

引言 INTRODUCTION

Persistence and stubbornness can be separated by a thin line. Being persistent is to hold onto the right things even when people think otherwise. But being stubborn is to embrace a lie even though it is proven to be false. A well-known story “The Emperor’s New Clothes” is an illustration of such mentality. Once there was a king who loved fancy clothes. He lavishly spent the country’s money on new outfits. Two con men took advantage of the king’s vain pursuit. They said they had a special fabric that was invisible to unwise people. The ruler was convinced. Therefore, the two men began their work. The king sent officials to check the progress. He himself also paid a visit. All they could see was nothing. The two tailors pretended to weave threads and sew pieces of cloth with needles. No one said anything because they did not want to be considered as fools. Before long, the new “robe” was done. The king could not wait to try it on. Everyone praised that it was a magnificent garment. The emperor decided to walk around the capital city to show off his new robe. Citizens went along with the scam because nobody wanted to be seen as unwise. The ruler enjoyed all the cheers until a little kid cried out: “The king has no clothes!” The crowd finally realized the obvious fact. Therefore, they echoed with the child and chanted: “The king has no clothes!” However, the king continued with the procession because he was too stubborn to admit that he was a fool. In our passage today, Paul compares fools to wise people. Without a doubt, wisdom is a key word in the text. Wisdom and wise are repeated twelve times. We get the lady’s name “Sophia” from the Greek word for wisdom. At the same time, foolishness and related words foolish and folly are used six times. Paul contrasts what people consider to be wise and foolish to the true wisdom and foolishness in God’s eye. The author shows us that God is delighted to open the minds of those who are open-minded to the truth.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神謙卑驕傲的人 God Humbles the Haughty

God desires for people to know Him. But our pride can be an obstacle in the process. That is why Paul tells us that God humbles the haughty. Let us read **verse 18-20**. God humbles the haughty by using a way that they regard as foolish to save us. That method is “the word of the cross.” The gospel message is actually quite straightforward. You can even summarize it in less than one minute: Jesus the only true God came into the world and became a man. He died on the cross for our sins but He rose three days later. Whoever receives Jesus by faith and claims Him to be Savior and Lord will be saved. This truth is so simple that even a three-year-old kid and a ninety-year-old senior can understand. However, it causes opposite results in the audience. Paul states in verse 18: **For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** Why is there such a big difference? It is because people choose to believe what they want to believe. Therefore, they refuse what they consider to be silly and useless. Their rejection is a way God humbles haughty people. Paul quotes Isaiah in verse 19 to explain. In the original context, the prophet condemned God’s people for being rebellious. The country was facing a threat from Assyria. The military crisis was actually a spiritual test. Instead

of relying on God, the king and his officials asked Egypt for help. They thought that they could rescue themselves through a political alliance. Inside the country, people continued their worship at the temple. But they were only going through the motions. They praised God on their lips, but they did not obey God in their hearts. Hence, the Lord allowed His people to fall to the enemies. God disciplined the leaders by frustrating their human wisdom. They thought they could use God to achieve their goal. In the end, they failed. Paul was dealing with people with the same mindset. They thought they were smarter than God. In verse 20, Paul lists three groups of elite people in his time. “The wise” were educated people. We call them scholars today. “The scribe” could be a teacher in those days. They are professors in colleges nowadays. “The debater” was a person who beat others through a debate. We can think of attorneys in court. At a time when most people were illiterate, knowledge was power. People who knew a lot were respected and they could achieve promising careers. They might contribute to the society through their studies and by sharing their findings. However, their benefits were restricted to this life. Paul says all they amounted to was but “wisdom of the world” if they did not have God in the equation. They say they do not worship any god. But their knowledge became gods. They in fact worship themselves! They thought they were wise, but they were actually foolish in God’s eye. There are many people like that in our world. They invent great products, discover new ways to treat diseases, explore outer-space and nano-space and manage companies and the government. They deserve recognition. However, if God is not in their worldview their expertise is only wisdom of the world. They try to explain the reality by excluding God. Their assumption becomes their conclusion. What is true wisdom? The book of Proverbs talks a lot about it. For example, 9:10 states clearly: **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.** God is the source of true wisdom. Wise people are those who humble before Him. The pursuit of knowledge is a process to understand God’s design and order. It can be physics, psychology, medicine, engineering, etc. Since God created the universe, He reveals wisdom in His creation. We see beauty, complexity and purposes when we observe nature. Truly wise researchers must be objective. They accept that there may be new ideas that contradict their paradigm. The more they know, the more they admit that there is something they do not know. That includes the existence of God. Humble people are those who are ready to change their position if their observations do not fit the original proposition.

