

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

It is natural for people to like new things. You enjoy compliments when others notice that you are wearing new clothes or using a new phone. Those who want to save money will shop for used products. I often buy used books for my sons. After all, they only need those books for one class. Between new and used items there is something called refurbished. Sellers restore old products to the original appearance and functions. They look like brand-new but in fact they are not. Some of you know that the car I drive has a rebuilt title on it. Apparently a tree landed on it and crushed the top and windshields. The insurance company declared it totaled. A mechanic bought it through auction, fixed it then sold it to me. Compared to buying a used car of similar mileage, I saved several thousand dollars. I was so excited to see the car when it was delivered to my house. It was shiny inside and out. A few months into my ownership, I realized that it was not new. Some minor functions stopped working. Worse still, it will leak under heavy rain. My sons tease me often that I was cheated for buying a lemon. But despite those flaws, it is still a great car to drive for many years. An old or damaged product can get a second life after a reconditioning process. God gives us a bigger blessing when He saves us. He grants us a new life! We look identical on the outside. But we are totally renewed on the inside. When we come to the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul tells us the transition we go through from sinners to saints. It is entirely God's grace when He changed us from our old self to the new.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 從我們的敗壞被拯救 Saved from Our Depravity

Paul begins by laying out the cold-hard facts. God saves us from our depravity. Paul nails it in verse 1: **And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.** When we were sinners, we were not just bad. We were spiritually dead! Even a three-year-old kid can tell the difference between life and death. They know animals in the zoo are alive, whereas the meat in grocery stores are dead. When we are in sin, we are dead to spiritual matters. We have no interest in thinking about God. Here, Paul uses two words to describe our depravity. Many Christians know that “sins” means missing the mark. It is like an archer shoots an arrow but it does not hit the bullseye. Then the word “trespasses” means stepping over the boundary. We often see a sign that reads “no trespassing” outside a vacant land. Anyone crossing the line will be considered as an intruder. God declares it a sin when we fail to reach His standard of perfection and when we go beyond His permissions. Due to our depravity, we have an **inclination** to sin. Paul continues to say in verse 2: **In which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.** We follow the course of the world. It is like a train that will head toward wherever the track leads it to. The secular world tells us to buy this and eat that, and accumulate this and enjoy that. That value system is dictated the prince of the world, namely Satan. He rebels against God and he lures people to join his camp. We buy into his lies because we like to make ourselves the boss. We do not like others to tell us what we should and should not do – not even God! God warned Adam and Eve: “Don't eat that fruit or you will die.” But they reasoned: “We'll become like God when

we take a bite!” As a result, sin came into the world. We inherit that trait like a genetic disease from our first parents. Because of that, we enjoy **indulgence** in sin. Read verse 3: **Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.** “Passions” and “desires” describe our craving to commit sin. We can think of it as an addiction to stealing, gambling or playing computer games. We all have different areas of weakness. It can be money, pride, greed or something else. Satan surely knows how to attack us. Some of you may say: “What is the big deal? We’re all imperfect. It is fine as long as I don’t hurt people.” The fact is that it may be okay with us, but it is not okay with God. He will exercise His **indictment** of sin, whether in this life or in eternity. We see the phrase “children of wrath” in verse 3. Our sins trigger God’s anger. He loves us but He hates sins. Every parent can identify with that sentiment. We love our children but we do not approve the wrong things they do. Kids may disobey in small ways but grown-ups sin in major ways. We steal God’s glory and give credit to ourselves. Companies cover up their negligence to save millions of dollars. We also hurt people’s hearts by breaking promises and relationships. If we are being honest to ourselves, we will agree that we have done many wicked things that only God and ourselves know. We sin in our deeds, speech and thoughts. We will not realize how rich God’s grace is until we admit our depravity. God does not save morally-good people, because there is none based on His standard. God only saves sinners. We need God’s grace as much as criminals locked up in a jail. We may not commit the crimes they did. The difference is that we sin in different ways. No one can be saved if God does not show us mercy.

