

# *The Meaning of Christmas* 聖誕節的意義

1 Timothy 提摩太前書 1:12-17

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**Andy Park** is an electrician in England. He also goes by the name "Mr. Christmas". He claims to have celebrated Christmas day every day since July 1993.

英國的一位電工安迪·帕克，有一個別稱是「聖誕節先生」。他聲稱自 1993 年 7 月以來每天都慶祝聖誕節。

He claims that he eats turkey sandwiches and mince pies for breakfast **each day**, then goes to work until returning for lunch to eat a full roast turkey dinner before watching a recording of the Queen's Christmas speech, with sherry in hand.

他聲稱**每天**他都會以火雞三明治和肉餡餅當早餐，然後去工作，直到午餐回來吃一頓豐盛的烤火雞晚餐，然後手裡拿著雪利酒觀看女王聖誕演講的錄影。

In an interview published in 2006, Mr. Park was quoted as saying that he had consumed over the previous 13 years.

在 2006 年發表的一篇訪談中，帕克先生被引述說，在過去的 13 年裡他享用了

4,380 **turkeys**,

4,380 隻火雞，

87,600 **mince pies**,

87,600 個肉餡餅，

1200 litres of **gravy**,

1200 公升肉汁，

26,280 **roast potatoes**,

26,280 個烤土豆，

30,660 **stuffing balls**,

30,660 個餡球，

4,380 bottles of **champagne**,

4,380 瓶香檳，

4,380 bottles of **sherry**, and

4,380 瓶雪莉酒，以及

5,000 bottles of **wine**.

5000 瓶餐酒。

Although celebrating Christmas every day with **turkeys** and **mince pies** and tinsel and the Queen's speech strikes me as a bit odd, he has a point.... even if he has missed it entirely!  
儘管每天都用火雞、肉餡餅和聖誕裝飾，及女王的演講來慶祝聖誕節，讓我覺得有點奇怪，但他有一點很有道理……即使他完全看不出來！

The meaning of Christmas is something to be celebrated every day.  
聖誕節的意義是值得每天都去慶祝的。

I say that because of v.15 of that Bible passage that was just read out to us:  
我這麼說是因為剛剛向我們宣讀的那段聖經經文第 15 節中：

***Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world*** - there is the Christmas event right there - ***Christ Jesus came into the world.***  
**這話可信，值得完全接受：「基督耶穌到世上來 - 那裡就是聖誕節的事件 - 基督耶穌到世上來。」**

The coming of the eternal Son of God into the world, Jesus Christ, is a fact of history. That is what we remember at Christmas.

上帝永恆的兒子耶穌基督來到世上是歷史事實。這就是我們在聖誕節所紀念的。

But the coming of the Son of God into the world is **so much more** than a historical fact.  
但神的兒子來到世上不只是一件歷史事實。

The historical event we are celebrating is a message of HOPE when you keep reading the rest of v.15: ***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.***

當你繼續閱讀第 15 節的其餘部分時，我們正在慶祝的歷史事件是一個希望的信息：  
**基督耶穌到世上來是要拯救罪人。**

The meaning of Christmas for you from Jesus Christ is forgiveness, salvation, and hope.  
耶穌基督帶給你的聖誕節意義是寬恕、拯救和希望。

Christmas declares that what is undesirable in your life can be changed, and what is precious needs to never be lost.

聖誕節宣告，你生命中不想保留的東西可以改變，而珍貴的東西永遠不需丟失。

It is a message of hope sent by God to **confused** children, **cynical** teenagers, **single** parents, **cranky** husbands, **tired** wives, **weird** neighbours, the **aged** and the **lonely**, **preachers** and **lovers** and **haters** and **you** and **me**.

是對困惑的孩子、憤世嫉俗的青少年、單親父母、脾氣暴躁的丈夫、疲倦的妻子、奇怪的鄰居、老年人和孤獨者、傳教士、愛人和仇敵以及你和我發出的希望信息。

Since the Son of God lived, died, rose, reigns, and is coming again, God's message through him is more than a historical fact.

