

INTRODUCTION 引言

Knowledge will affect our decisions. You will modify your habits if you realize that there is a better way to do certain things. I tried to convince my two sons to use mouthwash the past few years. Recently, I asked my younger son if he is doing it. He said he is, although he does not like the burning sensation. I questioned why he does not rinse his mouth with water after using mouthwash. Then I wondered what is the right way to do it. A few websites indeed advise against rinsing with water. That allows the mouthwash to remain on your teeth. In fact, some experts say we should not rinse our mouth after brushing. I have been cleaning my teeth the wrong way all my life! I am not suggesting you to change your habit. I am your pastor, not your dentist. The point is that the correct information should guide our actions. The same is true for spiritual matters. The English adult fellowship discussed an important question a few weeks ago: are Christians still sinners? What do you think? Some of you may say: “Nah! What is the big deal? Let the Bible scholars debate about it. I have house-works to do this afternoon. I need to go to school or work tomorrow.” The fact is that your understanding on sin will affect your relationship with God. Whether you see yourself as a victim or a victor in sin will also influence your decisions. What matters is not how we feel or what some Bible teachers think, but what God says. We need to know the truth so that we can walk in the truth.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Condemnation in Sin 定罪

Are Christians still sinners? First, we need to consider our spiritual status before we receive Jesus. The Bible says we are condemned in sin. God comes to the verdict based on His righteous standard. Romans 3:23 says: **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** “All” means everyone – men and women, young and old, people in the past and in the future. Sin is a universal problem. Paul defines sin as failing to meet the perfect standard of God. We smear God’s reputation when we sin. Imagine a son from a celebrity family got drunk, hit another car and injured its driver. It brought shame to the family. In addition, the insurance company would go after the policy-holder for a compensation. The court would also charge the driver for breaking the law. He might have to pay a fine or go to jail, or both. However, the laws of the land only target people’s conducts. The police cannot arrest me if I am only thinking about stealing something from a store. I will not be accused if no one sees me committing a crime either. But sin is more serious than crime. Anything we do, say and think that falls short of God’s perfect requirement is sin. God defines pride, greed, jealousy and slander as sins. Therefore, we are all condemned. No one can be exempted. Just like crime, sin also has its consequence. Hebrews 9:27 says: **And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.** God will judge us for all that we do in this life. He knows everything about us. It is like He has a CCTV in the sky that records all that we think, say and do. Those evidence will be presented in the heavenly court. God will demand a payment to cover the damages caused by our sins. We do not want to think about judgment. But it will happen just as the Bible says. Sin is truly a serious matter. We need to accept the bad news before we will hear the good news. A doctor who tells you that you are in perfect health every time you visit him is a liar. I would rather see a doctor

who tells me the facts. I will follow his advice to change my life habits or even take medicines to get better. Sin is a problem bigger than we can handle. We do not realize that we need a solution unless we admit our helplessness. God loves us and He provides a remedy for us. We need to seek His help.