## 2. 藉父神的恩慈被拯救 Saved by God’s Generosity

We cannot and will not respond to God’s calling when we are in a state of depravity. But God shows us mercy when we are dead in sin. He saved us by His generosity. Paul describes in verses 4-5: **4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...** God gives us grace when we are yet ignorant of our spiritual condition. His love is much greater than our sympathy toward needy people or strayed animals. God does not donate money and food to the charity. He does not volunteer Himself to serve in a shelter. He did something only He could do. He infuses new life into our dead souls. Paul says that God made us alive together with Christ. We received a new life to our dead soul much like Jesus was raised from the dead. We often refer to Romans 6:4 when there is a baptism: **We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.** We are saved by the grace of God, and not by the water. Baptism candidates use the ceremony to proclaim their faith. The sequence of going into and coming out from the water symbolizes our identification with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. When we received Jesus, it was as if we went back to 2,000 years ago and died with Him. At that time, the Jewish religious leaders, Roman officials and followers of Jesus all witnessed Jesus’ death on the cross. His resurrection was a fact as much as His death was a real death. When He rose from the dead, believers also rose with Him in their new life. The blessings are two-fold – their sins are forgiven, and they are liberated from the bondage of sin. God does not resuscitate patients who stop breathing or whose hearts stop beating. He resurrected sinners together with Jesus! God’s generosity does not stop at giving us a new life. Paul continues in verse 6: **And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.** God raised us from our

spiritual dead, and He put us together with Jesus in heaven. The Bible says Jesus sat on the right side of the Father after He went back to heaven. To the Jews, the right side is an honorable position. Jesus does not sit there and stare at His phone all day. He rules as King, and He prays to the Father on our behalf. Our seats in heaven will not be the same as Jesus' seat. He is our King and we are His servants. But it means that God has reserved a spot for every believer. Nowadays, it is common for airlines to put some passengers on a standby status. They wait anxiously at the gate, not knowing when they can get on a plane. They will be excited when a ticket agent calls their names. They get their seats on the flight. They can go to their destination. Those who are in Jesus do not have to wait in line. Their seats in heaven are confirmed. Their status will not change no matter what they may go through in life. Brothers and sisters: do you live in fear that God may kick you out from your seat? Don't be! Once we are saved, we are forever saved. Do you cherish your place in God's Kingdom? Do you thank God daily for His saving grace? Are you aware of your new life in Jesus? Or are you still dragged by Satan to commit sin whenever he entices you? We will be defeated if we rely on our own strength. Instead, we must tap into God's immense power. Do not live like a piece of dead meat! God had raised us up together with Christ. Submit yourself to God and let Him charge up His resurrected power in you.

### 3. 為父神的榮美被拯救 Saved for God's Majesty

God saved us from our depravity. He saved us by His generosity. But there is a greater purpose for His grace. Paul goes on and tells us that God saved also us for His majesty. Look at verse 7: **So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** God's majesty is demonstrated when He bestows great mercy to us undeserved sinners. Through Jesus' sacrifice, the Father redeems us and imposes great wealth to us. People throughout the ages will marvel at God's majestic work. Jesus is the only path through whom people can be saved. Verses 8-9 are well-known to most Christians: **8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.** God saves us not because of what we do, but it is because of what Jesus did. Paul uses the comparison of gift versus work to illustrate it. A gift is something you freely receive. You will insult the giver if you ask how much you should pay, or what favor you should offer in return. The proper response is a sincere thanks. In comparison, a wage is something you work toward. You expect a return based on your effort. You do not need to thank your boss when you get a paycheck. You earn it with your time and sweat! Salvation is God's gift and not our work. But some Christians may argue: "But I need to exercise my faith. I won't be saved if I don't believe." Paul clarifies the matter by saying "this is not your own doing." Based on the grammar in the Greek text, "this" points to both grace and faith. We used to be dead in sin. We cannot respond to God's calling unless He gives us a new life. It is God who causes us to say "yes" when a Christian shares the gospel with us. Therefore, we must pray that God will work in people's hearts as we introduce Jesus to them. No one can take the credit for a saved soul. However, God's display of majesty does not stop at our conversion from sinners to saints. Paul continues to say in verse 10: **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.** We are not saved by doing good works; but we are saved for doing good works. God redeemed us to become His precious masterpieces. God wants our life to reflect His majesty. Some people put on a uniform when they leave home for work. Others know which company they work for when they see the logo. Most believers do not wear a shirt with big letters at the front that read "I am a Christian."

