

**THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF
SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

CD 86 contains two Messages
Themes From Acts of the Apostles Chapters 3-4

Editorial Note: From 1956 - 1960, Sidney and Violet Cox lived in Miami, Florida. Sidney was on the teaching faculty of the Miami Bible Institute, teaching courses on the New Testament while serving as Professor of New Testament at the institute.

While in Miami, Sidney further developed a relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, who sponsored and supported the Miami Bible Institute. The Christian and Missionary Alliance operates a vast network of churches and is similar to a denomination. Miami Bible Institute trained ministers to enter pastorates in CMA churches. This series of messages or Bible lessons was delivered at the Miami Gospel Tabernacle, a local CMA church with a membership of 300-400 people. It is also believed that Sidney and Violet were members of this congregation at that time.

Other references in this series would date them to October 1959 at which time Sidney was 72 years of age.

He describes that this series was to last for six months; however, we have only found the first four installments of the series that cover the first four chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. February 2009.

Tracks 1-7. Themes from Acts of the Apostles Chapter 3.

“After Pentecost – What Now for the Early Church? The Healing of the Lame Man.”

[You will turn please in your Bibles or your] lesson leaflets, where ever it may be. Turn to the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and we'll read a little bit of this together. I wanted to be quite sure that (no, that's not mine. No, I've got mine.) I wanted to be quite sure that one member of the class, whose name I did not hear is marked present. His name is Cox. Just be quite sure that you've got him down, will you, because he happens to be here. I don't want to be missed out on that.

I think probably we have a lady visitor this morning too. Her name is Judith.¹ I don't know just what her last name is, but she's evidently visiting on the west coast [of Florida] and has flipped the edge of her skirts over in our direction. I don't know whether it's kept anybody away, but I think we ought to be thanking the Lord that she's where she is and what she is, instead of being something a whole lot worse. There's no danger according to weather reports, either here or anywhere else. But these girls, they visit us every once in a while, especially in the fall.

¹ He is referring here to Hurricane Judith. This reference helps us date this sermon. A low formed south of Jamaica on October 15. Soon after merging with another low moving eastward from the southern Gulf of Mexico, the combined system developed into a tropical storm in the southeast Gulf of Mexico on October 17. Judith moved over Florida the next day, Sunday October 18 after reaching hurricane strength, and moved across the peninsula and rapidly out to sea, reaching a peak of 80 mph, but steadily weakened until dissipating on the 21st east of Bermuda.

Alright, third chapter of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. I would like to remind you again of our great privilege during this quarter and the next to study without hurrying, a book as important as the Acts of the Apostles. Sometimes we feel crowded, hurried about things, but we don't feel that in just the same way here. It is quite true that the various sections that we are studying deserve more time than we're able to give to them. For instance, to attempt to cover the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles in twenty-five or thirty minutes is a task that simply cannot be done, not adequately. We can touch "the hem of the garment," of course, and we shall endeavor to do that this morning.

I want you to keep in mind before we read, and then we're going to stop and have just a brief moment of prayer - I want you to keep in mind please, that we began this study with the approach to the Day of Pentecost. We're on the other side of the resurrection and when we began in the first chapter of the Acts, we saw the last appearance of our Lord upon earth. It was the time when, with His disciples gathered around Him, He ascended into the glory from whence He came, and the cloud received Him out of their sight. And the two visitors who came there to speak to the disciples told them that as He went away, so He would return.

Now, that was the point of beginning on this series of lessons. Then from that point on we considered the last ten days after the ascension and before the Day of Pentecost. And then last week we began with the words that seem to be full of electricity, "And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come."² Now, that was the day that we were talking about last week, and we noticed a number of things about it. A number of very startling things, some that are so startling we're apt to forget the others.

One of the startling things about it was that 120 people could be of one mind in one place and of one accord. Now, that's startling, it sure is. Because one place, one accord, one mind meant that the Holy Spirit could then do what He wanted to do and what was in God's order for Him to do. And there was a tremendous thing, this gathering together of people who had never been of one mind before and now they were. They were of one mind in one place of one accord.

