

INTRODUCTION 引言

When you look at today's sermon title, you may be wonder: "What in the world is that all about?" Every church has something unique. For ours, it is our food. Not many churches have a professional kitchen. We also have a few seasoned chefs to cook for us. Among the many well-known dishes our kitchen crew makes, Char-Siu (BBQ pork) should be our all-time favorite. We have significantly more people eating when we serve that food. Some eaters order extra Char-Siu to take home. Food is a great service we provide. People do not have to worry about where to eat. You only pay six dollars to eat here, not to mention you can get a second if you want more! However, we should look at meal as a ministry. After all, this is not a restaurant. We are a church! We should not only feed people's stomachs. But we must also fill their souls. God gives us many resources and opportunities to help people know Him. As such, FCBC is only half-successful if people only come here for Char-Siu. God's heart is pleased if people come here for Christ the Savior. Therefore, a godly church is a good church. The Philippian church is an example. Paul founded the church during the second of his three missionary trips. It was the first Christian church established in Europe. Paul sent this letter to thank the believers for their financial support of his mission work. He was imprisoned when he wrote this letter. But he expressed his longing to visit the church soon. We can break down the section we read earlier into two parts: words of praise and words of prayer.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Praise of Exhortation 充滿讚賞的鼓勵

First, Paul expresses his praise of exhortation to the Philippian church members. He says he thanked God every time he thought of them. His heart was also filled with joy whenever he prayed for the church. He tells us the reason in verse 5: **Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.** We get the English word "fellowship" from this Greek word for partnership. The Philippian church had been working with Paul in his gospel ministry. He was a traveling missionary and the church gave him financial support. Paul shares more in 4:15 – **And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.** Here we see the word "partnership" again. Macedonia was the Roman province where the city of Philippi was located. After Paul left Philippi, he went to other cities. But the Philippian church kept sending support to Paul. This evangelist was grateful for their close partnership in the gospel work. Our church supports mission work too. We have a mission fund to partially support a few missionaries. We also participate in two major fund drives of the Southern Baptist Convention every year. We just announced about the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering today. We partner with those evangelists through giving. Besides financial contribution, you can also pray for them. We post the newsletters from them on the notice board near the entrance. Read their updates, get to know their work and needs, then pray for them. God may not send you to another city or country to share the gospel. But He sends you to your campus, office and neighborhood to tell people about Jesus. If you are a believer, then you should also be an evangelist. If salvation

means so much to you, then you should share it with others. Just tell people how you became a Christian and why Jesus is important to you. Quote a Bible verse that is helpful to you. Invite people to come to church. God will give you wisdom and words to say because He partners with us. Paul says it this way in verse 6: **And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.** The partnership was not only between Paul and the Philippian church, God was partnering with them too. Paul started the church, but God continued to use it to expand His Kingdom. There will be an end to gospel ministry. “The day of Jesus Christ” or similar phrases are common in the New Testament. It refers to the second coming of Jesus. The Lord went back to heaven after His resurrection. But the Bible clearly tells us that He will return in the future. He will judge the world and usher all His followers to heaven when He comes. No one knows when that will happen. But it will surely take place. If all other Biblical prophecies about Jesus have been fulfilled, then the prophecy about Jesus’ return will definitely come true. The question is: are we ready? Do we long for Jesus’ appearance? Do we conduct our lives with a heavenly perspective? We are often fooled by the fallen world that our only goal is to enjoy this life. Yes, we need to study, work and feed our family. There is nothing wrong about clothes, entertainment and vacation. But have you wondered why Jesus saved you? It is more than reserving a place in heaven. God made you a child of His first, so that you will share this great news with others. God started this church a few decades ago through the love of some American believers. Now the baton is in our hands. God who started the good work in this church will bring it to a completion. He calls us to partner with Him. Our ministries should aim toward the ultimate goal of helping people know Jesus. Our children’s program, festival celebrations and food should be for the same purpose. Our daily life and our church life will have different meanings when our eternal destiny is secured. We do not live for ourselves, but for the Lord. We do not live only for today, but also for eternity.