God does not put a halo on our heads either. People cannot see your faith until they see your actions. We had a winter storm a week ago. At least two church families I knew of lost power. Quite a few brothers and sisters showed their love by offering help. That is faith in action! We should not only talk love, we need to practice love too. God puts you in a unique place to witness His majesty to the people around you. Your classmates, neighbors and colleagues need to see God in you. For example, will you continue to work when your boss takes off early? Will you show respect to government leaders when others criticize them? Are accumulating wealth, using luxurious goods and sending kids to renowned colleges your only life goals? If your mentality are the same as the secular world's, then why should people come to know your God? But when people see your good works, they will be eager to attend church when you invite them. Good works are not the roots for our salvation. But good works should be the fruits of our salvation. Becoming a Christian is not just about going to heaven in the future. We need to start living like God's children when we are still in this world.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

It is entirely God's grace when He changed us from our old self to the new. I told the story behind my car at the beginning. There is an amazing story about another car. It is a 1965 classic. A man drove the automobile for 20 years before he sold it reluctantly because money was tight in the family. Many years later, he became a grandpa. One day, his two sons shared their memories about sitting in the car. An idea popped up in their mind: what if they can find dad's car and give it back to him? Their goal was not to find a similar car. They wanted to locate the very car their father used to own. Lo and behold, an agent was able to track down the car based on its identification number. When one of the sons contacted the owner, he was told that it was just sold to someone in Canada. The two men did not give up. Sometime later, they did an online search based the year and model of the car. The first listing was their father's car! They called the dealer, confirmed the identification number and bought it over the phone. The dad was greatly surprised when he saw the car. He could not believe that it still existed after so many years. An old machine was now given a new life and it was returned to the original owner. God sees us much more precious than an antique car. We are His children. Our Heavenly Father sent Jesus to redeem us. He grants us a new life. He claims ownership of us all over again. We are back to God's family. From then on we belong to Him.

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

一般人都喜歡新的東西。當別人讚賞你穿新衣服或使用新手機時，你會覺得高興。想省錢的人會購買二手貨。我常常幫兒子們買舊書。畢竟，他們只需要那些書來上一堂課。在新和舊的東西之間還有翻新的產品。有些人把舊產品恢復到原來的外觀和功能。它們看起來像是全新的，但實際上並非如此。有些人知道我的車以前是一部廢車。很可能一棵樹掉在上面並壓碎了車頂和擋風玻璃。保險公司宣布車子報廢。一位修車師傅透過拍賣把它買下來，修好後賣給了我。與同樣里程的二手車相比，我節省了數千美元。當汽車送到我家時，我很興奮。它的裡裡外外都閃閃發亮。開了幾個月後，我終於接受那一輛不是新車。一些功能停止運作。更糟的是，下大雨時它會漏水。我的兒子們常常取笑我說我買了「檸檬車」被騙了。但雖然有一些缺陷，我估計我仍然可以使用它很多年。舊的或損壞的東西經過翻新後可以重新被使用。當神拯救我們時，祂給我們更大的祝福。祂賜給我們新的生命！我們的外表看起來沒有改變，但我們的內心已經煥然一新。保羅在以弗所書第二章告訴我們從罪人到聖徒所經歷的轉變。當神把我們從舊人變成新人時，一切完全是神的恩典。

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 從我們的敗壞被拯救 Saved from Our Depravity