And then you'll remember the more startling things that happened. For instance, the sound of the mighty rushing wind. There was the evidence of those cloven tongues of fire that rested upon each of the disciples. There was the marvelous thing that happened to them as individuals and as a group. As a group, they were welded together into one body, of which Christ was the head and they each severally were members of His body. That was the great thing that He did for them collectively. But each one of them was empowered individually, and he was empowered to do as he had been commanded to do, to witness. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me."³ Now we witness with our tongues, mainly. There are other ways, of course. But mainly we witness with our tongues, and consequently the evidence of individual empowerment came in the form of a cloven tongue of fire.

And you'll remember how this tongue of fire was used in the case of the man who became the spokesman of this group, how the great sermon that Peter preached, that we speak of as his first sermon. It wasn't his first sermon, really; his first sermon was to the disciples after our Lord had gone away. But this was the first great sermon of the Christian era, and Peter delivers this sermon in the power of the Holy Spirit. The tongue of fire was upon him, and if there is one thing that we need both

² Acts 2:1

³ Acts 1:8

then and now is the tongue of fire in our witnessing. Now our tongues wag, but they are generally very feeble. And what we need in these days as well as those days is a tongue that has more than just power to wag and sound; it has power to burn things and to grip the hearts of men; the tongue of fire that came upon those disciples in those days.

Now, that day is over. The Day of Pentecost is over. It had fully come. It fully ends. Now what? The church has been formed. The individual disciples have been empowered. The great miracle of Pentecost has taken place. Now, we move out of that day to the day that is beyond. Second chapter, we're on the Day of Pentecost. Third chapter, we're on the other side of it. What's going to happen now? What is the church going to do now that it has been formed into a body? What will the church do now that it has been duly empowered in the individual members? What will it do? How will it carry out its program? Where will it start? What will be the evidence that the tongue of fire stills continues to be with them? Can't be seen anymore. There's no more sound of mighty rushing wind. But what's going to happen now?

Well, now let's read please, the opening section of our lesson text, and then we'll stop for a moment of prayer, and then give some consideration to this. You follow it please, while I read it.

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, ‘Look on us.’ And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.”⁴

Now that phrase, or those two words, feet and ankle bones, are the words of a physician. They express a certain condition of his feet and ankle bones. That's not just an expression that he was tired, or something like that. That's a doctor talking and he's telling us there, what's the matter with his feet, and what's the matter with his ankle bones. There were certain things that were wrong with his feet. There were certain things that were wrong with his ankle bones, and Doctor Luke tells us exactly what was wrong with them there. It's not a general phrase at all. This is a physician's language that we have here. Now, we'll consider these things as we go along, but in the meantime let's stop and have a word of prayer together.

(Praying)

Our Father, we pray for the touch of the Spirit upon us that we may find ourselves guided by His gracious hand into the truth as thou wouldst have it to bring to this class, this morning. How gracious Thou art and how wonderful, and we claim Thy presence, Thy blessing, Thine empowerment upon us as we turn to the Word of God this day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Now, let's start here and go back for just a moment and ask these questions. How will the church start its work? Here it has been formed on the Day of Pentecost. It has been welded into one body. It has been given a commission. The individual members have been duly empowered. Where will it start?

⁴ Acts 3:1-7

How did it start? What was the first thing the Christian church did? Because there is a rule in scripture study that is called the Law of First Emergence, or First Appearance. Where ever you find a truth appearing for the first time, it gives the pattern from then on. Now, you can find that all the way through the scripture. Now, here is the first appearance of the church actively at work. Now where did it happen, what did it do, who was in the congregation, who took up the offering, who recorded the statistics, who wrote it up for the denominational paper, who organized it, who underwrote this first campaign of the Christian church? Now, here we've got it, right here. What is it? Where did it take place? Did the disciples, 120 of them more or less, did they get together and figure out some kind of a program and say, "Well, now here we are, we've got to get started on this business. This is the way to do it. We're going to have an organization. We're going to start where people go to worship. We're going to start in the temple. And we're going to start here and start there and do this and do the other." What did they do? What? What did they do?