2. Prayer with Expectation 帶著期望的禱告

After giving his praise of exhortation to the Philippian believers, Paul continues with a prayer with expectation. Verse 8-11 is a complicated long sentence. Basically, Paul prays for two things. First, Paul prays that their **“love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment.”** In the Bible, “knowledge” does not only refer to information. It is an understanding gained through experience. Parents teach their kids driving skill by first explaining how a car works. For example, the right pedal is the accelerator and the middle one is the brake. However, no one can learn how to operate a car without actually driving it. Parents must risk having a heart attack and bear the danger that their kids may hit something. Similarly, the Bible says God will provide for our needs. If you do not pray, put your trust in the Lord and wait on Him, then you will never experience God’s care for you. Paul says besides knowledge, we also need discernment. The word “discernment” has to do with making a judgment. Before we knew Jesus, we used the world’s standard to make decisions. After we become believers, there must be a change in our mindset. We need God’s help to make wise choices and set the right priority. Paul says that the right knowledge and discernment will help us approve what is excellent. I like the translation of a Bible version called the Message for verse 9: **“You need to use your head and test your feelings.”** We should not only choose what we feel as good, but what God sees as the best. What you eat for lunch later may not matter much. However, other decisions like career, marriage and parenting will have long-lasting effects. One day, God will examine the outcomes of our life. Therefore, the second thing Paul prays for is that the

Philippian believers may be “**pure and blameless for the day of Christ.**” The Greek word for “pure” means free from impurities under the examination of sunlight. When I was a kid, people went to mom and pop stores to buy eggs. We told the clerk how many eggs we needed. Then he would pick up the eggs one at a time, inspect them before a light bulb to make sure that they were fresh. Similarly, the Holy Spirit living in us constantly scans our mind. He will alert us for sinful thoughts like greed and pride. Other than remaining as pure, God also wants us to be blameless. That does not mean perfect. Rather, it means not causing others to stumble. The picture is like a smooth path that does not have any rock or hole that will trip people. Whatever you do will affect others to some extent. Non-believers will associate what you do with what you believe. Jesus Christ is always with us as if we are wearing a company’s uniform. Some employees are very proud to work for their companies. Likewise, we should be proud to be God’s children and show it through our lives. Paul says we can live a pure and blameless life when we are filled with the fruits of righteousness. We are all born as sinners. But God declares us righteous after we receive Jesus. The result is fruits of righteousness. That is associated with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 – **22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control...** You should have all nine qualities if you are a Christian. Some virtues may be more evident, others may need more help from God to improve. Do your classmates or colleagues consider you a loving person, and someone who is patient and kind? Again, we are not talking about perfection. But do you display those godly traits especially when you are under stress? For example, when you disagree with others or when people are rude to you? What applies to each believer is also true for a church. Can newcomers feel that we are joyful people? We may look religious but are we also helpful to their needs? People can notice that we have a different life if we do that. They may think that we are good people and this church is a nice church. We can then tell them that those are the results of God working in us. He can minister the same changes in them too.

CONCLUSION 結論

A godly church is a good church. God hopes that people to come here not just for Char-Siu, but more importantly for Christ the Savior. Food will fill people’s stomachs for a few hours. But salvation will bless them for eternity. The sweet aroma of food will attract eaters. But only the gospel of Jesus will attract seekers and make them stay. I once read an article that talks about a special flower that draws a big crowd. Titan Arum is not famous for its beauty and fragrance. Quite the contrary. It is considered the stinkiest flower in the world. It is a native species to the Sumatra island of Indonesia. The plant can grow to more than ten feet tall. It takes five to ten years before it will bloom. You will know it when it does. It smells really bad. People give it a nickname “corpse plant.” Scientists analyzed the chemicals released in the unpleasant smell and found the same ingredients in certain cheeses, garlic, rotten fish, sweaty socks, etc. It will attract flies and other insects that help its pollination. It will attract a lot of tourists when it blooms. Many people are willing pay to see it and sniff its disgusting odor. Today, people pay a few dollars to enjoy our church meal. They come into our building already. We should seek the opportunity to share with them a priceless gift that only Jesus can give. We are doing an effective gospel ministry if they think of Jesus every time they ponder on Char-Siu.

INTRODUCTION 引言

當你看到今天的講道題目時，你可能會懷疑：「這到底是什麼信息？」每個教會都有一些獨特的地方。我們教會的賣點是我們的食物。沒有多少教會有專業的廚房。我們還有一些經驗豐富的廚師為我們做飯。我們廚房同工泡製的有名菜色之中，叉燒應該是最受大眾歡迎的。當我們供應叉燒時，便會有很多人來吃。有些人還會多買一些叉燒帶回家。食物是我們提供的優良服務。人們不必操心找地方吃飯。在這裡吃一頓才六塊錢，吃不夠還可以再拿！然而，我們應該把食物看成為一項事工。畢竟，這是教會，不是餐館！我們不應該只餵飽人們的肚子，我們也必須滿足他們的靈魂。神給了我們許多資源和機會來幫助人們認識祂。因此，如果人們是為了叉燒來這裡，第一華人浸信會就只成功了一半。如果人們來到這裡是為了救主基督，神的心會很喜悅。因此，一所敬虔的教會便是好的教會。腓立比教會就是一個例子。保羅在他三次宣教旅程中的第二次建立了這個教會。它是在歐洲被創辦的第一座基督教會。保羅寄出這封信感謝信徒們對他宣教工作的經濟支持。當他寫這封信時，他因為傳福音而坐牢。但是保羅表達了他渴望盡快訪問那個教堂的願望。我們可以把剛才讀過的經文分成兩部分：讚賞的話和禱告的話。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Praise of Exhortation 充滿讚賞的鼓勵