2. 神拯救單純的人 God Saves the Simple

God welcomes humble people because He saves the simple. Let us continue to read **verse 21-25.** Some people equate simple to dumb. They think that simple-minded people are those who blindly believe in anything. Therefore, those who are full of “wisdom of the world” find it hard to accept the gospel. Paul mentions the two wisest groups of people at that time in verse 22-23: **22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.** The Jews counted miracles as a proof of God’s work. Jesus displayed supernatural power by healing the sick and casting out demons. But most Jews denied that Jesus was the Messiah. Why? They expected Him to be a mighty commander who led them to overthrow the Romans. Jesus came and preached the gospel. He drew near to the poor, tax-collectors, children and women but not the rich and famous. People saw His meekness as weakness. He died like a criminal on the cross. The Bible clearly says such death is a curse from God. How could this Messiah save His people? The message of the cross thus became a stumbling block to the Jews. Whereas, the Greeks found the gospel a laughing stock. In

their philosophy, the divine is pure and the highest while physical matters are trivial and mortal. The gods in their religions sit high above in heaven and receive people's worship. If Jesus was God, then He could not have come into the world. He could not have polluted Himself by mingling with sinful humans. Worse still, it was unthinkable for a god to suffer humiliation from people. How could someone who was unable to save himself save others? Therefore, both the Jews and the Greeks thought the gospel was foolish. God shows no favoritism to the smarty pants. Instead, He saves those who are simple in their minds. Once some parents brought children for Jesus to bless them. It was a custom in those days for Jewish rabbis to bless little kids. But the disciples were mad. Perhaps they thought Jesus had more important things to do. The Lord seized the opportunity as a teaching moment. He told the disciples in Mark 10:14-15 – 14 ...“**Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.** 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” To become child-like is not to be childish. To believe that Santa Claus exists and money grows on trees is childish. But to accept Jesus out of simple faith is child-like. Little kids admit their inadequacy. They ask parents for advice and help, fully trusting that dad and mom can solve their problems. Children are also curious about everything. They keep asking the “why” questions. At the same time, they understand that there are things too complicated to comprehend. That is the right mentality as we come to God. We can ask all the questions about God. But eventually, we have to take a leap of faith to receive Him. We must admit that we are helpless like little children. That is why the gospel is a challenge to our pride. We believe that we are decent people. But the notion that we can save ourselves through good works is not based on the Bible. To put it bluntly, such belief is an insult to Jesus. When I talk with gospel friends, I often ask them why we should believe in Jesus. Some people say it is good to have an anchor for life when they feel lost. Others admire the moral values of Biblical principles. Those are good answers, but they are not the real reason why we need Jesus. We need Him because we are pathetic sinners and He is the only way for forgiveness. God's plan is not to make good people better, but to make dead souls alive. The church should not shy away from preaching Christ and His cross. Jesus' death is not only the highest model of love. He paid the price no one can afford. Some non-believers may find the title “sinner” offensive. We cannot judge anyone. It is God who judges all of us. We cannot see the beauty of God's grace until we realize the ugliness of our sins.