首先保羅告訴我們一個殘酷的事實。神從我們的敗壞中拯救我們。保羅在第 1 節中明確指出：**你們死在過犯罪惡之中，他叫你們活過來。**我們不只是壞人。我們靈裡死掉的人！即使是三歲的小孩子也能分辨出生與死。他們知道動物園裡的動物是活的，而超市賣的肉是死的。當我們犯罪時，我們對屬靈的事情是死的。我們沒有興趣思考神。在這裡，保羅用兩個字來形容我們的敗壞。許多基督徒都知道「罪」的意思是沒有達到目標，就像弓箭手射箭沒有打中靶心。另外，「過犯」這個字是指越過界線。我們常常在空地外面看到寫著「禁止闖入」的牌子。任何越過界線的人都將被視為犯法。當我們未能達到神的完美標準或超出祂的許可時，祂都看為是罪。由於我們的敗壞，我們有犯罪的**傾向**。保羅在第 2 節繼續說：**那時，你們在其中行事為人，隨從今世的風俗，順服空中掌權者的首領，就是現今在悖逆之子心中運行的邪靈。**我們依循世俗的做法，就像一列火車只能跟著軌道的方向行走。世界告訴我們買這個吃那個，積蓄這個享受那個。這種價值觀是由世界之王，即撒旦所定的。他背叛神並引誘人們加入他的陣營。我們相信他的謊言，因為我們喜歡自作主張。我們不喜歡別人告訴我們該做什麼、不該做什麼 – 甚至神也不能干涉！神警

告亞當和夏娃：「不要吃那個果子，否則你們會死。」但他們想：「當我們咬一口時，我們就會變得像神一樣！」結果，罪進入了世界。我們從始祖那裡繼承了這個特徵，就像得了遺傳病一樣。因此，犯罪的傾向就變成罪的**放縱**。請看第 3 節：**我們從前也都在他們中間，放縱肉體的私慾，隨著肉體和心中所喜好的去行，本為可怒之子，和別人一樣。**「私慾」和「喜好」描述了我們犯罪的欲望。我們就好像一些人上了偷竊、賭博或玩電腦遊戲的癮。我們都有不同的弱點，可能是金錢、驕傲、貪心或其他事情。撒旦知道怎樣來攻擊我們。有些人可能會認為：「那有什麼大不了的？反正沒有人是完美的。只要不傷害別人就沒事了。」事實上，我們可能覺得可以，但神覺得不行。無論是在今生或永恆，神會執行罪的**審判**。我們在第 3 節看到「可怒之子」這個用詞。我們的罪引起神的憤怒。祂愛我們，但祂卻恨惡罪。每個父母都能認同這種情緒。我們愛自己的兒女，但我們不認同他們的錯誤。孩子們可能會在一些小地方不聽話，但成年人卻會犯嚴重的罪。例如我們偷取神的榮耀，把功勞歸給自己。公司掩蓋自己的疏忽以節省幾百萬美元。或是我們違背承諾並中斷關係而傷害別人的心。如果夠誠實的話，我們便會承認自己做了許多只有神和我們自己知道的壞事。我們在行為、言語和思想都犯罪。除非我們承認自己的敗壞，否則我們無法體會神的恩典是多麼豐富。神不是要拯救道德高尚的人，因為沒有人能達到祂的標準的。神只拯救罪人。我們和關在監獄裡的罪犯一樣都需要神的恩典。我們可能不會犯他們所做的事，但我們會犯其他的罪。如果不是神憐憫我們，沒有人能得救。