2. Compensation for Sin 頂罪

Every person is condemned in sin. We can never afford to cover the damage we cause. Thanks to God! He sends Jesus as the compensation for sin. Jesus saved us by dying on the cross. But how did that actually take away our sins? Let us look at it from different angles. First, Jesus **replaced** us. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21 – **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** Jesus replaced us and suffered for our penalty on the cross. Go back to the example of the drunken driver. Suppose the car that he smashed was a priceless antique automobile. The owner filed a multi-million-dollar lawsuit. There was no way for the son to pay the money. The parents then stepped in, replaced their son and suffered the loss. That was what Jesus did for us. He replaced us by taking the punishment we deserve. Our sin debt is gone when we put our trust in Jesus. Second, by replacing us, Jesus also **redeemed** us. Look at Romans 3:24 – **and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.** The word redemption is a term used in slave trade. At that time, slaves were captives in wars, those who were unable to pay their debts or people born of slave parents. Slaves could only be set free when they or someone paid a ransom. The Bible says we are slaves in sin before we know Jesus. We sin uncontrollably. Jesus paid the ransom to redeem us. Paul says in Romans 6:17-18 – **17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.** Notice that we are never a free person in a spiritual sense. Sin is our previous master. Jesus now becomes our new Master. That is why Christians call Jesus their Lord. We now belong to Jesus. We can live a righteous life when we obey Him. Jesus replaced us and He redeemed us. Thirdly, Jesus also **regenerated** us. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 – **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** We are “in Christ” the moment we receive Jesus. Becoming a Christian is more than registering as a church member or adopting a new set of rules. There are some revolutionary changes on the inside. All of our sins – past, present and future – have been cleansed by Jesus. God changes us into a new person by giving us a new heart. This new life enables us to follow His instructions. In the past, you might think that the Bible is a good moral book. But it is just one of the options you can consider. Now you know that the Bible is the blueprint for your life. God gives you the love for His Word and the desire to apply it to your life. Thank God for giving us a new beginning in Jesus.

3. Confrontation with Sin 抗罪

We are condemned by God as sinners. But Jesus compensated for our sins. Christians no longer have to bear the eternal consequence for their sins. That is the best news for us. However, our confrontation with sin will continue for the rest of our lives. Why are Christians still able to sin? We live in a fallen world. The apostle John tells us in 1 John 5:19 that: **We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.** Satan tempts us with fame and fortune, pleasure and pride continually. Besides, we still live in a fragile and temporary body.

There is a possibility for us to sin at every moment. Jesus can identify with our experience. Satan tempted Jesus in Matthew 4 by asking Him to change stones into bread, to jump down from the top of the temple and to bow down before him. Jesus did not succumb to temptations in every instance. He used God's Word to defeat Satan's lies. He quoted the Bible and responded "it is written" in each temptation. He submitted to the Father and lived an obedient life. Today, the devil spreads lies that some people lead a sinful lifestyle because they are born with certain genes or it is their right and or it is intolerant not to accept others' differences. We should always go back to God's Word to clear up confusions. To God, something is either right or wrong. There is no gray area. God's standard does not need any revision either. Do not be swayed by so-called experts' opinions, and do not make social media your Bible either! A million "likes" or followers do not turn lies into truth. God gives us the freedom to obey or disobey Him. What will happen when Christians rebel against God? Here is the most precious part: sin will not undo our salvation. Jesus promises us in John 10:28 – "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." Once we are saved, no force can un-save us! We can do nothing to earn salvation and there is nothing we can do to lose salvation. Although sin will not destroy our relationship with God, it will disturb our fellowship with Him. Little kids will hide away from their parents when they rebel. You will feel awkward to see a friend you have offended too. We do not want to get near to God when we sin. We lack interest to read the Bible and attend church meetings. Although Jesus had taken away the eternal penalty of our sin, we have to bear the responsibilities in this life every time we sin. For example, we or others may get hurt, there may be loss of health or people's trust, loss of peace and joy or even legal ramifications. We enjoy sinning when we do not know Jesus. However, there is no fun for Christians to sin because they hurt the heart of the Lord who loves them and died for them. The Bible says God will discipline us as He sees fit because He loves us. The Holy Spirit inside us will keep nudging us until we repent. At any moment, we can claim the cleansing power of Jesus' blood. However, God's grace should never be used as a license to sin. A rich man's kid will not squander his father's wealth if he loves his dad more than his money. Likewise, we will not abuse God's grace if we truly love Him. We know that Jesus shouldered a huge cost to save us.

