

INTRODUCTION 引言

We live in an everchanging world. I often find it hard to keep up with new technology. Sometimes, the time it takes for me to learn new things is not worthy of the convenience they give me. I guess that is part of the agony for aging. Fortunately, many other good things remain the same. For example, the only way to order a cake from Costco is to go to a store. You cannot do it online. The bakery department will not answer your phone call either. When you go to a store, you have to fill out a form with a pen. There is no computer for you to type. Costco has been using the same system to receive orders since day one. You can complain all you want that it is slow and cumbersome. But if you want them to make a cake for you, then you have to follow their way. Similarly, we can only become Christians by following God's way. No one sets the rule except God. But our salvation is not the end of God's work. He desires to bless us and makes us a blessing to others. It is an honorable privilege to be gospel messengers.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Same Way to Save 同樣的得救方式

Paul begins by saying that God uses the same way to save people throughout history. It is through Jesus Christ. He is the foundation for our faith. Paul boils down the Christian faith into a simple conviction in verse 9: **Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** The title "Lord" is equivalent to Jehovah in the Old Testament. The Jews dare not utter God's name directly because it is so sacred to them. Therefore, they use the title "Lord" to replace it. Therefore, when Jews say "Jesus is Lord," it means "Jesus is God." That is the greatest hurdle for Jews to become Christians to this day. They must believe that Jesus was the Savior prophesied in the Old Testament. He was not only a great teacher and a prophet. Jesus is God. Because He is God, His death can cover our sins. Paul puts it this way 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 had no sin. But He willingly shouldered the sins of mankind on the cross. Jesus died for the penalty of our sins. Theologians use the phrase "substitutional atonement" to describe it. Today, we call an innocent person who substitutes the person that committed a crime a scapegoat. As a result, the real wrongdoer can go freely. Jesus is the scapegoat for our sins. The picture points to the Old Testament sacrificial ceremony. A sheep or a bull is offered on the altar to substitute sinners. God temporarily quenches His wrath because an animal dies in the place of a human. Jesus is our ultimate sin sacrifice. He died once and for all on the cross to atone for the sins of all people. But since Jesus is God, death has no authority on Him. He rose three days afterward. That is why we celebrate Easter today. Paul says that we can be saved if we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that He rose from the death. Of course, it is more than just paying lip-service. Our words must come from a sincere heart. A lot of people claim to be Christians, but they live like non-believers. The same title "Lord" can also mean "Master." True Christians are those who treat Jesus as the boss of their lives. Jesus gives us a warning in Matthew 7:21 – **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does**

the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Many people who call themselves Christians will be denied entry to heaven on God’s judgment day. God knows who His true children are. We prove to be followers of Jesus by obeying God’s teaching in the Bible. We should not make judgment on others. But we should examine ourselves. No one can be saved by doing good works. But good works that glorify God are natural results of a new life. Just like babies will grow to become adults, our new life in Jesus should also continue to grow. For example, our love for God, our desire to read the Bible, our hatred for sins and our grace toward others should increase. After we are saved, we should become mature and be more like our Lord. All along, God uses the same way to save people. Christianity is not a western religion. It is a universal gospel. No one can be saved by attending church, registering as members, serving in a church or even receiving baptism. Jesus is the only way to salvation. Our ministries should reflect that Jesus is Lord. He should get all the glory. We serve Him by serving people. God blesses our church by keep bringing newcomers to our midst. They enjoy our programs and good food. They learn about God when studying the Bible with us. We build friendship with them but we should help them establish an eternal relationship with Jesus too. We need to introduce to them that Jesus is Lord. The same is true for Christian parents. Bringing our kids to the church is only step one. Sooner or later, we need to help our kids know that Jesus is Lord. We hope that our Lord will one day become their Lord as well.

