

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

Home Bible Class #2
Gospel of John
Different Men. Different Method.

Editorial Note: This series is an example of how Sidney Cox attempted to use the tape recorder to help him reach groups with his sermons and Bible lessons. He had purchased a reel-to-reel tape recorder and used it extensively in this effort.

The origins of his interest in this technology and technique trace to the health and condition of his beloved wife, Violet. Violet was a victim of severe rheumatoid arthritis, and was an invalid for several years leading up to her death in 1967. During the latter years of her life, Sidney was her sole caregiver. She was never institutionalized.

As a result of his dedication to her, Sidney had to curtail his travels and preaching, although he remained in great demand by The Salvation Army and the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches to preach and teach. Unable to travel, he responded to invitations by recording his sermons and Bible lessons in the quietness of his apartment and mailed the audio tape to the various groups for their use.

On other occasions when he was able to appear in person, he would record his delivered sermons and lessons for future distribution to other groups who had an interest.

This series was recorded in his apartment and distributed to a small home Bible study group for their use. I am unsure of the exact date at which they were recorded, and the group to whom they were sent.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. August 5, 2010

It is so very nice to be able to welcome you again to this, the second of our home Bible classes and to hope again that the Lord will give us a real season of blessing together. This always happens when we turn our hearts to the Word of God and we shall be doing that for the next 25 or 30 minutes and centering our thought once more in the Gospel of John. Those of you who were with us in our first class will remember that we have been approaching this study from the standpoint of the differences that you see in the Gospel of John as compared to the other three gospels.

One of the things that impresses you at once when you begin to read the Gospel of John, if you have already read Matthew and Mark and Luke, that the Gospel of John is entirely different. Here is something that is quite new. And one of the most interesting studies in connection with this book is to discover the differences, the distinctions, of the Gospel of John. And of course, back in our minds there is the thought that there must have been some real purpose in mind when the Holy Spirit caused this fourth gospel to be written. He certainly wasn't repeating over again what He had already said three times in Matthew and Mark and Luke. This is something quite new.

And so we began by suggesting that the key word that we could use in our study would be the word, 'different' and then we reminded each other that there would be general differences, distinctions and also more detailed distinctions. And we said that there were three ways in which you could see the difference in the Gospel of John. One, the difference in the time when this gospel was written. It was written at a different time. And second, it was written to a different people. And third, it was written for a different purpose all together.

Now, one of the nice things about tape recording Bible class is that if you want to hear any portion of the lesson that preceded this one, that can be done without any difficulty at all. All we have to do is just turn the tape over and you can hear it all over again. But you will recall those three main distinctions. It was different in time, different in the people to whom the gospel was written, different in the purpose for which it was written.

And then we suggested that you could go more in detail about this and that there were four different aspects of this different gospel and we suggested that you could memorize them quite easily because they all begin with the letter 'M'. M as in Moses. When you're talking on tape sometimes it's difficult to distinguish between an M and an N in your pronunciation. But this is the letter 'M' and we said that you could find the difference in the Men that you meet or the people that you meet, in the Lord's teaching Method, and in the Message that He gave, and also in the Material of which the gospel is made up. Now, these are the four things and I'm suggesting that for the next few minutes that we just deal quietly with them. Think about the different people that you meet in the Gospel of John. Think about the different method that our Lord used, his teaching method. Think about the different material of which the gospel is made and the apparent difference, distinction in the message that fell from the lips of our Lord Himself. Because Jesus says things in the Gospel of John that He does not say anywhere else. And this is an important thing.

Let's start with the first one. Now, have you got your Bibles open? Because here, I want you to just thumb through some of the pages here. You won't have a bit of difficulty with this. Most of the time you can just do what we're suggesting from memory, but if you do need any help, you can just thumb through and don't hesitate to stop this tape if you want to make a note of something and don't have time to do it. Perhaps if I talk a little too rapidly or something of the kind, don't forget that this is our class and we can do as we please in it. We're not in any performance. This isn't a gathering together in some building or anything like that. We're just simply having a little Bible study on our own. So you just feel at liberty to behave that way, will you? And make yourself right at home, both with the tape and with the place in which you find yourself.

