具。它現在被用來填滿水池，為有新生命的人施浸。同樣，耶穌的十字架現在是我們新生命的象徵。