2. Same Way to Share 同樣的傳遞方式

God uses the same way to save people. God also gives us an important mission after we are saved. Just like He sent messengers out in the Bible, He sends us in the same way to share the gospel to others. Paul explains why that is essential in verses 13-15: **13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? ...** God sends His messengers out. They preach the gospel. People hear the message. They then have to make a decision whether or not to believe. Those who call on the Lord will be saved. Thanks be to God! Many faithful servants throughout history responded to God’s calling. They carried the gospel to many parts of the world. Others translated the Bible into various languages. The first English Bible was published in the 14th century through the effort of John Wycliff. Then more modern English translations are available later. The Chinese Bible was the result of over one hundred years of scholarly work. Western missionaries went to China, and they learned the language and culture. With the help of Chinese interpreters, they translated the Bible into Chinese. The Chinese Union Version we use today was first published in 1919. The availability of God’s Word in local languages greatly facilitates gospel work. The YouVersion Bible App a lot of Christians use has Bible in over 1,300 languages! People can read the Bible in their own languages, understand its content and be saved. However, that does not replace our role to share the gospel. We see an example in Acts chapter 8. An Ethiopian eunuch was on his way home after going to the Jerusalem temple to worship God. He was reading Isaiah chapter 53. A church leader named Philip was called by an angel to meet with that African official. In verse 30 of the passage, Philip asks the man: ... **“Do you understand what you are reading?”** He answers in the next verse: ... **“How can I, unless someone guides me?”** ... Philip then explained the text. It describes Jesus as a sheep being slaughtered. The eunuch understood. He then gladly accepted Jesus and was baptized on the spot! God sent Philip to explain the gospel to a man. You became

a Christian in the same way. If you are born into a Christian family, then perhaps your parents are the messengers. But for the majority of us, one or more believers must go and tell us about Jesus. The question is: are you willing to be the next gospel messenger? Those who have led people to Christ will agree that there is no bigger joy than to see a person receive salvation. God gave me that opportunity two weeks ago! Mr. Zhang came to our church recently. He told me that he is a believer. A few weeks later, Mr. Zhang asked me about baptism. I sat down with him and got to know his faith background. Then I explained the gospel to him. He understood and agreed with what I said. Then I led him in a prayer to commit his life to Jesus to follow Him the rest of his life. Thank God for His grace! God allows you to meet seekers like Mr. Zhang. They can be your neighbors, classmates, coworkers or even your family members. Will you share the gospel with them? Will you invite them to our church? One way to share the gospel is by telling three stories: their stories, your story and God's story. First, you listen to people's needs. Perhaps they are searching for meaning in life, they are anxious about the future, they are battling with other life issues. Then you share your testimony about how Jesus saved you and how He changed your life. That is followed by God's story. You explain who Jesus is, why only He can save us and what it means to become a follower of Jesus. You refer to Bible verses like John 3:16 and Romans 10:9 as support. Very likely, the person will still have questions. Perhaps you were like that before you became a Christian! Continue to pray for the person, encourage him/her to keep coming to the church and give room for God to work in his/her heart.

結論 CONCLUSION

Our salvation is not the end of God's work. He desires to bless us and makes us a blessing to others. God saves people the same way today, and He invites us to share the gospel with others in the same way. It is an honorable privilege to be gospel messengers. The world will keep changing. But God's promises will last forever. Let me conclude with a neat story I heard on the Christian radio recently. A couple was about to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. The husband was flipping through a photo album to cherish some beautiful memories. Suddenly, a piece of paper dropped out from the book. It was a voucher from the hotel where the couple stayed for their honeymoon night. It guaranteed them the same price if they went back to spend any anniversary. It had been forty years. They only paid \$38 back then. The man called the number anyway to see if the owner would honor the offer. The property was bought by an international hotel chain since then. To the man's surprise, the manager fulfilled his wish. I am sure that the couple must have a memorable trip. God's promises written in His Word are more secure than men's guarantee. God always welcomes sinners to return home. Jesus can save any person no matter how far he/she has gone. Will you be willing to be an ambassador of God's Kingdom to look for the lost?

INTRODUCTION 引言

我們生活在一個不斷變化的世界。我常常覺得自己跟不上新的科技。有時候，我學習新事物所花費的時間抵不上它們給我的益處。我想這就是衰老帶來的一種無奈。還好的是，許多其他美好的事情維持不變。例如，在 Costco 訂購蛋糕的唯一方法是去商店。你無法在網上訂購。糕點部也不會接聽你的電話。當你去到店面時，你必須用筆填寫表格。那裡沒有電腦給你輸入定單。Costco 從開業以來就一直使用同樣的方式接收訂單。你可以抱怨它又慢又麻煩。但如果你想要他們為你做蛋糕，那麼你就必須按照他們的方式去做。同樣，我們只有遵循神的方式才能成為基督徒。唯有神制定規則。我們的得救並不是神工作的結束。神渴望祝福我們，並使用我們成為別人的祝福。成為福音使者是榮幸的事。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Same Way to Save 同樣的得救方式