由於上帝的兒子活過、死過、復活了、並在作王，且即將再來，上帝透過祂傳達的信息不僅僅是一個歷史事實。

The real meaning of Christmas is about lives and destinies being changed by God. What we are talking about here today is so much more than remembering history and retelling old stories.

聖誕節的真正意義是生命和命運被上帝改變。我們今天在這裡談論的不僅僅是銘記歷史和重述舊故事。

Now, while there might be some questions over the sanity and authenticity of Andy Park's daily celebration of Christmas, there is no doubt about the impact of Jesus' coming into this world on our daily existence.

雖然安迪帕克每天慶祝聖誕節的合理性和真實性可能會受到一些質疑，但耶穌來到這個世界對我們日常生活的影響是毫無疑問的。

The sentences in front of us today are the words of Paul, one of the Christian church leaders in the first century. He often features in the list of the top 20 most influential people of all time.

今天我們面前的這段是第一世紀基督教會領袖之一保羅的話。他經常被列入有史以來最有影響力的 20 名人物名單中。

These sentences are his testimony of the change that Jesus brought to his life in vv12-14: 這些在第 12-14 節中的是他對耶穌給他的生命帶來的改變的見證：

Verse 12: *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.*

第 12 節：*我感謝那賜給我力量的我們的主基督耶穌，因為他認為我可信任，派我服事他。*

*Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.*

*我從前是褻瀆、迫害、侮慢上帝的人；然而我還蒙了憐憫，因為我是在不信、不明白的時候做的。*

*The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

*而且我們的主的恩典格外豐盛，使我在基督耶穌裏有信心和愛心。*

He describes himself as *a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man* before meeting Jesus.

他將在遇見耶穌之前的自己描述為褻瀆、迫害、侮慢上帝的人。

Paul used to hunt down Christians to devastate the early Christian church.

保羅曾經以追捕基督徒來摧毀早期的基督教會。

Paul's biographer - a Dr Luke - described him as a religious **predator** who breathed out **murderous** threats against Christians.

路加醫生，保羅的傳記的作者，將他描述為一個宗教掠奪者，對基督徒發出威嚇兇悍的威脅。

He was a *callous, pious, self-righteous, bigoted murderer* hell-bent on a full-scale extermination of the Christian church.

他是個冷酷、虔誠、自以為是、偏執的兇手，一心一意要全面消滅基督教會。

He was one of the main enemies of Jesus and the early church. He lived day by day with God to his back.

他是耶穌和早期教會的主要敵人之一。他日復一日地背向著上帝來生活。

Yet that fact was a surprise to him. He says he *acted in ignorance and unbelief*. He was totally oblivious to the fact that his day-by-day existence was standing opposed to God. The weird thing is that he was under the assumption that he and God were okay.

然而這個事實卻讓他感到驚訝。他說他的行為是出於無知和不信。他完全沒有意識到他的日常生活是與上帝對立的。奇怪的是，他一直認為自己和上帝的關係很好。

He had a religious pedigree and piety that set him apart. He was zealous to do what was right and obey God's law.

他的宗教血統和虔誠使他與眾不同。他熱衷做正確的事並遵守上帝的律法。

When he persecuted Jesus and his followers, he thought he was doing God a favour. He was ignorant of the fact that when he stood opposed to Jesus, he stood opposed to God.

當他迫害耶穌和他的追隨者時，他認為自己是在幫上帝的忙。他不知道當他反對耶穌時，他就是與神對立。

All his religious zeal made him an enemy of God. It's noticeable that he twice, in verses 15 and 16, refers to himself as the *worst of sinners*.

他所有的宗教狂熱使他成為上帝的敵人。值得注意的是，他在第 15 章和第 16 章中兩次稱自己是罪人中的罪魁。

A lot of people struggle with that kind of declaration. He says this elsewhere in his writings. Of all the people he knows, of all the people in the world, I am the worst.

很多人都對這種聲明感到困惑。他在他的著作中的其他地方也提到過這一點。在他認識的所有人中，在世界上的所有人當中，我是最糟糕的。

One commentator, unhappy with Paul's self-assessment, says that he is either morbid or unreal.

一位評論家不滿意保羅的自我評價，說保羅要不是有偏愛卑鄙的病態，就是不真實。

We might say Paul is using pious exaggeration. This can be a tendency in Christian and religious circles. We could call it spiritual hype or spiritual hyperbole, but it is really spiritual posturing.

