

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 East Lake Alliance Church in 1972. It is located at the intersection of 3rd Avenue North and 85th Street in Birmingham and is the current home of the 46th 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 5
“Through the Door” – Salvation Through Redemption and Regeneration
Chapter 1, Verses 18 & 23
July 15, 1973**

Sunday School at Eastlake Alliance Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson number 071573.

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

The chalkboard contains the following information:

“1st Peter Chapter 1”

- 1. Stopping places.*
- 2. Seven marks.*
- 3. Manifold testings.*
- 4. Remember - Understand.*
- 5. Through the door.*

And now Dr. Cox.

1st Peter. Now we started on this particular bit of God’s word several weeks ago and we’re now approaching the end of the 1st chapter. I can hardly wait to get into the 2nd chapter with folks like you, but this 1st chapter of 1st Peter is a very interesting section; and if you can see the board and I’ll try to get out of the way, you will see just the path that we have been traveling. Just to remind you, 1st of all, five stopping places in Verse 1. Then the seven marks of the Christian in Verses 2-5 and then the subject that we were dealing with last week, and we shall review it and touch a little bit on it again today, manifold testings.

Why do testings come? Why? Now here we’ve got the answer in this very beautiful thing, manifold testings; and then from Verse 10 on to Verse 18, we’re following the pathway of instruction, as if in this section we can hear somebody saying to us, “Now you’ve got a very important work to do.” It was mentioned in the end of Verse 9, the real reason why testings come is not just to improve us. That’s part of it, that’s for sure. But the real reason is to help us to do the only thing a Christian can do that an unsaved religious sinner can’t do. There’s just one thing that an unsaved religious sinner can not do. He can do everything else under the sun whether he’s born again or not. He can join the church, he can make some kind of a profession, he can give in the offering, he can get on the board of deacons, he can go to the seminary, he can get into the pulpit, he can do everything but one thing, and that one thing is mentioned at the end

of this section on testing, and it tells us really why testings come in order that we might do the very thing that is mentioned here - the one thing that a Christian can do that an unsaved religionist cannot do and that is win a soul for Christ. Now that's the only thing an unsaved religionist cannot do. He can't win a soul for Christ.

Now, following that, if we are to win souls for Christ, then obviously we ought to know beyond a shadow of a doubt what salvation is all about because the 1st thing we've got to do in the winning of a soul for Christ is not merely to explain salvation but to live it; because don't forget that when we go to win a soul for Christ the 1st thing that happens is they look at us before they listen to us; and we've said something to them before we ever open our mouths at all, we've said something. Now, if that's the case, then what manner of persons ought we to be and what kind of instruction should be within our hearts and minds if we are to explain salvation to somebody who doesn't know about it in such a way that they will want what we have?

Now in this next section, you will find the Holy Spirit saying, "I want you to be crystal clear about this, and don't be surprised that I say to you, you know, you be sure you know what salvation is all about. Don't get disturbed about that. Don't say, I know all about salvation and I don't need any more instruction, because the prophets needed instruction and the angels needed instruction and if they needed it, you need it." And then we're heading on towards something. There is a door right at the end of Chapter 1, a door leading into something, something we haven't seen before, something that leads us into the greatest thing a saved person can ever be and become and that is, not really a worker within the realm but a priest. He has made us kings and priests unto God, and when we get through that door we are finding ourselves not merely in a house where we engage in ordinary things one with another but we're heading straight into a temple, a place not made with hands and we find we're part of it. We're part of this temple, the temple of which somebody is the chief cornerstone and there is a foundation and we're all lively stones; and when we get into that temple our business there is to offer a sacrifice acceptable to God. Now you see the path we're traveling? Now if we can once get it, this step by step movement along the path that the Holy Spirit has in mind for us, trying to teach us, it will make 1st Peter a new book altogether.

Now my dear, let's turn please and before we go any further I want us to stop and just take a second look at what we were saying last week. We are, "Kept by the power of God," Verse 5, "Unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," and we mentioned that we've been climbing a hill until we get to the top of it and then suddenly we find ourselves down in the valley on the other side. Now, here is the valley, the valley of testing on the other side. "We greatly rejoice," that's the mountain top, but, "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," testings is the better word because God doesn't tempt. Satan tempts, God tests. That's the better word. Satan tempts to bring out the worst in us and God tests to bring out the best in us. Now here is testing, because it's the trial of your faith that is being tested. It's your faith, not your body, not your business. It's your faith that is put into the crucible so that something can happen to it and something can be taken from it if necessary; because the two things that happen with gold and silver in the crucible is: the gold is refined and the dross is removed. Now they are the two things that happen and we're talking about a process of testing.