首先，保羅表達他對腓立比教會成員充滿讚賞的鼓勵。他說每次想到他們都會感謝神。每當他為教會禱告時，他的心也充滿喜樂。他在第 5 節告訴我們原因：**因為從頭一天直到如今，你們是同心合意地興旺福音。**英文的「團契」這個字就是從「同心合意」的希臘文演變過來的。腓立比教會一直在保羅的福音事工中與他合作。他是個旅行佈道家，教會給予他經濟支持。保羅在 4:15 進一步補充：**腓立比人哪，你們也知道我初傳福音離了馬其頓的時候，論到授受的事，除了你們以外，並沒有別的教會供給我。**在這裡，我們再次看到了「同心合意」這個字。(和合本中文聖經把它翻譯為「供給」) 馬其頓是腓立比城所在的羅馬省份。保羅離開腓立比之後，就去了別的城市。但是腓立比教會繼續支持他。這位傳道人感謝他們在福音事工中的密切合作。我們的教會也有支持宣教事工。我們有一個差傳基金用來部分支持一些宣教士。我們每年還參加美南浸信會的兩個募捐活動。我們今天剛剛宣布了「安妮莊復活節獻金」。我們通過金錢奉獻與一些宣教士合作。除了經濟上的支持，你也可以為他們禱告。我們把他們的通訊張貼在大門口附近的佈告欄上。你可以去看看他們的近況，了解他們的事工和需要，然後為他們禱告。神可能不會派你到另一

個城市或國家去傳福音。但祂派你到你的校園、辦公室和社區去向人們傳講耶穌。如果你是信徒，那麼你也應該是個傳福音的使者。如果救恩對你如此重要，那麼你應該與他人分享。你只需要告訴別人你是如何成為基督徒的，以及為什麼耶穌對你很重要。你也可以引用一段對你有幫助的經文，並邀請人來教會。神會給你智慧和言辭，因為祂正在與我們同工。保羅在第 6 節這樣說：**我深信那在你們心裏動了善工的，必成全這工，直到耶穌基督的日子。**不只保羅和腓立比教會有夥伴關係，神也在與他們一起同工。保羅創立了教會，但神繼續使用它來擴展神的國度。福音事工會有一個終結。「耶穌基督的日子」或類似的用語在新約中很常見。它指的是耶穌的第二次降臨。主復活後回到天堂。但是聖經清楚地告訴我們，主會再來。耶穌回來時要審判世界，並把跟隨祂的人帶到天堂。沒有人知道那什麼時候會發生，但是它一定會發生。如果聖經中關於耶穌的其他預言都應驗了，那麼耶穌再來的預言就必然會實現。問題是：我們準備好了嗎？我們是否渴望耶穌的出現？我們是否以屬天的眼光來過生活？我們常常被墮落的世界所愚弄，認為我們唯一的目標就是享受今生。沒錯，我們都需要上學、上班和養家。衣服、娛樂和度假都不是錯事。但你有沒有想過耶穌為什麼要拯救你？神的心意不只是在天堂為你留一個位置。神讓你先成為祂的孩子，使你與別人分享這個好消息。神在幾十年前通過一些美國信徒建立了這個教會。現在接力棒在我們手中。神會完成祂在這個教會開始的善工。祂呼召我們與祂同工。我們的事工應該以幫助人們認識耶穌為最終目標。我們的兒童事工、節日的慶祝和吃飯都應該是為了同樣的目的。當我們的永恆歸宿已經確定後，我們的日常生活和教會生活就會有不同的意義。我們不是為自己而活，乃是為主而活。我們不只是為今天而活，也為永恆而活。