Well, now let's put this straight for a start. They didn't do anything. They were just simple enough to get out of the way and let the Holy Spirit do what He wanted to do. Now, that's the thing that's happened there. Now what did the Holy Spirit do? It wasn't the church doing it at all. It was the Holy Spirit doing it. What did He do? What did the Holy Spirit do?

Well, now we see a very strange thing. This first great act of the Christian church was not in the temple at all, it was outside of it. The first great act of the Christian church was not with a crowd; it was with an individual. It wasn't an organized effort. It wasn't a planned effort, not at all. It was something that took place because two men went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and something happened; not in the temple, but outside of it. And it wasn't an organized thing at all. It wasn't a crowd; it was an individual.

Now, let's remember if you please, that the spirit-led activity of the Christian church began outside of the temple, and it began with an individual. Now, there's the pattern of it all the way through. Now, when the Christian church follows that pattern of going with the message of the Gospel to an individual, rather than concentrating its attention on gathering crowds, then the Christian church does what the Holy Spirit wants it to do, and the pattern is exactly the same today. Now, there's nothing wrong with crowds at all. Nothing wrong with a crowd. The more folks we can get at, the better. There's nothing wrong with a crowd.

But the Christian church began with a man outside the temple; he wasn't inside at all. It's very doubtful if the people in the temple would have received him anyhow. Here he was, he was a beggar. He was a man who had lost ability to function in life as a man ought to function, for when his feet and ankle bones are utterly helpless and he has to be carried where ever he goes, that's the condition of the man that we see there. Now that's where the Christian church began its activity. It was formed in that upper room; it began its activity by the beautiful gate of the temple, but distinctly on the outside. Now, how did it begin here? Who were the great crowd of folks who gathered together for this occasion? Who was it? Did it begin with a 120 disciples? No, not at all. Not at all.

Now, watch it if you please, here's the pattern of the first activity of the Christian church. It began with two men walking side by side, two by two. That's the way it began. It began with two men walking side by side and both of them going in the right direction. Now, that's where the activity of the Christian church began. It didn't begin with some great preacher. It didn't begin with some great organization. It didn't begin with some great building program, not at all; not at all. It began with two

men doing the simple thing these two men did.

Now watch, if you please. Who were these two men? Well now, they were two men who, while they had been generally associated together, had never walked together like this before. Peter and James and John had been seen in company with each other a good many times, and very significant times. You can find them there on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration. You can find them there nearest to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. You can find them in all kinds of places, but here, it's not Peter and James and John this time. Here is a realignment in the general order of the disciples. It's Peter and John this time. Now, here they are walking together, and you will find that Peter and John, whatever differences they had, and they did; whatever misunderstandings they had between each other, and they did, they are now side by side. Here is the unity of that upper room now seen in the unity of these two men as they move to the temple.

Now, at what time of the day were they going there? Now, we're not left in any doubt. They were going there at the ninth hour. We're told that in the scripture reading. At what time of the day was that? Three o'clock in the afternoon. Now, remember if you please, it tells us distinctly they went to the temple at the hour of prayer. That's not the hour of sacrifice. The sacrifice had been offered half an hour before. That was the order. First the sacrifice, then the prayer. And that is the order still, beloved. We can't pray except on the basis of sacrifice. We have no right to pray, except on the basis of a sacrifice that has been offered for us, and that clears the way of access into the presence of God. That's the order. It isn't pray, and then sacrifice. It's sacrifice, and then pray. That's the order. Now, watch it again. They go there at the hour of prayer. Three o'clock in the afternoon.

