

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

**Editorial Note: This is one lesson of a 6-lesson weekly series of Bible studies that Sidney Cox delivered to the congregation of the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama in 1973.**



**This is a 2011 picture of what was the Eastlake Alliance Church in 1972. It is located at the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North and 85<sup>th</sup> Street in Birmingham and is the current home of the 46<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church.**

**In 1972, at age 84, Sidney Cox had moved from Detroit, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama to be near my parents, John and Jean Cox. Still remarkably healthy and independent, he lived in a small efficiency apartment on Birmingham's south side. His beloved wife, Violet had earlier passed away in 1967 while they were residing in Detroit.**

**From the time of their commissioning in Toronto, Canada in 1910/1912 to 1944, Sidney and Violet Cox had a well-chronicled career as Salvation Army officers – a journey that took them across the breadth of Canada and ultimately to Atlanta, Georgia in 1928 to be part of the founding of The Salvation Army's Southern Territory.**

**However, during the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (“CMA”). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a “denomination.” During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sidney had served as Professor of New Testament at two Bible institutes – The Miami Bible Institute and The Toccoa Falls Bible Institute (Toccoa, Georgia). These two institutes were principally supported by CMA and graduates often entered pastorates at CMA churches.**

**During this era of his life, Sidney Cox remained in great demand as a preacher, evangelist and Bible teacher both in Salvation Army and CMA venues. The Eastlake Alliance Church was a CMA church and they took advantage of his residency in Birmingham by engaging him to teach this series. The pastor of the church was Glen Tingley, Jr.**

**John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.**

**Epistle of Peter  
Part 2  
The Seven Marks of the Christian - The First Four:  
Elect – Sanctified – Obedient - Sprinkled  
June 10, 1973**

*Sunday School at Eastlake Alliance Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson number 061073.*

*This is Glen Tingley, Jr. welcoming you to this Sunday School class. Our teacher, Dr. Sidney Cox, is continuing a study in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter.*

*The chalkboard contains the following information:*

*“1<sup>st</sup> Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 1: Five Stopping Places”*

*“1<sup>st</sup> Peter, Chapter 1, Verses 2-5: Seven Marks of the Christian”*

1. *Elect.*
2. *Sanctified.*
3. *Obedient.*
4. *Sprinkled.*
5. *Begotten.*
6. *Inheritance.*
7. *Kept.*

*Now let us listen to the lesson with Dr. Cox.*

We have been studying together the opening section of a very important letter, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, and we stopped at Verse 1 and we said in that verse there were five stopping places in one verse, which gives the reason for the reminder that’s on the board - in Verse 1, five stopping places. And just to remind you of them, I’m not going to underscore them even with my voice, but you will note and remember the five stopping places in that first verse.

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”*

And one of the things we noted particularly was the emphasis on those two words “strangers scattered” and we reminded ourselves that those words are not ordinary words. It doesn’t mean that this letter was addressed to a person who was a stranger in the community where he lived. The sense of it is that every Christian is in a very real sense a stranger in this world, and we reminded you of an old song that tells us about that, it says, “I am a stranger here within a

foreign land, my home is far away upon a fairer strand; ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea, I'm here on business for my King.”<sup>1</sup>

And one of the great privileges, and that's a strange word to use of this, but one of the great privileges of the Christian life is the privilege of not belonging to this world in which we live. We don't belong to it. We may be here. We may be involved in it. We may have work to do in it, and we have all of these things but we don't belong to it. We belong somewhere else. We have, “An inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away and is reserved in heaven for you,”<sup>2</sup> and for me. Our citizenship is not here. It is somewhere else and so he addresses folks who are strangers.

And then the scattering is a word that is worth repeating and worth thinking about for the second time. Scattered doesn't mean a haphazard scattering like the leaves in the fall when the wind gathers them and sends them here and there. It isn't that kind of a scattering at all. It's the scattering of a sower of seed who puts his hand rhythmically in the bag and scatters the seed where he wants it to be, and that's the sense in which the word scattering is used. They are not scattered haphazardly, not at all. They are scattered in the will of the great sower of seed and that's a comforting thought, isn't it, for the Christian to know that where you are is not a matter of chance. You didn't happen there at all. You are there by the will and oversight of your heavenly Father, and you are there for a purpose and when the purpose is accomplished maybe He'll take you somewhere else, but you are not a children of chance. We are not blown here and there by every wind that comes along, and that's the sense.

And then we reminded ourselves that the last two words are interesting because that was the place where Paul and Silas wanted to go to on their second missionary journey and where the Lord forbade them to go. The Holy Spirit said, “No, I don't want you to go,” but in the will of God somebody went to Bithynia and somebody went to the churches in Asia, and it reminds us that if God doesn't do what He wants to do through one person, He can do it through another and we've got five stopping places in Verse 1.