And we reminded ourselves it comes in the will of God, for the purpose of God because He wants refined folks clear of the dross to do the thing He has in mind for us to do that nobody else

but us can do. We are the only ones there and we've got it at the end of Verse 9, "Receiving the end of your faith." Now here is a section there of praise that you need to look at because there are two words in it that were not there originally and they change the whole sense of that phrase, as if testing was all part of God's process of bringing you to salvation that, "You might receive even the salvation of your souls," as if testing is all part of that, but it isn't at all. The words "even" and "your" are not there at all in the original, and if you read it without them then you get the sense of it, "Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of souls." Now that's why God tests us in order to make us the more efficient soul winners. That's the thing that God's after and don't forget that untested Christians and Christians in whose life, or a cluttering around whose life the dross is there, hasn't been removed, they are seldom if ever used to win a soul for Christ. Winning souls for Christ is not a commonplace thing that any old body with half a knowledge and a lot of something or other in their hearts engage in. There are very few soul winners, very few and the reason for that is there are very few in whose life the purpose of testing is accomplished, the refining of the gold and the removing of the dross.

The average Christian still has a good deal of the dross there and when soul winning is the objective, the dross is something that clutters around us and hinders us. It is called in Hebrews the 12th chapter and the 1st verse, it is called "weights." "Lay aside every," what? – "Every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us," and unless this weight is laid aside, and here's God's way of getting rid of the dross so that He can make us what we ought to be; because don't forget that the very 1st thing that happens when we go to win a soul for Christ or when the Lord prompts us to do it, the very 1st thing that happens is people look at you before they listen to you. They take one good look and you say, "I wish you knew Jesus," and all the time their eyes are on you and they are saying, "Do you want me to know the Jesus that you know? Because I can't see much of it in you, and if that's it I don't want it," and that has happened over and over again.

Soul winning, my dear, is a matter of the eyes and the ears. We don't win souls by just telling folks about Jesus. We win souls when we, the soul winner, look like Him, act like Him, when there is something of the reflection of Him in our lives that can be seen. When somebody looks at us and says, "There's a difference in you. I don't know what it is. You've got something that I don't have and I wish I had it." Now there's the beginning of real honest to goodness soul winning. You can get any amount of the other stuff, the signing of a card and saying a few words here and there and there are a lot of stillborn babies by that process, but real soul winning is the thing we're talking about here and God puts us through the refining process in order that that which would hinder the reflection of His Son in us might be removed, then when that is seen then we've got a right to talk about Jesus and it will be to some profit and effect. It surely will.

Now, there's one other word that I didn't mention last week and I want us to take a look at it because it's a beautiful thing. One of the things that I hesitate to say we ought to do but if I say it you know why and how I say it. But one of the things we ought to be looking for in our study of the Word of God is not just the essential things, but how beautifully the essential things are said. God says things beautifully, uses beautiful words and one of those beautiful words in connection with a drab subject like testing is the word "manifold." Now look at it there. "Though now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," manifold testing.

Now let's take a look at that because we've been saying testings come in the will of God for His glory and for our good. Now that's the foundation of it. Now they come and they are spoken of as "manifold." Now my dear, let's stop there and take a look at that word because it's worth

looking at. I want to remind you of something. The word “manifold” is found in the Word of God eight times. You will find it eight times. Now that is not an assignment for you to check up on unless your own heart says that. If there are eight times, and this beautiful word appears eight times, I’m going to find out and under what circumstances manifold comes, manifold. And you will find it in the Old Testament and in the New and we read there, “O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy glory.”¹

When I used to be a choir leader years and years ago, one of the anthems that we used to delight in was that one. “O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.” Manifold, you see.

Now let’s leave the Old Testament. Let’s come to where we are. Let’s see what “manifold” has to say to us about this business of testing. I want to remind you of three times it appears right where we are, you see. Now, if you note these references, Ephesians 3:10, and you will find there the phrase, “The manifold wisdom of God.” Now I’m not going to put it on the board. _____ put it on the board. We’ve got a board here that we can use that is as big as we want, let’s put it up there. “The manifold wisdom of God.” You see it. Now there’s the 1st one, Ephesians 3:10.

