

## **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 3  
The Seven Marks of the Christian - The Last Three:  
Begotten – Inheritance - Kept  
June 17, 1973**

*Sunday School at Eastlake Alliance Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson number 061773.*

*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.*

*And now Dr. Cox with the lesson.*

Now, we looked at four of these seven marks before. Now we come to a very important one and I want you to notice it because it's not only important in the family of God, it's important in families on earth; because most of these things find their reflection in an earthly family as well as in the heavenly family. Now here is the next thing.

We are begotten. Now, before we come to that, notice where it comes, 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again.”

Now, let's stop because here is a word where we are apt to get confused if we don't watch out. There's a difference between being born and being begotten. There's a difference. We are born into the family of God, but when we were born into that family of God, God had a purpose in

mind. He had something for us in order that, and now having been born into the family of God we might move into the circle of God's provision and the thing God wants to do with us as well as for us.

Now, the word "begotten" is a word that applies to God's purpose that He had in mind in bringing you by the new birth into the family of God. We are born into the family. We are begotten into God's purpose for us. Now notice what is said there, you can see it without any difficulty at all, "According to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." We are now alive in the family of God and the thing that God surrounds us with is that beautiful thing that is called "hope." We are now entitled to all that God wraps up in that tremendous word "hope."

What does hope mean to you? What? What does it mean? Now the reason for that question is hope in the natural realm and hope in the spiritual realm are two entirely different things. I look out in the morning and I say, "I hope it's going to be fine but I'm going to take my raincoat just the same, you see." You see what's wrong with hope? It's only a transitory thing down here in this realm. "I hope we can get to our destination." I say that every time I get on an airplane. "I hope we get to our destination." But we've got not guarantee of it, have we, you see? Hope doesn't guarantee anything. I mean hope in the natural realm. We hope for this, we hope for that, we hope for that. We hope we're going to live to be a ripe old age or something of the kind but we can't guarantee it, can we? We have no guarantee. But when you come to hope in the spiritual realm, it's another thing all together. Hope in the spiritual realm is a certainty. It's a fact that is there now. We have it. Our hope, which is the anchor of the soul. Now you can't anchor your soul on something that may not happen. You anchor your soul on something that has happened and will be there as long as it's needed. And that's the difference between hope in the natural realm and hope in the spiritual realm.

I wish I could quote to you what Omar Khayyam, the great Persian poet, said about that. I can't quote it there, but he said something like this, "The things men cast their hopes upon are here for a little while and then gone and they are like snow on the desert's dusty face that lights a little while and then it's gone." That's hope in the natural realm, but it's nothing like that.

You see we are begotten to something. We have been born into the family of God. This is what God had in mind and He takes us by the Holy Spirit and leads us from the moment of our new birth into the realm of this hope that anchors the soul. And there's the wonder of it. And we say, "He hath begotten us according to his abundant mercy. He hath begotten us into a living hope," a hope that is alive. Not hope that is passing. Not the hope that may be or may not be, but the hope that is alive because He is our hope; and as long as He is there, the hope will be there. And, "We are begotten into a lively hope." Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it wonderful?

If only we folks in this class can help other Christians somehow, somewhere to realize what God has done for us, what His provision is that God had in mind when he brought us; and so we are begotten, but before we get away from that, let's not hurry here because one of the things that the Holy Spirit has to teach us when we come into the family of God is not only our table manners and how we ought to move around in the household of faith, He teaches us that, but the great lesson He teaches us is how to address our Father - the appropriate way in which a child of God speaks to and about our heavenly Father. Now you've got it here, as if the Holy Spirit is saying to us, it isn't here in so many words but it lies right on the surface. We read, "Blessed be the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Not, “the man upstairs.” Not, “the old man.” Not all these horrible things that degrade the name of God, but we find everywhere we listen to cheap music and cheap chatter and all the rest of the stuff and we hear the name of God degraded, but here’s a lesson that tells us how we ought to address God.

And one of the basic lessons that a child learns in any home is the lesson of respect in the manner of address to father and mother. Now that’s where the practical side comes in, you see? It’s alright for us to stand on the outside and say, “This is the way we behave ourselves in the family of God,” but does the earthly family find some little reflection in the heavenly family? Does it show us how the earthly family ought to behave? It most certainly does. And one of the things that breaks down family beauty is the failure to address father and mother as they should be spoken to, and it’s one of the easiest things that the devil does; and this mean, contemptible spiritual animal that we speak of in that way, he attacks our children in our home and one of the things, one of the points is to cheapen father and mother so that we become “the old man” or “the old woman” or something else, you see? You can add your own thing but the difficulty is here.