CONCLUSION 總結

We are condemned in sin before we know Jesus. He died on the cross to compensate for our sin. We will continue to confront with sin even after we are saved. Now we are back to the million-dollar question: are Christians still sinners? From God's perspective, believers are no longer sinners. Committing sin uncontrollably should not characterize our life. It is like we call naturalized immigrants as U.S. citizens. They still appear like foreigners. They speak English with an accent. They prefer the food and they celebrate the festivals of their birth country. However, according to the law, they are now Americans. Similarly, God transferred us into His Kingdom when we are saved. What matters is not how we feel or how others see us. God treats us as His children. The Bible calls us saints. We are justified and holy people, although we are far from perfect. Our struggle over sins is real and often painful. We have different weaknesses. It can be about personality, entertainment or materials. Satan will fool us that we cannot help but stumble over and over again in the same temptations. We will surely fail if we rely on ourselves. We can win only when we submit to God. We must use the power and the privilege God gives to us as Kingdom citizens to fight. In every decision, we can choose whether we want to be victors or victims in sin. God sees us as no more sin. With His help, we can sin no more.

INTRODUCTION 引言

知識會影響我們的決定。如果你知到有更好的方法來做某些事情，你就會改變你的習慣。在過去的幾年裡，我試圖說服我的兩個兒子使用漱口水。最近，我問小兒子他有沒有那樣做。他說他有，雖然他不喜歡那種燒灼的感覺。我問他為什麼用完漱口水之後不用清水漱口。然後我在想到底什麼才是正確的方法。一些網站的確建議不要用水漱口，這樣可以讓漱口水留在牙齒上。事實上，一些專家說刷牙後不應該漱口。難道我這輩子都在用錯誤的方式刷牙嗎？我不是建議你改變你的習慣。我是你的牧師，不是你的牙醫。重點是正確的信息應該引導我們的行為。屬靈的事情也是如此。英文成人團契幾週前討論了一個重要問題：基督徒是否還是罪人？你認為呢？有些人可能會想：「管他！有什麼大不了的？讓聖經學者去辯論吧。今天下午我還有家務要做。我明天要上學或上班。」事實上，你對罪的了解會影響你與神的關係。無論你將自己視為罪的敗將或勝軍，將會影響你的決定。關鍵不是我們的感覺或某些聖經老師的想法，而是神怎麼說。我們需要認識真理，這樣我們才能行在真理中。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Condemnation in Sin 定罪

基督徒是否還是罪人？首先，我們要思考我們在信耶穌之前的屬靈狀況。聖經說我們都被定罪。神按照祂公義的標準作出判決。羅馬書 3:23 說：**因為世人都犯了罪，虧缺了神的榮耀**。「世人」是指每個人：男人和女人、年輕人和老年人、活在過去和將來的人。罪是一個普遍的問題。保羅將罪定義為未能達到神完美的標準。當我們犯罪時，我們污蔑了神的聲譽。假設一個名人家庭的兒子喝醉了，撞到另一輛車，還撞傷了司機。他給家人帶來了羞辱。此外，保險公司會向投保人索取賠償。法院還會控告司機違犯交通規則。年輕人可能要付罰款或坐牢，或者受到兩樣的懲罰。但是，地方的法律只針對人的行為。如果我只是想要從商店偷東西，警察就不能抓我。如果沒有人看到我犯法，我也不會被指控。但罪行比罪案更嚴重。我們所做的、所說的和所想不符合神完美要求的事情都是罪。神將驕傲、貪婪、嫉妒和誹謗定義為罪。因此，我們都被定罪。沒有人可以被豁免。就像犯案一樣，犯罪也會有後果。希伯來書 9:27 說：**按著定命，人人都有一死，死後且有審判**。神會審判我們今生所做的一切。祂知道我們的一切。彷彿祂在天上有一部閉路電視，記錄我們所想、所說和所做的所有事情。那些證據將會帶到天上的法庭。神會要求賠償，來彌補我們犯罪所造成的損失。我們都不願意去想審判這件事，但它會按照聖經所說的那樣發生。罪的確是一件很嚴重的事。我們需要先接受壞消息，然後才會去聽好消息。如果你每次看醫生時他都說你的身體非常好，他可能是個騙子。我寧願去看一個告訴我事實的醫生。我會聽從他的建議，改變我的生活習慣，甚至吃藥來改善。罪是一個我們無法處理的大問題。除