Now, we’ll go a little beyond where we are but in 1st Peter and we’ll find in 1st Peter 4:10 these words, “The manifold grace of God.” Now let’s put that up on the board, you see. Now you see what we’ve got. We’ve got the manifold wisdom of God on the one side, and the manifold grace of God on the other. Do you see where we are heading, because in the manifold testings that we’re talking about, it’s right straight in the middle; and we’ve got manifold wisdom on one side and manifold grace on the other and manifold testing right in the center.

Now my dear, please keep this in mind for your own heart and tell other people about it. Testing never comes in the will of God as a single unit. Never. It is always accompanied by the manifold wisdom of God on the one side and the manifold of grace of God on the other; and thing that will transform testing into a time of rejoicing greatly is to see that this thing that we call testing has come to us from the wisdom of God on the one side and it’s accompanied by the grace of God on the other, you see; and in the center testing.

Now my dear, what about that testing that came to you? Now I’m not thinking of any particular kind. We usually think about some physical problem when we talk about that, but the physical problems are only one little segment of this proposition of testing, you see. When that testing came to you and you said to yourself in spite of yourself, “I wonder why this came to me?” And by the way, my dear, if you’re a Christian and you can see what God is doing through testing, it will take that word “why” away from you. It won’t take questions away from you but it will leave you with the right questions because we have a right to ask questions. We have a right to say, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” And, “Lord, where do you want me to go?” And, “Lord, when do you want me to start?” But, there’s a difference between those questions and saying, “Lord, why did you do this?” That will take that away from you if we can see wisdom on one side, grace on the other and our testing in between; so that wisdom has got one hand of your testing and grace has got the other, you see? Do you see?

¹ Psalm 104:24.

Now my dear, you tell somebody else about that. Don't spend your time absorbing that just for yourself because it would be worthwhile if you didn't do anything else, but let's be quite sure that we tell somebody else; because that's the problem you meet. "Why did God do this? Why did God do this? Why doesn't God do something else?" You see? And if we can see wisdom on the one side and grace on the other and our testing in between, so that it is flowing from the wisdom of God accompanied by the grace of God and our manifold testing then will shine with a glory that is expressed in the scripture right before us, "We rejoice in the midst of it with joy unspeakable."

Now you tell me how many Christians do you know who have learned that secret of rejoicing with joy unspeakable in the midst of testing, you see? Now, if God can teach us that, if God can only get us to the place where we can see that, then He can say, "You're the kind of person that I can use to win somebody else for Christ," because if that problem has been solved in your life it will shine in your face, it will be heard in your voice, it will be seen in your attitudes and somebody who is outside of Christ will sense the difference, there is something different about it. They will sense it.

Now, here's an old man who didn't go to university and he didn't have a letter at the end of his name and he didn't go to a theological seminary but yet he know something about the wisdom of God and a great deal about the grace of God and he knew how the wisdom of God and the grace of God could transform an ugly thing like testing and suffering and all the rest of it into something that is beautiful so that in the midst of it all we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now that's what He's after.

And my dear, when God can find a person like us who is willing to be taught that lesson and learns it, then God can work miracles with us. But that's the main thing. That's the main thing. He can get folks a dime a dozen who can know everything else and do everything else, but the folks that can see God's hand and God's grace and God's wisdom in the midst of a time of testing, that's the kind of person that God can use and will use, and he'll use it in the greatest thing He ever asked us to do and that is that our Christian life should be reproduced in the life of somebody else. Now that's the ultimate thing. We call it soul winning. What happens when you win a soul for Christ? Whether it's somebody that you meet in the casual ordinary ways or somebody in your own home, what happens? What does happen? Well, the thing that happens, my dear, is that your Christian life reproduces itself in the life of another and there isn't a thing alive that's ever really satisfied until it has reproduced itself. There isn't a thing alive that has really reached the ultimate of things until it has reproduced itself.

I wonder, and there is nobody here but us and we just chat together here, you're old grandfather talking to you - I wonder, could that be the reason why there are so many dissatisfied Christians around? It isn't because they're not busy. They can brew coffee and serve doughnuts and do a thousand other things and do, you see? But the ultimate satisfaction of the Christian life comes when that life given to you by God reproduces itself in another. Now that's soul winning. Soul winning is not getting a name on a card, not at all. Soul winning is a matter of reproduction, you see? The fruit of the vine is another grapevine, not just a bunch of grapes; and the fruit of the Christian is not just a pleasant person who produces pleasant things from the life but one whose life has reproduced itself, and that's the ultimate; and I sometimes wondered whether that would

be the reason why so many dear nice Christian folks are unsatisfied, dissatisfied down deep on the inside. We sing, *I am satisfied with Jesus*. Sure, sure. But if He's going to be satisfied with us, that's what He wants. He gave Himself that we might live. We give ourselves that somebody else might live.