I believe I brought a message here; you won't remember it, but I believe I brought a message here one Sunday morning or Sunday night or sometime, months and months and months ago, on the subject of what happened at the ninth hour in the scripture. And you will find a pattern all the way through how God does marvelous things at the ninth hour. It was the ninth hour on that mountain when fire fell and Elijah prayed and Mount Carmel became engulfed with the power of God. It happened at three o'clock in the afternoon. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Daniel was praying and God came to him and gave him the vision of the seventy weeks, this great program that we call the Times of the Gentiles, and it happened at three o'clock in the afternoon. Fifty days before this happened, or fifty-two or three days before this happened, there outside of the city walls of Jerusalem, a man had been crucified with two others and at three o'clock in the afternoon, there came the cry from the cross, "It is finished."⁵ Now, here we're finding it again. Three o'clock in the afternoon.

And these two men go up to the temple and find there outside the temple, not inside, a man lame from his birth; a man whose mark was disability. Now, what's going to happen? What's the church going to do about this? Not, what's the church going to do about the millionaire down the street? Not, what the church is going to do about the influential person? Not, what the church is going to do about the newspaper editor? But, what's the church going to do about this man? Now we want to know this. What's the church got to say to this man? What? Remember, this is the first, really articulate voice of the church after Pentecost. Now what's the church got to say to a lame man who has no place of entrance in the temple at all - no standing whatever. Here he is. What's the church got to say to him?

Now we notice what happened there. We notice what the man expected. What the man expected was

⁵ John 19:30

charity. But when Peter and John saw him there, you'll remember that Peter and John fastened their eyes upon him and said to him, "You look on us."⁶ Now, you look with your eyes, not your ankles. They told him to do that which he was able to do. If they had told him to get up and walk; if they had told him to swing his legs around; if they had told him to do something with those impotent ankles, that would have been something else, but they didn't. They told him to look. They looked, he looked. Then what happened.

You will notice that Peter put something on one side. He said, "Silver and gold have we none"⁷. Now, one of the marks of the child of God is that we put silver and gold in its right place. Silver and gold makes fine paving stones up there where we're going, but it has no particular value. Silver and gold is the standard of value down here. In other words, Peter and John were dealing with this subject outside of the natural, normal realm all together. They were not there at all. They had put it on one side and they had said, "Silver and gold have we none."

Now, you will remember that when Peter is writing his first letter that he repeats that phrase and he says that we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold.⁸ And there is one thing that Peter had learned and John also, and that was that silver and gold have practically no value whatever in the spiritual realm and not only that, but they will contaminate your fingers if you don't watch out.

Now, this is it. They had put it on one side. They had put on one side the standard of values of the world. The natural realm was put on one side. "Silver and gold have we none." My, when the church gets to the place where it puts natural things and natural values where they belong, on the outside, and concentrates on spiritual values, what power there will be. There sure will.

Now, what else did they say? They not only said we're going to put something on one side, but they said, "Silver and gold have we none." But, and here's the man asking this question, "If you haven't got silver and gold, what have you got?" What has the church got? If it doesn't concentrate on the values of the natural realm, what does it have? What? And this man looking at Peter had the right to say, "Well Peter, what have you got?" Because Peter himself had indicated that he did have something. And he said, "Such as I have give I unto thee." Now, what did he have? What?

He had a name, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Now, remember that within the circle of that phrase, that word, that name, all the power, all the ability, all the love, all the grace, all the desire in the heart of God is concentrated in that name. Now, this is what he had. This is what the church has to offer, not silver and gold. The church has to offer to lay humanity all the values that have been concentrated in the name that is above every name. Now let's not get the idea that that's simply a New Testament idea because that's been the source of power all the way along.

You turn to the 10th Psalm and you will find David singing, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."⁹ Thy name. All that he is is concentrated in the name. Do you remember that David once stood before a great and terrible enemy, an enemy that was 9' 6" tall and had a spear like a weaver's beam? This man, he was flesh personified, and David stood before him and said, "You come

6 Acts 3:4

7 Acts 3:6

8 I Peter 1:18

9 Psalms 8:9

to me with a sword and a spear, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts.”¹⁰ Do you remember, do you remember? And there is very good reason to think that when he wrote that lovely 10th Psalm in which you find those words, “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth,” you can almost see David with the head of this man in his hand, lifting it up to the skies, and saying, “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.”