Having cleared the air, this old man who writes a miraculous letter, having cleared the air thus, he then goes on to say, “I want to tell you what it means to be a Christian. I want to tell you the seven marks of the Christian.” And he starts off in Verse 2 and this is where we were in our last lesson together - we were considering what he has to say as to the initial mark of the Christian. What's the next step? What's the next step? Seven steps along the line or the pathway of the Christian life; and we learn Verse 2, the first word, we are, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” and we encourage each other not to get too theological right there because theologians can get themselves in a maze and a mystery and a mess too about that word “elect” and we reminded ourselves of what D.L. Moody said about that. He said the elect are the whosoever wills, and the nonelect are the whosoever won'ts, and that's true and that's the basic thought here. You are in the will of God. You have been brought into the family of God not as an accidental addition to it but someone who prepared for you. You have been brought into the family of God by the will of God.

---

<sup>1</sup> The first verse of the hymn, *The King's Business* by Elijah Taylor Cassel.

<sup>2</sup> | Peter 1:4.

It's quite true that when we took that step from the outside to the inside we didn't know that but when we arrived in the family circle of God and we found to our unspeakable delight that our heavenly Father had made preparation for us, He had anticipated our coming, He had made all the arrangements for our good day by day and our education and our behavior as children of God ought to behave. And we found ourselves, the elect of God. Step #1 in the Christian life. A Christian is not somebody who comes into the family of God by doing something or joining something. The essential point about our coming into the family of God is we are there by the will of God. We belong in the family by the will of our heavenly Father. He made preparation for us. We are, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God."

Now, the next step is having come into the family of God, finding ourselves a member of the family of God, we are now sanctified by the Spirit. Now again, let's not get theological about this. Let's be practical about it and stay with the basic meaning of the word because you can get yourself in a maze of confusion again about that word "sanctification." I could go to a dozen people within a stone's throw of us and ask for the meaning of the word "sanctification" and I'd get as many answers as I ask people, but the basic meaning of the word "sanctification" is the thing that was in the mind of Peter; he says, "You are sanctified through the Holy Spirit," "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the spirit."

Now, here we are in the family of God and, my dear, and we'd better remind ourselves of this, that the very first thing God does, God the Father does with one who comes into the family of God through Christ the Son is to hand us over to the care of the Holy Spirit Himself who becomes responsible for us, dwelling within us.

Now, there are two things that are absolutely necessary in a family. One is separation and the other is cleanliness. There are the two basic meanings of the word "sanctification."

We were watching some charming little children a little while ago and the parents would have two basic problems with every one of them; one is to say, "Now you go wash your hands," and the other is, "Don't forget whose child you are. Don't forget the family to which you belong." And parents who are worthwhile are constantly emphasizing that - the cleanliness and separation. Now in the spiritual realm, in the realm in which we are children of the heavenly Father, these same two things are necessary. The Holy Spirit will be constantly reminding us of the necessity for cleanliness. God wants clean children in His family. He can get along without clever ones. He's got all the cleverness that is necessary. Cleverness is not the basic requirement, cleanliness is and God wants us to be clean.

You remember what our Lord said there to his disciples, "Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken unto you."<sup>3</sup> Now it's the business of the Holy Spirit himself to apply to each one of us daily the cleansing power of the Word of God, to wash us in the water of the Word of God. Now when deeper cleansing is needed there is the cleansing of the blood. "Now are ye clean through the word," "If we confess our sins, we shall be cleansed by the blood of Christ,"<sup>4</sup> and cleanliness and separation.

---

<sup>3</sup> John 15:3.

<sup>4</sup> | John 1:9.

One of the most wonderful things that can happen is to find children who are proud to be members of their family, who are just delighted with their own position in their own family circle. I don't know of anything that brings greater joy to a father and mother than to find children within their family circle who are proud to be members of it; and one of the things that the Holy Spirit is doing in this process we call "sanctification" is to keep us clean and to make us realize what we are in the family of God, the high dignity that is ours when we are members of the family of God. "I'm proud to be a member of the family of God" ought to be on the lips of every Christian.

Now that's what old Peter is saying to these folks. He's saying, "You are elect according to the will of God. You are elect according to His foreknowledge. Now you must behave as children of God ought to behave and the Holy Spirit takes charge of it to that." Keeps you clean, makes you realize the dignity of being a member of the family of God, teaches you table manners, how we ought to talk with each other and particularly how we ought to address our Father; because one of the things that we will come to a little later on is the detail of that fact, that within the family of God, children of God are expected to behave like children of God ought to do and that's the Holy Spirit's business - to teach us our manners and to impress upon us the value and dignity of our position, and to provide God's detergents for keeping us clean.

Now we've got two words; we have "elect" and we have "sanctification."

Now the path goes on. What does that lead to? When we realize what God has done in bringing us into the family, when we realize what God expects of us in our general behavior and in our general cleanliness, how do you sum it all up? You sum it all up by this one word, "obedience." Now the central fact in the family of God is right there. We are children cleansed and obedient. And now again, coming back to our ordinary family knowledge, an obedient child is a delight to a father and mother and a disobedient child is something else, you add your own word there. But obedience in the family circle is the main central fact and especially is it so in the family of God. Our delight is to obey that which our Father requires of us and tells us in His word what we are to do. Our great delight is obedience.