2. Prayer with Expectation 帶著期望的禱告

保羅對腓立比的信徒表達充滿讚賞的鼓勵，接著他列出帶著期望的禱告。第 8-11 節是一個複雜的長句子。基本上，保羅為兩件事情禱告。首先，保羅祈求他們的「**愛心在知識和各樣見識上多而又多**」。在聖經中，「知識」不僅指信息。那是通過經驗獲得的理解。家長教孩子開車時，會首先解釋汽車的操作原理。例如，右邊的踏板是油門，中間的是剎車。但是，如果不坐在汽車裡，小孩便無法學會如何操作汽車。父母必須冒心臟病發作的風險，並承擔孩子可能撞到東西的危險。同樣，聖經說神會供應我們的需要。如果你不禱告，信靠主，並等候祂，你就不會經歷神對你的看顧。保羅說，除了知識，我們還需要辨別能力。「見識」這個字與做判斷有關。在我們認識耶穌之前，我們使用世界的標準來做判斷。我們成為信徒之後，我們的心態必須有所改變。我們需要神的幫助來做出明智的選擇並調整優先順序。保羅說正確的知識和辨別能力會幫助我們認可美好的事物。有一本叫做「信息」的英文聖經，我喜歡它這樣翻譯第 9 節：**你需要用你的腦袋來驗證你的感覺。**我們不應該只選擇自己覺得好的東西，而應該選擇神看為最好的。等一會你吃什麼做午餐可能無關重要。然而，職業、婚姻和教養子女等決定將產生長遠的影響。有一天，

神會檢查我們生活的結果。因此，保羅禱告的第二件事是，腓立比的信徒要「**作誠實無過的人，直到基督的日子**」。「誠實」的希臘文意思是在陽光的檢驗下沒有找到雜質。我小時候，人們去小商店買雞蛋。我們告訴店員要多少蛋。然後他會一隻一隻地把雞蛋放在燈泡前檢查，確保它們是新鮮的。同樣，住在我們裡面的聖靈不斷地掃描我們的思想。祂會警惕我們一些罪的念頭，如貪婪和驕傲等。除了保持純潔之外，神還希望我們無可指摘。這並不等於完美。它的意思是不要使別人跌倒。就像一條平坦的小路，沒有任何會絆倒人的石頭或坑洞。無論你做什麼，都會在一定程度上影響他人。非信徒會將你的行為與你的信仰聯繫起來。耶穌基督一直與我們同在，彷彿我們穿著公司的制服一樣。有些員工為他們的公司感到驕傲。同樣，我們也應該為成為神的兒女而感到榮幸。保羅說，當我們結滿了仁義的果子時，我們就能過純潔並無可指摘的生活。我們都是天生的罪人。但是在我們接受耶穌之後，神就宣告我們為義人。產生的結果是義的果子。這與加拉太書 5:22-23 中聖靈的果子有關：**22 聖靈所結的果子，就是仁愛、喜樂、和平、忍耐、恩慈、良善、信實、23 溫柔、節制...**。如果你是基督徒，你應該擁有全部九種品格。有些美德可能比較明顯，有些美德可能需要神幫助我們改進。你的同學或同事認為你是一個有愛心、有耐心和善良的人嗎？我們不是在談論完美。但你是否表現出這些敬虔的特質，尤其是當你處於壓力之下？例如，當你和別人的意見不合或別人對你沒禮貌時？同樣的要求也適用於教會。新朋友能感覺到我們是充滿喜樂的群體嗎？我們可能看起來很虔誠，但我們是否樂於幫人？如果我們那樣做，人們會注意到我們有不同的生命。他們可能認為我們是好人，這個教會是個不錯的教會。然後我們可以告訴他們，這一切都是神在我們裡面工作的結果。祂也可以在他們身上施行同樣的改變。

CONCLUSION 結論

一所敬虔的教會便是好的教會。神希望人們來這裡不只是為了叉燒，更重要的是為了救主基督。食物會填飽人的肚子幾個小時，但是救恩會永遠祝福他們。食物的香味會吸引食客。但唯有耶穌的福音才能吸引慕道的朋友並使他們留下來。我曾經讀過一篇文章，介紹一種吸引一大群人特別的花。泰坦魔芋的有名不是在於它的美麗和芳香。恰恰相反。它被認為是世界上最臭的花。它是印尼蘇門答臘島的當地品種。這種植物可以長到十多英尺高。它需要五到十年才能開花。當它開花時你一定會知道，因為真的很難聞。人們給它起了個外號叫「屍體植物」。科學家分析了臭味中釋放的化學物質，發現有奶酪、大蒜、腐爛的魚、臭襪子等等的相同成分。它會吸引蒼蠅和其他昆蟲，幫助傳播花粉。當它開花時，都會吸引很多遊客。許多人願意花錢去看它，聞聞它令人作嘔的氣味。今天，人們花幾塊錢就可以享用我們教堂的食物。他們已經進入我們的大樓了。我們應該找機會與他們分享只有耶穌才能賜予的無價之寶。如果他們每次想到叉燒時都想到耶穌，我們傳福音的事工便是有效的。