非我們承認自己的無助，否則我們不會意識到我們需要解決辦法。神愛我們，祂為我們提供了補救方法。我們需要尋求祂的幫助。

2. Compensation for Sin 頂罪

每個人都被定罪。我們永遠無法彌補我們造成的損失。感謝神！祂差派耶穌為我們頂罪。耶穌死在十字架上拯救了我們。但這實際上是如何清除我們的罪的呢？讓我們從不同的角度來思考。首先，耶穌**代替**我們。保羅在哥林多後書 5:21 中說：**神使那無罪的替我們成為罪，好叫我們在他裏面成為神的義。**耶穌代替我們在十字架上為我們的刑罰受苦。回到醉酒司機的例子。假設他撞壞的是價值連城的古董車。車主提起了數百萬美元的訴訟。那個兒子根本無法賠償。於是他的父母介入，代替兒子承擔損失。這就是耶穌為我們所做的。祂代替我們接受我們應得的懲罰。當我們信靠耶穌時，我們的罪債就不再存在了。另外，通過代替我們，耶穌**救贖**了我們。請看羅馬書 3:24：**如今卻蒙神的恩典，因基督耶穌的救贖，就白白地稱義。**救贖這個字是奴隸買賣的用語。當時的奴隸是戰俘，無力償還債務的人，或者是奴隸父母所生的孩子。奴隸只有在他們或別人付贖金後才能得到自由。聖經說，我們在認識耶穌之前，都是罪的奴隸。我們身不由己地犯罪。耶穌付了贖金來救贖我們。保羅在羅馬書 6:17-18 中說：**17 感謝神！因為你們從前雖然作罪的奴僕，現今卻從心裏順服了所傳給你們道理的模範。18 你們既從罪裏得了釋放，就作了義的奴僕。**請注意，我們在靈裡從來都不是自由人。罪是我們以前的主人，現在耶穌成為我們的新主人。因此基督徒稱耶穌為他們的主。我們現在屬於耶穌。當我們順服祂時，我們就能過聖潔的生活。耶穌代替我們，並救贖了我們。第三，耶穌也**重生**了我們。保羅在哥林多後書 5:17 告訴我們：**若有人在基督裏，他就是新造的人，舊事已過，都變成新的了。**當我們接受耶穌的那一刻，我們就是「在基督裡」了。成為基督徒不僅僅是登記做教會的會友或接納一套新的規則。我們的靈裡面有一些革命性的變化。我們所有的罪，包括過去、現在的和將來的罪都被耶穌潔淨了。神給我們一顆新心，改變我們成為一個新人。這個新生命能使我們遵從祂的旨意。過去，你可能認為聖經是一本很好的道德教材。但那只是你眾多選擇之一。現在你認定聖經是生命的藍圖。神使你愛祂的話語，並渴望將它應用到生活之中。感謝神在耶穌裡給了我們一個新的開始。

3. Confrontation with Sin 抗罪

我們被神定為罪人，但耶穌為我們頂罪。基督徒不再需要為他們的罪承擔永恆的後果。對我們來說，這是最好的消息。然而，我們將在餘生中繼續與抵抗罪。為什麼基督徒仍然會犯罪？因為我們生活在一個墮落的世界中。使徒約翰在約翰一書 5:19 節告訴我們：**我們知道，我們是屬神的，全世界都臥在那惡者手下。**撒旦不斷地用名與利、享樂和驕傲來引誘我們。此外，我們仍然活在一個脆弱且暫時的身體裡。我們每時每刻都可能犯罪。耶穌能夠體會我們的遭遇。撒旦在馬太福音 4 章中試探耶穌，要求祂把石頭變成餅，從聖殿的屋頂跳下來，並向他下拜。在每一個試探中，耶穌都沒有降服。耶穌用神的話語擊退撒旦的謊言。祂在每一個試探中都引用聖經並回應