我們可以說保羅使用了誇張的虔誠。這可能是基督徒和宗教界的一種趨勢。我們可以稱之為屬靈方面的炒作、屬靈方面的誇張，但它確實是屬靈方面的擺姿態。

But it is none of that for Paul. Paul is articulating a well-considered position. This is not a bit of spiritual false humility to make him look righteous.

但對保羅來說，都並非如此。保羅是要闡明一個經過深思熟慮的立場。這可不是為了讓他顯得正義而有的一點屬靈方面的虛假謙卑。

But it is not Paul being morbid. Paul is not a person with a low self-image. This is a more common view of Christianity...it is a crutch for those with low self-esteem and a guilty conscience.

但這並不是保羅偏愛卑鄙。保羅並不是一個自我形象低落的人。這是對基督教更常見的看法……認為它是那些自尊心低和良心有罪的人的拐杖。

The argument is that Paul and his type are perfectionists who get bent out of shape and down in the dumps over the smallest mistakes and failures.

爭論的焦點是，保羅和他的類型的人是完美主義者，他們會因為最小的錯誤和失敗而不安並陷入困境。

Stop being so morbid, Paul. Lighten up, Paul. 50% is a pass. “C’s” get degrees. No one is perfect. Go to a therapist.

別再這麼變態了，保羅，放輕鬆點，50%就是及格了。「丙級」也可獲得學位。沒有人是完美的。去看治療師。

Why is Paul saying he is the worst? He describes himself as *a violent man* in v.13. In the original language, the word translated VIOLENT in English is the same root word that we get from the English phrase HUBRIS.

為什麼保羅說他是個罪魁？他在第 13 節中將自己描述為一個侮慢的人。在原文中，翻譯成英文的「VIOLENT」一詞與我們得到的英文單字「HUBRIS」的字根相同。

In v.13, it means a *trampler*. Paul is saying, yep, I did a bunch of good things, but the motive under all my actions was a desire to be superior to everyone else.

在第 13 節中的意思是踐踏者。保羅是說，是的，我做了很多好事，但我所有行為背後的動機是渴望超越其他人。

As he pursued doing things to please God, he trampled all over people. All his actions were about him. At the heart of all his actions was the need to be the absolute ruler of his world.

當他追求做事來討神喜悅時，他卻踐踏了他人。他所有的舉動都是為了他自己。他所有行為的核心都是需要成為他的世界的絕對統治者。

In that sense, we are violent people. At the deepest levels, we want to make sure no one, including God, tells us how to run our lives.

從這個意義上說，我們是侮慢的人。在最深層次上，我們希望確保沒有人，包括上帝，告訴我們如何經營我們的生命。

This is the essence of sin. Sin differs in its objects for each of us but not in its nature.

這就是罪的本質。罪對我們每個人來說，其對像不同，但本質卻沒有區別。

Image two eucalypt seeds. One falls onto the ground where there is no soil or moisture. The other seed falls into a place of nutritious soil and moisture. The first one rots and the other grows into a great tree.

想像兩顆尤加利樹的種子。一個掉到沒有土壤或濕氣的地面上。另一顆種子則落入有營養的土壤和水分的地方。第一個腐爛了，另一個長成了一棵大樹。

Which eucalypt seed had more vitality and strength? There was no difference in the seed. It had everything to do with the environment.

哪一顆尤加利樹種子更有生命力和力量？種子沒有什麼差別，一切都與環境有關。

The Bible says that most of us do not grow up as Ivan the Terrible or Adolf Hitler, but it isn't for lack of talent.

聖經說，我們大多數人在成長過程中都沒有成為伊凡雷帝或阿道夫希特勒，但這並不是因為缺乏天賦。

Underneath the religious self-righteous to the hardened criminal is a violent pride that elevates the self over others.

宗教自以為是的以致頑固的罪犯的背後是一種將自我提升到他人之上的暴力驕傲。

Some use religion and morality, and others use irreligion and immorality to achieve the same end. Paul is saying that his heart is no different in its principle and power than the worst of sinners.