保羅一開始就說，在歷史上，神都用同樣的方式來拯救人。就是通過耶穌基督。祂是我們信仰的根基。保羅在第 9 節將基督信仰總結為一個簡單的宣告：**你若口裡認耶穌為主，心裡信神叫他從死裡復活，就必得救。**「主」這個稱號相當於舊約中的耶和華。猶太人不敢直接說出神的名字，因為神的名字對他們來說是如此神聖。因此，他們用「主」這個稱號來代替。所以，當猶太人說「耶穌是主」時，意思是「耶穌是神」。直到今天，這是猶太人成為基督徒的最大障礙。他們必須相信耶穌就是舊約中預言的救世主。祂不只是一位偉大的老師和先知。耶穌是神。因為祂是神，祂的死可以遮蓋我們的罪。保羅在哥林多後書 5:21 節中說：**神使那無罪的，替我們成為罪，好叫我們在他裡面成為神的義。**耶穌沒有罪。但祂卻甘願在十字架上擔當人類的罪。耶穌為我們罪的懲罰而死。神學家用「代贖」這個用詞來形容它。今天，我們叫替犯案者頂罪的人為代罪羔羊。這樣一來，真正的壞人就可以逍遙法外了。耶穌是我們的代罪羔羊。那幅圖畫指向舊約的獻祭禮儀。一隻羊或一頭牛被獻在祭壇上來代替罪人。因為動物代替人而死，神暫時平息祂的憤怒。耶穌是我們終極的贖罪祭。祂一次地死在十字架上，為所有人贖罪。但由於耶穌是神，死亡對祂沒有任何權柄。祂三天後復活了。因此我們今天慶祝復活節。保羅說，如果我們口裡認耶穌為主，心裡信祂從死裡復活，就可以得救。當然，這不僅僅是嘴巴說說而已。我們的言語必須來自真誠的心。很多人自稱是基督徒，但他們的生活卻像非信徒一樣。同樣的稱謂「主」也可以表示「主人」。真正的基督徒是那些把耶穌視為自己生命的老闆的人。耶穌在馬太福音 7:21 節中警告我們：**「凡稱呼我『主**

啊，主啊』的人不能都進天國；惟獨遵行我天父旨意的人才能進去。」許多自稱為基督徒的人將在神的審判日被拒絕進入天堂。神知道誰是祂真正的兒女。我們通過遵守神在聖經中的教導，證明自己是耶穌的跟隨者。我們不應該批評別人，但我們應該審視一下自己。沒有人可以通過行善而得救，但榮耀神的善行是新生命的自然結果。就像嬰兒會長大成人一樣，我們在耶穌裡的新生命也應該繼續成長。例如，我們對神的愛、讀聖經的渴望、對罪的恨惡以及對他人的恩典都應該增加。我們得救之後，就應該變得成熟，更像我們的主。一直以來，神都是用同樣的方式來拯救人。基督信仰不是洋教，乃是普世的福音。沒有人可以靠參加教會、登記成為會員、參與服事甚至接受浸禮來得救。耶穌是得救的唯一道路。我們的事工應該反映出耶穌是主。祂應該得到所有的榮耀。我們藉著服事人來服事祂。神不斷地祝福我們的教會，把新朋友帶到我們中間來。他們喜歡我們的活動和美味的食物。他們通過與我們一起學習聖經來認識神。我們與他們建立友誼，但我們也必須幫助他們與耶穌建立永恆的關係。我們需要向他們介紹耶穌是主。對於基督徒父母來說也是如此。帶我們的孩子來教會只是第一步。遲早，我們需要幫助孩子知道耶穌是主。我們希望有一天我們的主也能成為他們的主。