3. 神接納被棄的人 God Receives the Rejected

God does not only humble the haughty and save the simple. He also receives the rejected. We finish our reading from **verse 26 to 31**. Paul makes it clear that most Corinthian believers were not the rich and famous in the society. God saved them regardless of their background, intellectual levels or physical strength. It was all because of God's grace. If they really wanted to compare, then few of them could match Paul's credentials. He testifies in Philippians 3:4-6 – 4 ...**If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.** Paul had an excellent family heritage, he received the best education, he lived a perfect life according to the Jewish Law and he even went after Christians (who were considered as traitors to the traditional beliefs). Paul thought he was doing all the right things until God called him. He finally realized that he was acting against God. Then he understood that all that he could brag about from his past became trash compared to the pursuit of knowing Christ. That

God removed Paul's pride did not mean that God could not make use of Paul's abilities. In his future gospel ministries, Paul wisely used his talents and status. He used Bible knowledge to debate with the Jews. He used wisdom to argue with the intellects. He used his Roman citizenship to ensure a fair treatment in courts. But on all occasions, he submitted to the guidance of the Lord. God saved scholars like Paul, but He also redeemed slaves, who made up as much as one-third of the population in the Roman world. God showed no bias to people's social status. In doing so, He lowered those who had a lot but also raised up those who had little. Once again, it shows that salvation is 100% God's work and 0% our worth. We cannot go to God, and therefore Jesus came to us. Paul says in verse 30 that the Lord has become our righteousness, sanctification and redemption. We can never achieve God's requirement of perfection. It is Jesus who claims those who believe to be righteous. We often stumble in sin. Jesus continues to sanctify us as we walk with Him daily. We deserve God's condemnation due to our sins. But Jesus redeems us from the bondage of sin and He removes the eternal consequence of sin. That God receives the rejected is consistent with how He treated people in the Bible. For example, three ordinary ladies were included into Jesus' genealogy: Rahab had a shameful profession, Ruth was an unknown foreign housewife and Mary was chosen to give birth to Jesus. God used them because they were obedient to His calling. In the gospels, Jesus approached lepers, He shared the gospel with a Samaritan woman despite her immoral lifestyle, race and gender. Among the disciples, there were fishermen, a tax-collector and even Judas the traitor! God chose those people not because of who they were, what they had or what they could offer in exchange for salvation. The result is that no one can boast about themselves. God treats us the same way today. We can be saved because God ministers grace to us. Our education degrees, job titles and accomplishments in the world cannot earn us salvation. On the other hand, no one should look down on themselves if they were born in small villages, they do not have a long resume or they do not earn a big paycheck. God can of course save celebrities too. There are Christians in Hollywood, as well as professional athletes and politicians. God does not show them favoritism because of their reputation. He can use them in their unique social circles where other people cannot get access. Likewise, God saves you because He will send you to campuses, offices, factories and restaurants to reach out to your peers. The gospel is for all people because every person is a sinner who needs God's grace.

結論 CONCLUSION

God is delighted to open the minds of those who are open-minded to the truth. The message of the cross does not make sense to human logic. God became a man. He emptied His glory and honor to become nothing. He saved the world by dying in the hands of men. But Jesus was not assassinated. He did not die as a martyr either. He died willingly for you and me. Jesus extends an invitation to you today. Accept Him with simple faith. He can make those who are fools in the world to become wise in God's Kingdom. He will turn those who are financially poor to become spiritually rich. To Him be all the glory!

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堅持與頑固往往只是一線之差。堅持是相信一件真實的事，雖然其他人不願意接受。；而頑固，則是在謊言已被證實之後，仍然選擇相信它。著名的童話故事《國王的新衣》正是描述這種心態。從前，有一位國王非常喜愛華麗的衣服，他不斷地花國庫的金錢來買新衣服。兩名騙子看準了國王虛榮的性格，計劃騙他的錢。他們聲稱自己擁有一種特殊的布料，愚昧的人是看不見的。國王深信不疑，於是兩人開始「製作」衣服。國王派官員前去查看進度，自己也親自探訪。眾人其實什麼都看不到，但那兩名裁縫卻假裝織布、縫製衣料。沒有人敢說出真相，因為沒有人願意被視為笨蛋。不久之後，「新衣服」製作完成了。國王迫不及待地試穿，眾人紛紛稱讚這是一件漂亮的袍子。國王決定穿著新衣在首都遊行，以炫耀他的服飾。百姓們也配合這場騙局，因為沒有人想被認為是不聰明的。國王在歡呼聲中感覺很得意，直到一個小孩大聲喊道：「國王沒有穿衣服！」群眾這才恍然大悟，看清了顯而易見的事實，於是齊聲呼喊：「國王沒有穿衣服！」然而，國王當作沒有聽到，由於自己的頑固，他不願承認自己受騙、成了愚昧的人。在今天的經文中，保羅將愚昧的人與智慧的人作了對比。毫無疑問，「智慧」是這段經文的關鍵詞，這個字一共出現了十二次。我們常見的女孩名字「索菲亞 (Sophia)」正是從希臘文「智慧」這個字演變過來的。同時，「愚拙」這個字則出現了六次。保羅對比了世人眼中的智慧與愚拙，與神眼中真正的智慧與愚拙。作者向我們顯明：神樂意接受那些向真理打開心門的人。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神謙卑驕傲的人 God Humbles the Haughty