## 2. 藉父神的恩慈被拯救 Saved by God's Generosity

當我們處在敗壞的光景時，我們不能也不會回應神的呼召。但當我們死在罪中時，神就向我們施憐憫。祂藉著祂的恩慈拯救我們。保羅在第 4-5 節中描述：**4 然而，神既有豐富的憐憫，因祂愛我們的大愛，5 當我們死在過犯中的時候，便叫我們與基督一同活過來...**。當我們對自己的屬靈狀況仍然是無知時，神就賜給我們恩典。祂的愛大過於我們對有需要的人或流浪動物的同情。神沒有捐錢和食物給慈善機構。祂也沒有在收容所當義工。神做了只有祂才能做的事。祂為我們死去的靈魂注入新生命。保羅說神使我們與基督一同活過來。我們死去的靈魂獲得新的生命，就像耶穌從死裡復活一樣。每次有浸禮時，我們常常引用羅馬書 6:4：**所以，我們藉著洗禮歸入死，和他一同埋葬，原是叫我們一舉一動有新生的樣式，像基督藉著父的榮耀從死裡復活一樣。**我們是靠神的恩典而得救，而不是靠水得救。接受浸禮的人用儀式來宣告他們的信心。進到水裡和從水中出來的過程象徵我們與耶穌的死、埋葬和復活認同。當我們接受耶穌時，就彷彿回到了兩千年前，與祂同死。當時，猶太宗教領袖、羅馬官員和耶穌的跟隨者都目睹耶穌死在十字架上。祂的復活是事實，正如祂的死是真正的死亡。當祂從死裡復活時，信徒也與祂一起復活得到新生命。其中的祝福是雙重的：他們的罪被赦免，他們也從罪的捆綁中被釋放。神不是復甦呼吸停止或心跳停止的病人，祂讓罪人和耶穌一同復活！神的恩慈不止於給我

們新生命。保羅在第 6 節繼續說：他又叫我們與基督耶穌一同復活，一同坐在天上。神使我們從屬靈的死亡中復活，並把我們與耶穌放在天上。聖經說耶穌回到天上後坐在父神的右邊。對猶太人來說，右邊是一個榮耀的位置。耶穌並沒有整天坐在那裡盯著祂的手機。祂以王的身份統治，並替我們向天父祈求。我們在天上的座位與耶穌的寶座不一樣。祂是我們的王，我們是祂的僕人。但這意味著神為每個信徒保留了位置。如今，航空公司常常把部分乘客放在候補的位置。他們在登機口焦急地等待，不知道什麼時候才能上飛機。當票務員叫到他們的名字時，他們會很高興。他們有座位了。他們可以前往目的地。那些在耶穌裡的人不必排隊等候。他們在天堂的位置已經確定了。無論他們遇到什麼事情，他們的地位都不會改變。弟兄姐妹：你是否活在恐懼之中，害怕神把你從座位上踢下來？不用擔心！我們一旦得救，就是永遠得救。但是你是否珍惜你在天國的地位呢？你每天感謝神的救恩嗎？你能感受到你在耶穌裡的新生命嗎？還是每次撒但引誘你，你便犯罪跌倒呢？如果我們靠自己的力量，我們就會被打敗。我們必須倚靠神的無比力量。不要像一塊死肉一樣活著！神已經使我們與基督一同復活。要將你自己交託給神，讓祂在你身上彰顯祂復活的大能。