Now, here's what they did have. The church had this. It wasn't Peter that had it. When the folks looked at him afterwards as if he was a God, as if he was something wonderful, you remember how indignantly almost Peter brushed it on one side and said, “Don't look at us, we haven't got anything. It's not me, don't look at me. I haven't got anything, not at all. This comes in the name of the one who was crucified, dead and buried and rose again. This is the source of it all.” This is it. Now, this is what the church had then. It should be what the church has now. It should be.

Now, quite frequently you find that the church's voice is quite feeble when it comes to saying to somebody in dire need, “Rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Rise up and walk.” Now, you notice the formula here. First of all, they had a word, a name, a word with all the power of God concentrated in it. God has poured all of His power and all of His love and all of His grace into the crystal chalice of the name of His only begotten Son. It's there. They had that.

Then, in addition to that, they had a beautiful, if ancient formula. Do you remember what the children of Israel in dire distress had to do when they had been bitten by serpents in the wilderness and a brass serpent had been erected on a pole? What did they have to do? What? Just one thing – look and live. And Peter is voicing right there this powerful formula of the Christian church: look and live. Now that's the most powerful thing the Christian church possesses, is the divine authority to say to a lame man outside of the religious circles all together, “You look and you shall live.” Now, that's the second thing they possessed.

I'll tell you the third thing they possessed and it's just as well for the Christian church collectively and individually to remember it. He possessed a right arm and that right arm of Peter's was stretched out and it grasped the right hand of the man down on skid row and put forth power and lifted him up.

Now, you've got three powerful things there. You've got the content of the name. You have the formula of look and live. And you have the power of the right hand.

Now, I don't wonder that this man, that something happened to him. I don't wonder, that when that simple plan is followed, disability becomes ability. And impotence becomes power. And helplessness gives place to completeness. Now that's what happened, and it didn't happen in the temple at all. It happened on the outside. And it didn't happen to a crowd, it happened to an individual, just one person. That's all. An individual man received power.

I do not wonder that there was consternation in the crowd around about them, and remember that the crowd that gathered around this man was not the crowd that gathered on the Day of Pentecost. That day was over. They had already gone back to where ever they were. They had already seen what they saw. This was a crowd of Jews. These are the Jews that go off to the temple at the hour of prayer. This was an Israeliteish affair. These were the people. They may not have been there on the Day of Pentecost at

¹⁰ I Samuel 17:45

all. Some of them undoubtedly were. But that wasn't their day; here is their day. And here they are, on this day, gathering around and looking at this, and when they hear what Peter had to say, they discovered that something they thought they had completed, they hadn't completed at all. They thought they had done away with Jesus, but they hadn't done away with him at all. Here he is, here he is, and they knew from the words of their own prophets that this was the evidence that Messiah in His power, was still in the midst of them.

For an ancient prophet, six or eight hundred years before Christ came, had said that in that blessed day when Messiah should come, "The lame man should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."¹¹ Now, they knew that, and here was the evidence right before their eyes, and it happened right by the side of the beautiful gate of the temple to an audience of one, **to two simple men who didn't possess not one half of a letter at the end of their name between them.**

And here they were and this is the pattern of the activity of the Christian church all the way through. It is to go with the blessed formula of look and live, with the power of the word and with a hand outstretched and not behind. Ecclesiasticism will tie our hands behind us; forms and ceremonies will tie our hands beside us, but God help us to get clear of that so that our hand is free to go out to the man who needs it. Now that's the business of the church, and when the church does that, miracles still happen. Power still comes, impotence takes wings and flies out of the window and completeness and power takes its place. Ability in the place of disability.

This was the thing that happened after Pentecost – no great rushing wind, no cloven tongues of fire but the power of the name. And beloved, the power of that name is still with us and there is still life for a look at the crucified one. Yes there is.

Our Father, take this word and use it some way for Thy glory. In Jesus name. Amen.¹²

¹¹ Isaiah 35:6

¹² Passage in red was found on the original cassette tape of this message, but did not survive to the recorded audio found on CD 86.