And isn’t it marvelous. Three times you will find that, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I’m not going to tell you where they are found but one time has to do with what He has done for us, one time is where He is doing for us and one time is what He will do for us, and you will find three times this beautiful thing, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Isn’t it wonderful that the Holy Spirit could have taken a man like Peter who still smelled of fish and caused him to write words like this? “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to His abundant mercy,” not His limited mercy, His abundant mercy. “Has begotten us into a lively hope,” and the seal of it is that the Savior we love and who dwells in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is the risen Christ, the resurrection.

When folks go wrong in their attack on the truth, they nearly always attack the person of Christ at both ends, the virgin birth and the resurrection. They don’t bother too much about the rest of it. You can have a miracle worker and you can even have somebody who dies for somebody but somebody whose born supernaturally that’s something else, isn’t it? Somebody who’s raised from the dead, that’s something else. It certainly did, it took the Roman Catholic church a long time to answer those problems until they began their dogmas that made Mary supernaturally conceived, and Mary taken to heaven in a supernatural ways so that she doesn’t die. How could she be a member of the Godhead any other way? But there it is, [it took them] a long time to get over that hurdle. But there is where the attack comes always and it’s the resurrection from the dead.

Now my dear, here’s something else. We are begotten. We are begotten “for an inheritance,” and don’t forget that an inheritance is something entirely different to a legacy. This isn’t a legacy. God gives us legacies all the time. He sends the rain on the just and the unjust, a beautiful morning like this and a thousand things we don’t want for one single thing. We have the legacy, our health and all the rest of it, you see. God gives us legacies, but an inheritance is something else. Only a child in the family can have an inheritance, you see, so that this is what he is talking about, something that has been reserved especially for us because we’re in the family of God. We have been born into the family, begotten unto the lively hope and the lively hope is seen when it becomes visible in an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Did you ever hear of such a thing? See? Visualize it in terms of an inheritance

of any kind no matter what it is, whether it is money or property or what it is. If it's some tangible something that comes to us as a result of an inheritance from somebody or other, what kind of thing is it?

Suppose somebody left you a house. Would it be incorruptible? Would it be undefiled? How many times would you have to repaint it and fix it up and what would it look like 50 years from now, you see? There isn't any of the marks of an earthly inheritance here. This is a heavenly one. It has no mark of death upon it and that's what "undefiled" means. Yeah, it's what incorruptible means. It's undefiled. There are no fingerprints on it, on this house when God gives it to you and it becomes your eternal possession and it's as much yours now as it will be when in the glory of God's planning He hands it over to you. An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and it fadeth not away. It will be as beautiful a million years from now. See? It fades not away and it's reserved in heaven for you. There will never be any mix up about it. With all the children that God has to look after, there's never been a moment of confusion yet. Nobody has ever gone to their inheritance incorruptible and find somebody has claimed it ahead of them. There's been a mix up somewhere. In some way or other, God keeps it all sorted out and we've got an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, fadeth not away and it's reserved in heaven for you. The title deeds are there in the strong boxes of heaven with your name on them, you see?

It's almost unbelievable isn't it, when you sit in a little room like this and talk together about things on this side, it's almost beyond us isn't it? That there in the glory, there in the title deeds to an inheritance with my name on it and your name on it and never be any confusion about it, never, never. The reason why God doesn't give us the inheritance now and we have to wait a while for it is because we wouldn't have sense enough to handle it now if He gave it to us, you see? It's all as simple as that. We couldn't take care of the inheritance undefiled. Not at all. But someday when God's grace has been doing its work in our hearts and the Holy Spirit has accomplished His purpose, then it will be ours.

And in the meantime, what? While we're traveling along on this rough and lonely road down here, waiting for the moment when our inheritance finally becomes us, the inheritance is safe, that's for sure, it's there, but what about you? Are you safe? Does God look after you as well as the inheritance? Supposing something happened to you, you see? And then, when the inheritance was there, you were not there to claim it. There would be something wrong with God's plan someway you see? So there's an inheritance safe and in the meantime the one for whom the inheritance waits is equally safe. You just look at it now. Here it is. "Who are kept by the power of God," and God does two things when he brings us into this realm for which we are begotten. He takes care of our inheritance and He takes care of us as well. Now it couldn't be any other way could it? If God kept us but there was some danger to the inheritance, there would be some fault in the plan, wouldn't it? And if He kept the inheritance but didn't keep us so that we are never sure and He was never sure whether we were ever going to arrive safely at home. You see what a confusion that would be? But you find both of these beautiful things. Here on the one side, an inheritance safe; on the other side, the one who is to claim the inheritance equally safe. "We are kept," and then we catch our breath and we say, "Oh my, but this is too big of a job for me," and for your information dear, your heavenly Father knows that better than you do. You can't keep yourself. You couldn't keep yourself between here and when you get home at noon. Not at all. But he has not only provided the assurance that we are kept but the way in which we are kept, how are kept, look at it. "We are kept through faith,"

