# Fifteen Words of Hope (8)

**Pastor Eddie Ildefonso**
**2 Corinthians 5:21**

(Continuation from **06/30/13**)

## 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]
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> **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]
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> **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.

This designation points unmistakably to the only possible sacrifice for sin. It eliminates every human who ever lived, **"for there is no man who does not sin"** (**1 Kings 8:46**)**,** since **"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** (**Romans 3:23**)**.** Only one who **knew no sin** of his own could qualify to bear the full wrath of God against the sins of others. The perfect sacrifice for sin would have to be a human being, for only a man could die for other men. Yet he would also have to be God, for only God is sinless. That narrows the field to one, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

In the design of God, the second person of the Trinity became a man (**Galatians 4:4-5**)**.** The Bible makes it clear that though He had a human mother, the Lord Jesus Christ did not have a human father. Joseph is never referred to as His father, because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35**)**.** As the God-man, He was the perfect One to be the sacrifice for sin (**John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19**)**,** fulfilling the Old Testament picture of the unblemished sacrificial lamb (**Exodus 12:5; Ezekiel 46:13**)**.**

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The impeccability (sinlessness) of Jesus Christ is universally affirmed in Scripture, by believers and unbelievers alike. In **John 8:46** Jesus challenged His Jewish opponents, **"Which one of you convicts Me of sin?"** Before sentencing Him to death, Pilate repeatedly affirmed His innocence, declaring, **"I find no guilt in this man" (Luke 23:4; cf. Luke 23:14, Luke 23:22).** The repentant thief on the cross said of Jesus, **"This man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41).** Even the hardened, callous Roman centurion in charge of the execution detail admitted, **"Certainly this man was innocent" (Luke 23:47).**

The apostles, those who most closely observed Jesus' life during His earthly ministry, also testified to His sinlessness. Peter publicly proclaimed Him to be the **"Holy and Righteous One" (Acts 3:14).** In his first epistle he declared Jesus to be **"unblemished and spotless" (1 Peter 1:19);** one **"who committed no sin" (1 Peter 2:22);** and **"just"** **(1 Peter 3:18).** John also testified to His sinlessness, writing, **"in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5).** The inspired writer of Hebrews notes that **"we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin" (Hebrews 4:15),** because He is **"holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).**

But the most powerful testimony concerning Christ's sinlessness comes from God the Father. On two occasions He said of Christ, **"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5).** Jesus' unbroken fellowship with the Father also testifies to His sinlessness; in **John 10:30** He said simply, **"I and the Father are one" (cf. John 14:9).**

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