### 3. 為父神的榮美被拯救 Saved for God's Majesty

神把我們從敗壞中拯救出來。祂藉著祂的恩慈拯救我們。但祂的恩典還有更重要的目的。保羅繼續告訴我們，神也是為著祂的榮美而拯救我們。請看第 7 節：要將他極豐富的恩典，就是他在基督耶穌裡向我們所施的恩慈，顯明給後來的世代看。當神向我們這些不配的罪人賜予極大的憐憫時，祂的榮美就彰顯出來。透過耶穌的犧牲，天父救贖了我們，並賜給我們尊貴的身份。歷世歷代的人都會驚嘆神的奇妙作為。耶穌是人們得救的唯一途徑。第 8-9 節是大多數基督徒都熟悉的：8 你們得救是本乎恩，也因著信；這並不是出於自己，乃是神所賜的；9 也不是出於行為，免得有人自誇。神拯救我們不是因為我們做了什麼，而是因為耶穌替我們做了一切。保羅用恩典與行為的比較來說明這一點。恩典就像一份禮物。禮物是你白白收到的東西。如果你問你應該付多少錢，或是你應該以什麼作為回報，你就會羞辱送禮物的人。正確的回應是真誠的感謝。相比之下，行為是人的努力。就像做工的人便會賺到薪水。根據你的努力，你期望有相應的回報。當你拿到工資時，你不需要感激老闆。那是你用時間和汗水交換的！救恩是神的恩賜，而不是我們的功勞。但有些基督徒可能會說：「但我也起碼要運用信心。如果我不信，我就不會得救。」保羅澄清說：「這並不是出於自己。」根據希臘文的文法，「這」同時指恩典和信心。我們過去是死在罪中的。因此除非神賜給我們新生命，否則我們無法回應神的呼召。當基督徒傳福音給我們時，是神讓我們願意接受救恩。因此，當我們向人們傳福音時，我們也必須祈求神在人們心中工作。沒有人能將靈魂得救歸功於自己。然而，神彰顯的榮美不止把我們從罪人轉變為聖徒。保羅在第 10 節繼續說：我們原是他的工作，在基督耶穌裡造成的，為要叫我們行善，就是神所預備叫我們行的。

我們得救不是靠好行為，但我們的得救是為了做好行為。神救贖了我們，使我們成為祂寶貴的傑作。神希望我們的生活能反映出祂的榮美。有些人出門上班時需要穿製服。其他人看到商標就知道他們在哪家公司工作。大多數信徒不會穿前面寫著「我是基督徒」的衣服。神也沒有把光環戴在我們頭上。但是，如果人們看不到你的好行為，他們便無法看到你的信仰。一週前我們遇到一場暴風雪。據我所知，至少有兩個家庭停電。不少弟兄姐妹伸出援手，表達愛心。這就是把信心化成行動！我們不僅談論愛，更要實踐愛。神把你放在一個獨特的地方，讓你向周圍的人見證祂的榮美。你的鄰居和同事必須從你的身上看到神。例如，當你的老闆提前下班時，你會繼續努力工作嗎？當別人在背後批評政府官員時，你會仍然尊重他們嗎？累積財富、用名牌貨、送孩子上名校是否你唯一的人生目標？如果你的心態和不信的人一樣，那麼人們為什麼要認識你的神呢？但是當別人看到你的好行為時，他們比較願意接受你的邀請來教會。好行為並不是我們得救的根據。但是好行為必須是我們得救的果子。成為基督徒不應該只是為了將來上天堂。當我們還在這個世界時，我們就必須開始活得像神的兒女。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

當神把我們從舊人變成新人時，一切完全是神的恩典。一開始時我提到我的車子背後的故事。有一個更奇妙的故事，是關於另一部車子的。那是一部 1965 年的經典名車。有一個人因為家裡經濟困難，忍痛把自己開了 20 年的車賣掉。許多年後，他當了爺爺。有一天，他的兩個兒子分享他們坐在車裡的回憶。他們突然有一個想法：他們能否找到爸爸的車並把它物歸原主。他們的目標不是找到類似的車，他們是希望找回父親曾經擁有的那輛車。結果一個網上的經紀人根據車子的登記號碼真的找到那輛車。但是當其中一個兒子聯繫車主時，那個人說剛剛把車子賣到加拿大了。兩兄弟並沒有放棄。一段時間後，他們根據汽車的年份和型號在網上搜尋。列出來的第一部就是他們父親的車！他們打電話給車行，確認了登記號碼，然後馬上把它買下來。爸爸看到車子後大吃一驚。他不敢相信事隔多年後它仍然存在。一台舊的機器就這樣被賦予新的生命，並歸還給原來的主人。神看我們比一輛經典的汽車更寶貴。我們是天父的兒女。祂差遣耶穌來拯救我們。祂賜給我們新的生命。祂再次擁有我們的生命。我們回到了神的家。從此我們就屬於祂了。