有些人利用宗教和道德，有些人則利用非宗教和不道德來達到同樣的目的。保羅是說，他的心在原則和能力上與最壞的罪人沒有什麼不同。

It is only by the grace of God that he is who he is. This is the hope of Christmas – Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. This is the HOPE OF CHRISTMAS.

唯有靠著神的恩典，他才成為現在的樣子。這就是聖誕節的盼望—基督耶穌到世上來是要拯救罪人。這就是聖誕節的希望。

## THE HOPE OF CHRISTMAS 聖誕節的希望

See what it says halfway through v13: *I was shown mercy...*

看看第 13 節中間怎麼說：然而我還蒙了憐憫...

V14...*The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly...*

14 節... 而且我們的主的恩典格外豐盛...

Paul calls the great power that brought change in his life *mercy* and *the grace of our Lord*—undeserved favour.

保羅稱這改變他生命的偉大力量是我們主的憐憫和主的恩典。是不配得的恩惠。

God did not give Paul what he deserved or what he had coming to him. That would have been rejection and death! Instead, he showed him mercy.

神沒有給保羅他應得的，也沒有給他配得的。那將是拒絕和死亡！相反，他對他表現出了憐憫。

That is Paul's first-hand account of the impact of Jesus coming into this world to save sinners. 這是保羅對耶穌來到這個世界拯救罪人的影響的第一手描述。

So why is Paul telling us here about his experience of the radical change Jesus brought to his life?

那麼，為什麼保羅在這裡告訴我們他經歷了耶穌為他的生活帶來的徹底改變呢？

The answer to that question is given very clearly in verse 16: *for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*

第 16 節非常清楚地給出了這個問題的答案：然而，我蒙了憐憫，好讓基督耶穌在我這罪魁身上顯明他完全的忍耐，給後來信他得永生的人作榜樣。

Jesus changed Paul, the chief enemy of the church in its infant days, and Paul tells us about it so that in 2023, you and I will grasp the meaning of Christmas.

耶穌改變了保羅，他是初期教會的主要敵人，保羅告訴我們這件事，以便在 2023 年你我都能明白聖誕節的意義。

The word EXAMPLE there in v16 means that Paul is not just a pattern but the ultimate pattern or type of what a Christian is.

第 16 節中的「榜樣」意味著保羅不僅是一種模式，而且是基督徒的終極榜樣或預表。

Jesus Christ picked the chief of sinners to demonstrate to you today what his mercy and power can do in your life.

耶穌基督挑選了罪魁向你展示祂的憐憫和力量可以今天在你的生命中發揮什麼作用。

There is no sinner that the grace of God, in Jesus, cannot overflow to and deal with. Don't belittle the mercy of God by saying that you cannot be changed!

沒有一個罪人是神的恩典，在耶穌裡，不能滿溢對付的。不要貶低神的憐憫，說你是無法改變的！

What happened to Paul can happen to you. Notice it there in v15:  
發生在保羅身上的事也可以發生在你身上。注意 15 節中的內容：

*Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.*

這話可信，值得完全接受：「基督耶穌到世上來是要拯救罪人」，而在罪人中我是個罪魁。

Paul's personal reason to give thanks to God is now widened to praise for the universal significance of Christmas...JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD...FOR THE WORLD.

保羅個人感謝上帝的理由現在擴大到讚美聖誕節的普遍意義……耶穌來到世上來……是要拯救罪人。

The purpose of Jesus coming into this world to save sinners has been welcomed by two thousand years of human beings who, conscious of their guilt before God, have gratefully accepted what the saving death of Jesus Christ accomplished for them in bringing them back into relationship with God.

耶穌來到這個世界拯救罪人的目的受到了兩千多年來人類的歡迎，他們意識到自己在上帝面前有罪，並感激地接受了耶穌基督的拯救之死為他們所完成的工作，使他們重新與上帝建立了關係。

The message in these verses for us now is that if God can show mercy to a man who, in his ignorance, put Christians in prison and cast his vote to put them to death, a master of religious thuggery, there is hope for everyone.