神渴望人認識祂，但我們的驕傲常常成為其中的障礙。因此，保羅告訴我們，神謙卑驕傲的人。讓我們來讀第 18 至 20 節。神藉著一種人看為是愚拙的方法來拯救我們，從而謙卑驕傲的人；那個方法就是「十字架的道理」。福音的信息其實非常直接，甚至可以在一分鐘之內講完：耶穌是唯一真神；祂來到世上成為人，為我們的罪被釘死在十字架上，並在三天後從死裡復活。凡憑信心接受耶穌、承認祂為救主和生命之主的人，必然得救。這個真理如此簡單，連三歲的孩子和九十歲的長輩都能明白。然而，它卻在聽眾中產生了截然不同的結果。保羅在第 18 節指出：**因為十字架的道理，在那滅亡的人為愚拙；在我們得救的人，卻為神的大能。**為什麼會有如此強烈的差異呢？原因在於，人選擇相信自己想相信的事，因此拒絕他們認為

愚拙、無用的事物。這樣的拒絕，正是神謙卑驕傲之人的一種方法。保羅在第 19 節引用以賽亞的話來說明。當時，先知責備神的子民悖逆。國家正面臨亞述的威脅，這場危機其實是一場屬靈的考驗。王和官員沒有倚靠神，反而向埃及求助，他們以為透過政治結盟就能自救。國內的百姓仍然在聖殿敬拜，但那只是外在形式而已；他們口裡讚美神，心裡卻不順服祂。因此，主容許百姓敗在敵人手中。神挫敗人的智慧來管教那些領袖。他們以為可以利用神來達到自己的目的，結果卻徹底失敗。保羅所面對的，正是抱著同樣心態的人。他們自以為比神更聰明。在第 20 節中，保羅列舉了當時三種菁英份子：「智慧人」指受過教育的人，相當於今天的學者；「文士」在當時可能是老師，類似現今的大學教授；「辯士」則是善於辯論、以口才打敗別人的人，就像法庭上的律師。當時大多數人都不識字，於是知識就是力量。有學問的人受人尊敬，也能擁有光明的前途，他們透過研究與分享成果來貢獻社會。然而，若沒有把神納入其中，這一切的成就也只是「世上的智慧」。一些人自稱是無神論，但實際上，他們的知識成了自己的神，他們其實是在敬拜自己！他們自以為有智慧，在神眼中卻是愚拙的。社會上有許多這樣的人：他們發明新產品、發現治療疾病的新方法、探索外太空，並管理企業與政府。他們有很多貢獻；然而，若他們的世界觀中沒有神，他們的專業知識不過是世上的智慧。他們試圖在排除神的前提下解釋現實世界。於是他們的假設便成了結論。那麼，什麼才是真正的智慧呢？箴言對此有許多教導。例如 9:10 清楚地說：**敬畏耶和華是智慧的開端；認識至聖者便是聰明**。神是真智慧的源頭；因此真正有智慧的人，是在神面前謙卑的人。追求知識的過程，其實是在了解神的設計與秩序，無論是物理學、心理學、醫學或工程學。既然宇宙是神所創造的，祂的智慧便彰顯在受造之物當中。當我們觀察大自然時，便能看見美麗、複雜與目的。真正有智慧的人必須保持客觀，願意接受新的觀念；他們知道得越多，就應該承認自己還有許多不知道的事情，包括神的存在。謙卑的人，就是那些在觀察結果不符合原先假設時，願意改變看法的人。

