

05-19-13

Series: [Fifteen Words of Hope](#)

Fifteen Words of Hope

(1)

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

(New Series 05/19/13)

Fifteen Words of Hope

[2 Corinthians 5:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

It began with one of history's earliest recorded instances of biological warfare. **In 1347 a Mongol army** besieging the Genoese trading post of Caffa in the Crimea (modern Ukraine) catapulted the bodies of bubonic plague victims over the town's walls. The terrified defenders fled to Italy, carrying with them the deadly plague bacteria (and the rats and fleas that spread them). Over the next three years the plague spread throughout Europe in the massive epidemic now known as the Black Death. Before the epidemic ran its course an estimated twenty million people—approximately one-third to one-half of Europe's population—perished. The coming centuries would see recurring outbreaks of the bubonic plague, which would remain a dangerous, unchecked killer until the development of antibiotics in the twentieth century.

Though the Black Death is the most infamous epidemic in history, it was not the only one. **The influenza epidemic of 1918-19** killed an estimated **thirty to fifty million people**, and several million more died at about that same time in an outbreak of typhus in eastern Europe. Other infectious diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever, and in more recent times AIDS, have also claimed uncounted millions of victims.

But there is one plague that is more widespread and deadly than all others combined; it is, as the Puritan writer Ralph Venning called it, the **“plague of plagues.”** It affects every person who ever lived—and is 100 percent fatal. Unlike other plagues, which cause only physical death, this plague causes spiritual and eternal death as well. It is the plague of sin.

Because Adam's fall plunged the entire human race into sin ([Romans 5:12-21](#)), all people are sinners from birth. **“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,”** lamented David, **“and in sin my mother conceived me”** ([Psalm 51:5](#)). In [Psalm 58:3](#) he added, **“The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth”** (cf. [Genesis 8:21](#); [Isaiah 48:8](#)). Not only are all people sinners by nature, they are also sinners by action. To the Romans Paul wrote, **“There is none righteous, not even one”** ([Romans 3:10](#); cf. [Psalm 14:1-3](#); [Psalm 53:1-3](#)).

Later in that chapter he added, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** ([Romans 3:23](#)); consequently, **“There is no man who does not sin”** ([1 Kings](#)

05-19-13

Series: Fifteen Words of Hope

[8:46](#)), and no one can say, “**I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin**” ([Proverbs 20:9](#)).

The inevitable outcome for all those infected by the sin plague is death. [Ezekiel 18:20](#) states plainly, “**The person who sins will die**” (cf. [v. 4](#)). Adam’s tragic epitaph, “**and he died**” ([Genesis 5:5](#)) will be written for all his descendants (cf. [Genesis 5:8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31; Genesis 9:29](#)).

Nor is the prognosis any better in the spiritual realm.

Sin produces **two disastrous spiritual consequences**:

- 1) Alienation from God in this life ([Ephesians 2:12; Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21](#)), and
- 2) Unrelenting punishment in hell in eternity ([Matthew 25:41, 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelations 14:9-11; Revelations 20:11-15](#)).