這些經文現在向我們傳達的信息是，如果上帝能夠憐憫一個因無知而將基督徒投入監獄並投票將他們處死的人，一個宗教暴行的大師，那麼每個人都有希望。

Paul calls to us across the centuries, to us celebrating Christmas in 2023: *Don't despair. He saved me, the worst of sinners. He can save you! There is HOPE IN JESUS.*

保羅向跨世紀的我們、在 2023 年慶祝聖誕節的我們發出呼籲：不要絕望。祂拯救了我這罪魁。他可以救你！在耶穌裡有希望。

Look, too, at how massive this HOPE is. The hope of Christmas is that because Jesus came into this world to save sinners, what is most precious doesn't need to be lost.

再看看這個希望有多大。聖誕節的希望是，因為耶穌來到這個世界是為了拯救罪人，所以最珍貴的東西不需要丟失。

Take another look at v.16:

再來看第 16 節：



*I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*

我蒙憐憫，好讓基督耶穌能在我這個最壞的罪人身上表現出祂無限的忍耐，為那些相信祂並獲得永生的人樹立榜樣。

There is the hope of Christmas right there. Life is good and precious; we don't want to lose it. We can talk all we want about the good things of life, but if we don't have life, we don't have anything.

聖誕節的希望就在哪裡。生命是美好而寶貴的，我們不想失去它。我們可以暢所欲言地談論生命中的美好事物，但如果我們沒有了生命，我們就一無所有。

The hope of Christmas to you from verse 16 is that you need never lose your life. It is good to live.

從第 16 節來看，聖誕節給你的希望是你永遠不需要失去你的生命。活著真好。

Your life is precious and can be saved. Jesus Christ came into the world to save us and change us **forever**.

你的生命是寶貴的，是可以挽救的。耶穌基督來到世上是為了永遠拯救我們並改變我們。

The hope of Christmas is that Jesus came into this world to change our eternal status, and so that is one of the biggest motives in allowing him to change us now.

聖誕節的希望是耶穌來到這個世界來改變我們永恆的地位，所以這是讓祂現在改變我們的最大動機之一。

Christmas should be celebrated every day of the year. Granted, it is a little different than Andy Park, but it is celebrated every day.

一年中的每一天都應該慶祝聖誕節。當然，與安迪·帕克有點不同，但每天都應慶祝。

The meaning of Christmas, God's mercy to sinners through Jesus Christ, should be pushed down into our hearts day by day, and it should rise again to change lives.

聖誕節的意義，上帝透過耶穌基督對罪人的憐憫，應該日復一日地深入我們的心中，並且應該再次升起，改變生命。

What God did on the first Christmas, what he did in forgiving and changing Paul's life forever, and what he does in forgiving and changing people today is utterly free mercy.

神在第一個聖誕節所做的事，以及祂永遠寬恕和改變保羅的生命所做的事，以及祂今天寬恕和改變人們所做的事，都是完全白白的憐憫。

If you are not a Christian, mark this year by coming to Jesus today. Recognise that though the actions of your life may not warrant you being declared the worst of people, but the motive of your heart does.

如果你不是基督徒，今天就來信靠耶穌來紀念今年吧。要體認到，雖然你生活中的行為可能不能保證你被稱為罪魁，但你內在的動機卻可以。

The good news of Christianity is that though we are worse than we can possibly imagine, in Jesus Christ, we are more loved and affirmed than we ever dream. That is the wonder of Christmas.

基督教的好消息是，儘管我們比我們想像的更糟糕，但在耶穌基督裡，我們比我們想像的更被愛和肯定。這就是聖誕節的奇妙之處。

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. That is God's gift to the world. It is his gift to YOU THIS CHRISTMAS. It is worthy of full acceptance.

耶穌基督來到世上是為了拯救罪人。這是上帝給世界的禮物。這是他今年聖誕節送給你的禮物。這是值得完全接受的。

If you are a Christian, how has God changed you this year? It's also why Jesus came. Paul is the ultimate example of a life change.

如果你是基督徒，今年神如何改變你？這也是耶穌來的原因。保羅是生命改變的終極榜樣。

What might be your next step in celebrating the meaning of Christmas each day as we turn the corner into 2024?

當我們即將進入 2024 年時，您可能採取的下一步來每天慶祝聖誕節的意義會是什麼？