

09-29-13

Series: Fifteen Words of Hope

Fifteen Words of Hope

(11b)

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

(Continuation from 09/15/13)

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. [24 words]

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

²¹ For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. [25 words]

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

²¹ τον μη γνοντα αμαρτιαν υπερ ημων αμαρτιαν εποιησεν ινα ημεις γενωμεθα δικαιοσυνη θεου εν αυτω [15 words]

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) is like a cache of rare jewels, each deserving of a careful, reverential examination under the magnifying glass of Scripture.

It yields truths about the 1) benefactor, 2) the substitute, 3) the beneficiaries, and 4) the benefit.

The Substitute

[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.

After presenting Jesus as the absolutely holy substitute for sinners, the text makes the remarkable statement that God made Him to be sin. That important phrase requires a careful understanding. It does not mean that Christ became a sinner; the above-mentioned verses establishing His utter sinlessness unequivocally rule out that possibility. As God in human flesh, He could not possibly have committed any sin or in any way violated God's law. It is equally unthinkable that God, whose "**eyes are too pure to approve evil**" ([Habakkuk 1:13](#); cf. [James 1:13](#)), would make anyone a sinner, let alone His own Holy Son. He was the unblemished Lamb while on the cross, personally guilty of no evil.

[Isaiah 53:4-6](#) describes the only sense in which Jesus could have been made sin:

[Isaiah 53:4-6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him,

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And by His scourging we are healed.

⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Christ was not made a sinner, nor was He punished for any sin of His own. Instead, the Father treated him as if He were a sinner by charging to His account the sins of everyone who would ever believe. All those sins were charged against Him as if He had personally committed them, and He was punished with the penalty for them on the cross, experiencing the full fury of God's wrath unleashed against them all.

It was at that moment that **"About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" ([Matthew 27:46](#)).**

It is crucial, therefore, to understand that the only sense in which Jesus was made sin was by imputation. He was personally pure, yet officially culpable; personally holy, yet forensically guilty. But in dying on the cross Christ did not become evil like we are, nor do redeemed sinners become inherently as holy as He is. God credits believers' sin to Christ's account, and His righteousness to theirs.

In [Galatians 3:10, 13](#) Paul further explained the necessity of believers' sins being imputed to Christ. In [verse 10](#) he wrote that **"as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.'"**

There is no way for sinners to reconcile themselves to God, because no one is able to **"abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them."** Violating even one precept of the Law warrants eternal punishment in hell. Thus, the entire human race is cursed and unable to do anything to lift that curse. Therefore, the only reason believers can be reconciled to God is because **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'" ([Galatians 3:13](#)).**

Were it not for the fact that **"while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly"** ([Romans 5:6](#)), no one could be reconciled to God.