2. 神拯救單純的人 God Saves the Simple

神歡迎謙卑的人，因為祂拯救單純的人。讓我們繼續讀**第 21 至 25 節**。有些人把「單純」等同於「愚蠢」，認為心思單純的人就是盲目相信一切的人。因此，那些充滿「世上智慧」的人，往往很難接受福音。保羅在第 22 至 23 節提到當時兩類被認為最有智慧的人：**22 猶太人是要神蹟，希利尼人是求智慧，23 我們卻是傳釘十字架的基督，在猶太人為絆腳石，在外邦人為愚拙**。猶太人把神蹟視為神作為的證明。耶穌藉著醫治病人、驅逐邪靈顯出超自然的能力，但大多數猶太人仍然否認祂是彌賽亞。為什麼呢？因為他們期待彌賽亞是一位大能的軍事領袖，帶領他們推翻羅馬政權。然而，耶穌來到世上傳講福音，靠近貧窮的人、稅吏、孩童和婦女，卻不是那些有財有勢的人。人們把祂的溫柔看成軟弱。祂甚至像罪犯一樣死在十字架上。聖經清楚表明，這樣的死是神的咒詛。這樣的彌賽亞，怎能拯救祂的百姓呢？

因此，十字架的信息成了猶太人的絆腳石。至於希臘人，他們把福音當作笑話。在他們的哲學中，神是純潔而且至高無上的，而物質是卑微且必朽壞的。他們宗教中的諸神高高在天上，接受世人的敬拜。如果耶穌真的是神，祂怎可能來到世上？祂怎能與有罪的人混在一起，玷污自己？更不可思議的是，一位神竟然為人承受痛苦並且被人羞辱。一個連自己都救不了的人，怎能拯救別人呢？因此，無論是猶太人還是希臘人，都認為福音是愚拙的。但是神沒有看中那些自以為聰明的人，祂卻拯救單純的人。曾經有父母帶著孩子來給耶穌祝福。在當時，猶太拉比為孩童祝福是很常見的事，但門徒卻不高興，也許他們認為耶穌有更重要的事情要做。主卻把這件事當作教導的機會，祂在馬可福音 10:14–15 中對門徒說：14 …「讓小孩子到我這裡來，不要禁止他們；因為在神國的，正是這樣的人。15 我實在告訴你們，凡要承受神國的，若不像小孩子，斷不能進去。」像孩子一樣單純，並不等於幼稚。相信聖誕老人的存在、以為金錢是長在樹上，那才是幼稚；但憑著信心接受耶穌，那是孩子一般的單純。孩子承認自己的不足，他們向父母尋求建議和幫助，他們完全相信爸爸媽媽能解決問題。孩子也充滿好奇心，不斷地問「為什麼」。同時，他們也明白有些事情太過複雜，自己無法理解。這正是我們來到神面前時該有的態度。我們可以向神提出任何問題。但最終，我們必須跨出信心的一步來接受祂。我們必須承認自己像小孩子一樣無助。這正是福音挑戰我們驕傲的地方。我們往往認為自己是好人，但是靠行善救自己這個想法並不符合聖經。坦白說，這樣的期望其實是對耶穌的羞辱。當我與福音朋友交談時，常常會問他們一個人為什麼要信耶穌。有些人說，信仰可以成為生命的指導；也有些人欣賞聖經所教導的道德價值觀。這些回答都不錯，但並不是我們需要耶穌的真正原因。我們需要祂，因為我們是可憐的罪人，而祂是唯一赦罪的途徑。神的計畫不是把好人變得更好，而是使死去的靈魂得著新生命。教會不應該不好意思傳講基督和祂的十字架。耶穌的死不只是愛的最高典範，耶穌付上了無人能承擔的代價。有些非信徒可能覺得「罪人」這個稱呼很刺耳。我們無權審判任何人，是神審判我們眾人。唯有當我們看清自己罪的醜陋時，才能領會神恩典的美麗。

