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Series: Fifteen Words of Hope

Fifteen Words of Hope

(13)

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

(Continuation from 10/06/13)

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 Benefit

so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

([5:21d](#))

[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.

The phrase **so that** reflects a purpose clause in the Greek text.

[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.

The benefit of God's imputing believers' sins to Christ and His righteousness to them is that they **become** righteous before Him.

[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.

They are "found in Him, not having a righteousness of [their] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from

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God on the basis of faith” ([Philippians 3:9](#)).

[Philippians 3:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

The very **righteousness** God requires before He can accept the sinner is the very righteousness He provides.

[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.

Because Jesus paid the full penalty for believers’ sin, God no longer holds it against them. In [Psalm 32:1](#) David wrote, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!”

[Psalm 32:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

In [Psalm 130:3-4](#) the psalmist added, “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” In metaphorical pictures of forgiveness, God is said to have removed believers’ sins as far from them as the east is from the west ([Psalm 103:12](#));

[Psalm 103:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

cast their sins behind His back ([Isaiah 38:17](#));

[Isaiah 38:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷ “Lo, for *my own* welfare I had great bitterness; It is You who has kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

promised never to remember them ([Isaiah 43:25](#));

[Isaiah 43:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵ “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.

hidden them from His sight behind a thick cloud ([Isaiah 44:22](#));

[Isaiah 44:22 \(NASB\)](#)

²² “I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”

and cast them into the depths of the sea ([Micah 7:19](#)).

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Micah 7:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.

Believers experience the blessedness of forgiveness solely by faith in the complete redemption provided by Jesus Christ; “**the righteousness of God [comes] through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**” ([Romans 3:22](#)).

Romans 3:22 (NASB)

²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

They are “**justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus**” ([Romans 3:24](#));

Romans 3:24 (NASB)

²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Therefore, God is “**the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus**” ([Romans 3:26](#)).

Romans 3:26 (NASB)

²⁶ for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

In [Romans 3:28](#) Paul stated definitively, “**For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law**” (cf. [Romans 4:5](#); [Romans 5:1](#); [Galatians 2:16](#));

Romans 3:28 (NASB)

²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Romans 4:5 (NASB)

⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Romans 5:1 (NASB)

¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 2:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Galatians 3:24 (NASB)

²⁴ Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us to Christ*, so that we may be justified by faith.

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When repentant sinners acknowledge their sin ([Psalm 32:5](#)), affirm Jesus as Lord ([Romans 10:9](#)), and trust solely in His completed work on their behalf ([Acts 4:12](#); [Acts 16:31](#)), God credits His righteousness to their account.

[Psalm 32:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

[Romans 10:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

[Acts 4:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

[Acts 16:31 \(NASB\)](#)

³¹ They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

On the cross God treated Jesus as if He had lived our lives with all our sin, so that God could then treat us as if we lived Christ's life of pure holiness. Our iniquitous life was legally charged to Him on the cross, as if He had lived it, so that His righteous life could be credited to us, as if we lived it. That is the doctrine of justification by imputation—the high point of the gospel. That truth, expressed so concisely and powerfully in this text, is the only cure for the sin plague.