2. Same Way to Share 同樣的傳遞方式

神用同樣的方式來拯救人。當我們得救之後，神也給了我們一個重要的使命。正如在聖經中祂差遣使者一樣，祂也以同樣的方式差遣我們去向別人傳遞福音。保羅在第 13 至 15 節中解釋為什麼這是至關重要的：13 因為「凡求告主名的，就必得救。」14 然而，人未曾信他，怎能求他呢？未曾聽見他，怎能信他呢？沒有傳道的，怎能聽見呢？15 若沒有奉差遣，怎能傳道呢...？神差遣祂的使者出去。他們傳揚福音。人們聽見了這個信息。然後他們必須決定是否相信。凡求告主的人就必得救。感謝神！歷史上有許多忠心的僕人回應了神的呼召。他們將福音傳播到世界各地。另外有些人將聖經翻譯成不同語言。在約翰·威克里夫的努力下，第一本英文聖經於 14 世紀出版。後來有更多現代的英語翻譯本。中文聖經是學者們一百多年工作的成果。西方傳教士去到中國，學習語言和文化。在中文翻譯員的幫助下，他們將聖經翻譯成中文。我們今天使用的和合本於 1919 年首次出版。神的話語以當地語言出版，有助於福音工作。很多基督徒使用的 YouVersion 聖經應用程序有 1,300 多種語言！人們可以用自己的語言閱讀聖經，理解其內容並得救。然而，這並不能取代我們傳福音的角色。我們在使徒行傳第 8 章看到一個例子。一位埃塞俄比亞太監去耶路撒冷聖殿敬拜神後在回家的路上。他正在讀以賽亞書第 53 章。一位名叫腓利的教會領袖被天使呼召去找那位非洲官員。在這段經文的第 30 節中，腓利問那個人：...「你所念的，你明白嗎？」他在下一節中回答道：...「沒有人指教我，怎能明白呢？」... 然後腓利解釋經文。它把耶穌描述為一隻被宰殺的羔羊。太監明白了。然後他欣然地接受了耶穌並當場接受了浸禮！神差遣腓利去向一個人解釋福音。你以同樣的方式成為基督徒。如果你出生在一個基督教家庭，那麼

也許你的父母就是福音使者。但對於我們大多數人來說，必須有一個或多個信徒去告訴我們有關耶穌的事。問題是：你願意成為下一個福音使者嗎？那些曾經帶領人歸向基督的人都會同意，沒有什麼比看到一個人得救有更大的喜樂了。神兩週前給了我這個機會！張先生最近來到我們教會。他告訴我他是一個信徒。幾週後，張先生向我詢問浸禮的事。我和他坐下來了解他的信仰背景，然後我向他解釋福音。他理解並同意我所說的。然後他和我一起禱告，將自己的生命交託給耶穌，並願意一生跟隨耶穌。感謝神的恩典！神讓你遇到像張先生這樣的福音朋友。他們可能是你的鄰居、同學、同事甚至你的家人。你願意與他們分享福音嗎？你願意邀請他們來我們的教會嗎？分享福音的一種方法是講三個故事：他們的故事、你的故事和神的故事。首先，你要聆聽別人的需要。也許他們正在尋找生命的意義，他們對未來感到焦慮，他們正在為其他生活中的問題掙扎。然後你分享耶穌如何拯救你以及祂如何改變你的生命。接下來是神的故事。你解釋耶穌是誰，為什麼只有祂才能拯救我們，以及成為耶穌的跟隨者意味著什麼。你引用約翰福音 3:16 和羅馬書 10:9 等聖經經文作為支持。對方很可能仍然會有疑問。也許你在成為基督徒之前也是那樣的！繼續為他禱告，鼓勵他繼續來教會，並給神空間在他心中工作。

結論 CONCLUSION

我們的得救並不是神工作的結束。神渴望祝福我們，並使用我們成為別人的祝福。今天神以同樣的方式拯救人，祂也邀請我們以同樣的方式與別人分享福音。成為福音使者是榮幸的事。世界不斷在變化，但神的應許永遠長存。讓我以最近在基督徒電台聽到的一個精彩故事來作結束。一對夫婦準備慶祝結婚 40 週年紀念。那位丈夫翻閱相冊，重溫一些美好的回憶。忽然，一張紙從書上掉下來。那是這對夫婦度蜜月之夜所住酒店的優惠券。酒店保證如果他們回去慶祝任何週年紀念，他們會得到相同的價格。已經過了四十年。當時他們只付了 38 美元。不管怎樣，他還是打電話，想看看店主是否願意實現那個承諾。原來，那個物業早已被一家國際連鎖酒店收購了。讓他驚訝的是，酒店的經理願意實現他的願望。我相信那對夫婦肯定會度過一次難忘的旅行。神寫在祂話語中的應許比人的保證更可靠。神總是歡迎罪人回家。耶穌可以拯救任何人，無論他在哪裡。你願意成為天國的使者嗎去尋找迷失的人嗎？