3. 神接納被棄的人 God Receives the Rejected

神不但謙卑驕傲的人、拯救單純的人，祂也接納被棄的人。我們從第 26 節讀到第 31 節。保羅清楚指出，哥林多教會中的信徒，大多數的人不是社會上的名流或貴族。不論他們的背景、智力程度或身體機能，神都拯救了他們，這顯明了神的恩典。若真要比較，當中沒有幾個人能與保羅相比。他在腓立比書 3:4–6 中如此見證：4 若是別人想他可以靠肉體，我更可以靠著了。5 我第八天受割禮；我是以色列族、便雅憫支派的人，是希伯來人所生的希伯來人。就律法說，我是法利賽人；6 就熱心說，我是逼迫教會的；就律法上的義說，我是無可指摘的。保羅有優越的家庭背景，他接受過最好的教育，按猶太律法的標準過著完美的生活，他甚至積極迫害基督徒（他們在當時被視為背叛傳統信仰的人）。保羅原來以為自己所做的一切

都是對的，直到神呼召了他。他才終於明白，自己其實一直在與神為敵。也正是在那時，他領悟到，過去一切可以誇口的成就，與認識基督相比，都不過是垃圾。神除去了保羅的驕傲，並不代表神不能使用他的長處。在往後的福音事工中，保羅善用神所賜給他的才能與身分。他用聖經知識與猶太人辯論，用智慧與知識分子對話，也運用自己羅馬公民的身分，在法庭上爭取公平的待遇。然而，在所有情況中，他都順服主的帶領。神拯救了像保羅這樣的學者，也救贖了奴隸。在羅馬帝國中，有三分之一的人口是奴隸。神對人的社會地位毫無偏私；祂使原來擁有很多的人降卑，也使一無所有的人被升高。這再次顯明，救恩百分之百是神的作為，百分之零是基於我們的價值。我們無法走到神那裡，因此耶穌來到我們中間。保羅在第30節說，主成了我們的公義、聖潔與救贖。我們永遠無法達到神完全的要求，是耶穌宣告凡信祂的人為義。雖然我們常在罪中跌倒，但是耶穌每天與我們同行，幫助我們不斷地成聖。我們本該因罪而面對神的審判，但耶穌將我們從罪的捆綁中贖回，並除去了罪所帶來的永恆結局。神接納被棄的人，這與祂在聖經中的作為是一致的。例如，在耶穌的家譜中，出現了三位平凡的婦人：喇合從事過羞恥的行業；路得是一個普通的外邦家庭主婦；馬利亞則被揀選成為耶穌在地上的母親。神使用她們，是因為她們順服神的呼召。在福音書中，耶穌也主動接近大癩瘋病人；祂不顧那位撒瑪利亞婦人的道德背景、種族與性別，向她傳講福音。在門徒當中，有漁夫、有稅吏，甚至還有出賣耶穌的猶大！神揀選這些人，不是因為他們的背景、擁有什么，或能為救恩付上什麼代價。其結果就是，沒有人能為自己誇口。神今天也是如此對待我們的。我們得救，是因為神施予恩典給我們；學歷、職位與世上的成就，都無法換取救恩。另一方面，也沒有人應該因為出身在農村、缺乏技能或收入低微而自卑。神當然也能拯救社會上的名人—好萊塢、職業運動員與政界中都有基督徒；但神並不因他們的名聲而特別偏待他們，而是要使用他們在獨特的社交圈中接觸其他人。同樣地，神拯救你，是因為祂要差遣你進入校園、辦公室、工廠與餐館，向你認識的人作見證。福音是為所有人預備的，因為每個人都是需要神恩典的罪人。

結論 CONCLUSION

神樂意接受那些向真理打開心門的人。十字架的信息，難以用人的邏輯來理解。神成為人，倒空自己的榮耀與尊貴，甘願成為一無所有；祂竟然藉著死來拯救世人。然而，耶穌並不是被暗殺，也不是殉道而死；祂是為了你和我，甘心樂意地捨命。今天，耶穌向你發出邀請：你必須以單純的信心接受祂。祂能使在世人眼中愚拙的人，在神的國度裡成為智慧的人；祂能使經濟貧乏的人，在屬靈上成為富足的人。願一切榮耀都歸給祂！