「經上記著說」。耶穌遵從天父，並過著順服的生活。今天，魔鬼散佈謊言，說有些人過著犯罪的生活方式是因為他們生來就有某些基因，或者那是他們的權利，或者我們應該容納別人和我們的差異。我們必須回到神的話語來澄清疑惑。對神來說，所有事情只有對或錯，沒有灰色地帶。神的標準也從來不需要修改。不要被所謂的專家意見所左右，也不要將社交媒體當作你的聖經！一百萬個「贊」或追隨者不會把謊言變成真理。神賜給我們順服或不順服祂的自由。當基督徒犯罪時會發生什麼？最寶貴的地方是：罪不會取消我們的救恩。耶穌在約翰福音 10:28 節向我們保證：「我又賜給他們永生；他們永不滅亡，誰也不能從我手裏把他們奪去。」一旦我們已經得救，沒有任何力量搶走我們的救恩！我們不是靠自己的努力贏得救恩，因此我們也不會因為做了什麼而失去救恩。雖然罪不會拆毀我們與神的關係，但是罪會影響我們與神的相交。當小孩子反叛時，他們不敢見到父母。當你看到你得罪了的朋友時，你也會感到尷尬。當我們犯罪時，我們也不想靠近神。我們沒有興趣讀聖經和參加教會聚會。雖然耶穌已經為我們的罪除去了永遠的刑罰，但我們每次犯罪時仍然需要承擔今生的責任。例如，我們或其他人可能會受到傷害，我們可能會失去健康或別人的信任，失去平安與喜樂，甚至要負法律的責任。當我們不認識耶穌時，我們會喜歡犯罪。然而，基督徒犯罪時不會覺得很爽的，因為他們傷害了愛他們並為他們而死的主的心。聖經說神會以合宜的方式管教我們，因為祂愛我們。我們裡面的聖靈也會不斷扎我們的心，直到我們願意悔改。在任何時候，我們都可以支取耶穌寶血的潔淨功效。然而，神的恩典絕不應該被用作犯罪的通行證。如果一個富翁的孩子愛他父親勝過愛他的錢，他就不會揮霍他爸爸的財富。同樣，如果我們真的愛神，我們就不會濫用祂的恩典。我們知道耶穌為了拯救我們付出了重大的代價。

CONCLUSION 總結

在我們認識耶穌之前，我們是被定罪的。耶穌死在十字架上替我們頂罪。在我們得救之後，我們仍將繼續對抗罪。現在我們回到那個百萬金元的問題：基督徒還是罪人嗎？從神的角度來看，信徒不再是罪人。我們不再會身不由己地犯罪。這情形有點像已經歸化為美國公民的移民一樣。他們仍然看起來像外國人，他們講英語也帶有口音。他們喜歡家鄉的食物，他們慶祝家鄉的節日。但是，根據法律，他們現在是美國人。同樣，當我們得救時，神將我們遷移到祂的國度裡。關鍵不是我們的感覺或別人如何看我們。神對待我們如同祂的兒女。聖經稱我們為聖徒。我們是被稱義和聖潔的人，儘管我們遠非完美。我們與罪的爭戰是真實的，而且常常是很難受的。我們有不同的軟弱，可以是關乎個性、娛樂或物質。撒旦會欺騙我們，使我們一次又一次地在同樣的試探中跌倒。如果我們倚靠自己，我們肯定會失敗。只有當我們順服神時，我們才能得勝。我們要使用神賜給我們作為天國公民的能力和特權來爭戰。在每一個決定中，我們都可以選擇是要成為罪的勝利者還是失敗者。神看我們不再有罪。靠著祂的幫助，我們能夠不再犯罪。