now don't forget, it's not by our own smartness or our cleverness or our experience or the years that we've done or anything of the kind, it has nothing to do with us, nothing to do. "We are kept by faith," and don't forget that God provides even the faith. It isn't something that is natural in us. "By grace are ye saved through faith," and even that, even the faith is not of yourselves. It is a gift of God. So again, the wonder of God's provision and the greatness of His giving to us, He provides the faith. "We are kept by faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Now my dear, we've been going down a little old simple pathway, at least that's what it seemed like. Or maybe started out at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter and the 1<sup>st</sup> verse of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. My, it seemed as if, "Well, we've been over that many and many a time," and so we have, but it's amazing what you find when you go over it the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, isn't it. And it will be amazing, my dear, when you go over it the 3<sup>rd</sup> time when you pass it on to somebody else.

Now we've got a picture, haven't we, and we look. This is what it means to be a Christian. We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God.

We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and we are set aside entirely for God's purpose and cleansed so that we can not only see the job but do it adequately with clean hands and pure hearts. Sanctified.

We have been given the great central principle of the family of God, obedience. There is no substitute for obedience, none whatever. It's either total obedience or a life and experience of increasing dissatisfaction. If you could find the base cause for dissatisfaction in the life of the average Christian, and don't forget there are more dissatisfied Christians than satisfied in spite of the fact that we sing loudly together, "I'm satisfied with Jesus." We sing it, but very often even while we're singing it we don't know very much about real satisfaction. This is undoubtedly because somehow or other disobedience has crept in. When obedience is there - shining, beautiful, unhindered, unspoiled, when that's in the center of his life then we can say, and then only, "I'm satisfied with Jesus," and we can add, "He's satisfied with me," because He will never be satisfied any other way, never. There is no such thing as a satisfied Savior with a disobedient child. No such thing.

And so we've got this, we've got a...and we remembered what it meant to be sprinkled by the blood, the sign of God's ownership. You are a member of my family and I put this symbolic sprinkling of the blood on you in exactly the same way as I put it in the old dispensation and everything that belonged to God was sprinkled by the blood.

Now we've got this, this is what it means to be a Christian, we are begotten. We have not only been born, we have been moved because we are born into the center of the will of God where these beautiful things are all there for us. We have been begotten.

And then we have an inheritance that's incorruptible and undefiled and it fadeth not away.

And we've got it again and in the meantime, glory be to God. The inheritance is safe and the one to claim the inheritance is equally safe because the inheritance is there not because we deserve it but because of the multiplied inexpressible grace of God gives us that, and the multiplied inexpressible grace of God keeps us until that glorious moment when the inheritance and the inheritor are brought together in the glory of God.

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And we look at this and we say, “Isn’t that wonderful”. It is. It just makes life altogether different doesn’t it? We can never be the same when we realize this but God not only wants us to enjoy what we are but he wraps us around with this because this is an armor for us; because God is going to take us down into the valley where the shadows are; and He’s saying to us, “I want a picture of what? Of you. I want a reproduction of my Son in you, not only so I can see what the glory of my grace can do, but the equal glory of the testing that comes.

Just looking forward for the chance to talk to folks like you about what’s the meaning of “testing.” What’s the meaning of the word “manifold?” Why does God add through Peter and by the Holy Spirit, why does He add a word like that? “Through manifold testings.”<sup>1</sup> And I have a feeling we’re going to have a good time. I am regardless because I go over this not in a class but I go over it and now I am thinking over and over again and it’s amazing what it will do for you when you can see the meaning of suffering. When we don’t say any more, “Why did God do this?” We don’t say it any more. What a relief that would be wouldn’t it, if only we could be lifted into some kind of a realm where we wouldn’t have to ask that, “Why did God do this? What was God’s purpose in this?” And so we can see in advance, and that’s the thing that lights any dark valley and it’s the only thing that will light any dark valley.

Now, you dear nice folks, we’re going to bring our class to a close.

Our Father, we give Thee thanks and in the quietness of this room we have been able to talk together about eternal things. We feel sometimes how inadequate our understanding of these things, and yet by the grace of God Thou does take a little fragment, sometimes a little word and light it up until it becomes alive with meaning and it not only reaches our ears, it reaches our hearts as well; and we give Thee thanks for it, not only the fact that we have a word but we have somebody who can make that word live in our hearts and reproduce it in our lives; and so we give Thee thanks again. For our absent members we give Thee thanks and praise for Thy blessing upon them through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Thank you so much and God bless you.

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<sup>1</sup> | Peter 1:6.