Now, if that's the case, then we should know and here is our scripture following on here, we ought to know without the shadow of a doubt the glory, the majesty of the salvation we have received and the salvation that we're going to offer to somebody else, we ought to know about it and we shouldn't be discouraged if we find it isn't an easy job to find out all about salvation. The person that says, "I know all about salvation," labels themselves an ignoramus because you'll be wondering about salvation for all eternity, you see? And even the angels desire to look into it. They have held their breath when they saw at a spot in what we call time, they saw somebody in whom all the glory of God descended and they saw Him dying on a tree. And the angels watched and wondered and they said, "How could it be, how could it be, something as majestic as this," and the prophets looking down through the veil of the years on toward Calvary, they wondered too because some of them, because of the Spirit of God who was upon them, not in them, He was upon them, they glimpsed something of someone who can come and then, mystery. There was suffering as well as glory there and the prophets couldn't understand it. Do we understand it? The prophets couldn't. "How can it be that somebody coming from the realms of glory could come and face suffering?" We can understand His glory. No doubt about that. We can understand that, but suffering, you see?

Now my dear, we are to go out and tell somebody about somebody who suffered _____. Now we need to know about that, don't we? We need to know about them and all the time we're approaching something. I want you to know this. I want you to be crystal clear about this. I want to be quite sure that you know this because in a step or two, I'm going to take you through a door and on that door you will see the reason for God's plan of redemption; because when you get to the end of this chapter there and it's interlude in which we are told that God wants us to be crystal clear in our knowledge of this; and don't forget that right in the middle of it here in Verse 14, we have a repetition and it is a repetition of a word that occurred in Verse 3, I think, no Verse 2. "We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God unto obedience."

Now my dear, here he's saying, "I want you to learn these things and to be crystal clear about it but the central fact that will enable you to understand these things is not your mental ability, it's your total obedience." Now here we've got obedience again, you see and obedience in another sense altogether. This is the mark that we are the children of God, obedience.

Now, this is the mark that we are acceptable workmen in the hands of God whom God's going to prove to win another soul for Christ, and the main section of it all is not how much we know verse by verse of something, but is in your heart, is there in your heart and life total obedience. Now that's the kind of folks that God can use and old Peter, strange to say, is writing these things to his friends and saying, "You not only need to know this, but the foundation of your knowledge, the thing that will turn knowledge into wisdom is your total obedience." That's the thing and then he says, "You lift your eyes and there's a door and you're going through it and on the other side of the door," and by the way, I wonder what will be on the other side of the door, because that's what Chapter 2 is all about. We find ourselves with a door there and the door has two uprights like most doors do, and the door hangs in between and on the one, Verse 18, you will find it is redemption and Verse 23 it is regeneration.

Now my dear, if you're going to win a soul for Christ, what are you going to talk about? Joining the church? What are you going to talk about, engaging in what we call Christian fellowship? It would be nice. You would enjoy it as a member of our church - we do this and that and the other, you know. I know we don't do these things but we use that as an illustration, you see? But we're talking to somebody about getting saved and when you get saved you go through a door from this to that, and on the door there are two words written; one is redemption and the other is regeneration; and here is another of the beautiful words that Peter uses more than anybody else. On that door there through which we go from the outside to the inside of God's purpose, through that door on the one side it is sprinkled with precious blood.

Now you've got there one of the many times in this epistle where Peter talks about, the seven times where he uses the word "precious." Now here is one of them and there is "precious blood." There's no salvation without it. You don't get saved by quitting some bad habit and starting a new one and signing your name on a card. Not at all. You get saved because you know somebody died for you and why He did. It's precious blood.

And on the other side there is regeneration [he meant redemption], for in Verse 23 [he meant Verse 18] you remember it says to us we are redeemed not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot, and without blemish; and in Verse 23, we are born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever; and when you go to seek to win a soul for Christ, there are two things that are essential for salvation: one the blood and the other the incorruptible Word of God.

And we go with this and this is the pathway of teaching that we will find through the 1st chapter of 1st Peter.

Our Father, we thank Thee that in the quietness of this room Thou hast given us the chance to look quietly and thoughtfully into some of the what we call the deep things of the Word of God. We pray that our hearts may be so touched that these lives of ours may be profited by what the Word of God has said to us through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.