Now, we ought to remind ourselves constantly of that because one of the things we constantly face is the temptation to soft pedal that word "obedience" - partial obedience, semi-obedience, part of the time, "I'll obey if it is convenient. Our Father didn't mean exactly what He says so He gives me the liberty to do what I want sometime and what He wants some other time." Now that's the tendency. There's where the attack comes. There's the temptation if you want to use that word, and this is the thing that is in the center of the family of God. When obedience is there, everything is right. When disobedience is there, everything is wrong. Now that's the central fact, and an old man writing to his friends, and he won't write to them again; he writes another letter after this, it's true, but when he's done that, that's the end and he's saying to them, "Don't forget that the central fact in your relationship to your heavenly Father is this word obedience." This is the word that marks what we were and what we became by the grace of God. We were children of disobedience. We are now children of obedience. That's the primary mark of it all.

Now, the next step along the line, the 4<sup>th</sup> step, is a rather strange one, “Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”<sup>5</sup> Now don’t forget that in the old dispensation - the picture of it is before our eyes constantly, everything that belonged to God was marked by the sprinkling of the blood, everything - the high priest, the priesthood, everything within the tabernacle itself, sprinkled by the blood. It was the mark of God’s ownership. And it was placed there as His particular mark. Now, it marked His ownership, His relationship to us. We are “Sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ,” and symbolically that what happened to you - saved by the blood, marked by the blood as belonging to God. The high priest or any other priest for that matter was marked symbolically by the touching of the blood. The lobe of his ear, the right hand, his foot were all marked by the touch of the blood and it reminded him, this belongs to God. This belongs to God. Your feet belong to God, and in exactly the same way Peter is reminding these folks who are not only saved but have been made kings and priests unto God, Revelation 1:7, and you will find that. Now he’s reminding them, “Don’t forget that this hand of yours has been touched symbolically by the blood. You can’t do what you want to do with this; you do what He wants you to do. Those feet of yours have been marked symbolically by the blood. You can’t go where you may have gone before. You can’t do that. This is something in which your feet must take you on errands of mercy for God.”

Now, let me give you a simple illustration. I think we’ve got time for this - because the sprinkling of the blood reminds us constantly that we are members of an intimate family with God the Father in the center of it. If any of you are familiar with Bob Jones University in Greenville, you may know that one of the very interesting things they have there is a biblical museum in which there is a fabulous collection of things from the land of Palestine, and two, at the time I was there, two remarkable people were in charge of it. Both of them doctors, their name was Bowen. I don’t remember what the man’s first name was but we have reason to remember what the woman’s name was. She was Dr. Barbara Bowen and she wrote a book and if you ever see it in the bookstore, you sell your house and lot and buy it, and it’s got an interesting title. Its title is, *Strange Scriptures That Bewilder the Modern Mind*. Now that’s a long thing, but she takes these scripture things and explains what the meaning of it is. Things like, “Heaping coals of fire upon your head,” and so on - the scriptural meaning of it.

Now, I knew her and on one occasion I was in that biblical museum and she picked up a little vessel, little glass container with a sprinkling neck to it and she said, “This is something you will find in every Jewish home and it contains a perfume. It is made of rosewater.” Now, Dr. Bowen said, “I went to visit a Jewish family and I had done a favor for them and they were very grateful and when I knocked on the door, the eldest daughter opened the door and before I could say a word, she had one of these little glass containers in her hand, she had sprinkled me with rosewater,” and when I got inside she explained what that was a symbol of. She said, “You did something for us that placed us in your debt forever and it made us feel that you belong to us and when something or somebody becomes a part of our family circle, we sprinkle them with rosewater just to remind you that you belong in our family.”

You know, that’s a simple little illustration of what God the Father does for us through the Holy Spirit. He says, “I want you to take that child with your name on it. I want you to take that child

---

<sup>5</sup> | Peter 1:2.

and sprinkle them, not only to mark them as belonging to me but to give this emphasis that you belong in the family of God.”

And we have four marks of the Christian. We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. We are sanctified by the operation of the Spirit. We have the central principle of obedience within our hearts and we have been sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ to mark us out as belonging to Him, the mark that we belong in the family of God.

Now next week when we continue this, we shall go on for the next marks of the Christian, and in the mean time they are quite obvious what they are and we shall spend a little time as we have done today just considering them.

Our Father, we pray that Thy blessing shall rest upon us. It was not accidental that Thou didst bring us into the class this morning and to give us a chance once more of facing some of these obvious and perhaps commonplace truths - we have been brought into the family of God by the will of God. We have been cleansed by the blood. We have been set aside as belonging to God. We have been given the principle of obedience. We have been emphasized and reminded that we belong to God by the sprinkling of the blood, and we pray that the dignity of it shall abide within our hearts. And so for Thy blessing upon us as we go to our morning service we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

It's been so nice to see you. God bless you.