Now, let's start and see. Who are these different people that you meet in the Gospel of John? - folks that you do not see elsewhere. Well, when you turn to the first chapter of the Gospel of John you will find a man there and our Lord talks with him and in that talk He describes this particular man as, "An Israelite without guile."¹ Now, who was that man that you find in the first chapter of the Gospel of John of whom our Lord said, "He is an Israelite without guile?" Now, let's just pause a minute and if you've got a suggestion don't hesitate to say it out loud. Don't say Nicodemus, because that isn't correct. But who would be this man? Have you had time to just think about it?

1 John 1:47

Let your mind go over that first chapter of the Gospel of John once more. We've read it over and over again. You meet some very interesting people in that first chapter. But who was this man that our Lord found and saw and talked with and said of him, "He's an Israelite without guile?" Well, his name was Nathaniel. Now dear, don't look for Nathaniel outside of the Gospel of John because you won't find him. He's one of the distinctive characters that you find in this gospel that we call the Gospel of John. Nathaniel, there's character number one.

Now, the second one that we find there is much easier than that, because we go to the 3rd chapter and here we find our Lord talking with a man who came to him by night. Now, he was an important man and our Lord preached a great sermon to this man. Just one in the audience and he gave him that great sermon on the new birth. Now, we don't need to spend time asking who that was, do we? We're talking now about Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus by night. Now, keep in mind, if you please, that you will not find Nicodemus outside of the Gospel of John. Now, we've got two characters: one, Nathaniel in Chapter 1, and we've got Nicodemus in Chapter 3.

Now, let's go to Chapter 4 and there you find our Lord talking with a woman by the side of a well, a well that bore the name of Abraham's grandson. It was Jacob's well and a woman had come in the middle of the day and here we find this woman talking with our Lord and our Lord talking with her. And something happened when He talked with her, that's for sure. And we speak of her as the Woman of Samaria. You'll remember, she was the one to whom our Lord told the great secret of having a well within so that if you drink of the water there you should have satisfaction within, not just a temporary satisfaction without. It's one of the most wonderful incidents that's recorded anywhere in any of the gospels or anywhere else for that matter. And here we've got this woman, the Woman of Samaria. Now, I want you to notice something about her.

We do not know her name and that's one thing that you will discover throughout the Gospel of John, and elsewhere for that matter. You will find that some of the most important and interesting characters are folks who are not named at all. Now, don't ask each other and certainly don't ask me what was the name of the Woman of Samaria because I don't know, and you don't either. And so we'll just leave her there. But remember, you will not find her outside of the Gospel of John. She is one of these distinctive characters of the Gospel of John.

Now, let's go on a little further, because when you get into the fifth chapter right at the beginning, you find another very interesting character. Here is a man who had been ill for thirty and eight years and we find him by the pool of Bethesda. And this was a place where at a certain time there was something that happened in the midst of that pool that is spoken of as, 'the troubling of the waters'.² And the Word of God tells us an angel troubled the waters. Now again, don't ask me to explain that, because I can't. All I know is just what the Word of God says. Evidently, at a certain time there was a movement within the water and whoever got in first received some physical benefit. Now, here was a man who had been there for thirty and eight years and he had never been able to get in at the right moment to receive the physical help that would come from this pool of Bethesda, or whatever happened there that is spoken of as, 'the angel troubling the waters.'

2 John 5:4

Now, here again, don't ask me to tell you his name because once more we shall notice, here is a man, a very important man too, a very interesting character, a very important person in the narrative of the Gospel of John. And yet his name is not given to us at all. We don't know who this man was. All we knew was that our Lord spoke to him and told him to do something and this man in simple obedience did what he was told to do and from that moment on, his illness vanished and there was great joy in his heart. Now, we speak of him as, 'the impotent man by the pool of Bethesda.' That's just the way in which we describe him so that we know of whom we are talking – 'the man by the pool of Bethesda.' Now, once more don't look for him outside of the Gospel of John. You will not find him; he's one of the distinctive characters that you discover in the Gospel of John, and you do not find elsewhere. The impotent man by the pool of Bethesda.

Now, I want us to go beyond Chapter 6 and 7 and 8 until you come to Chapter 9, and there you will find another very interesting character, a man who is quite distinct. There isn't anybody like him and once more he is unnamed. We don't know the name of this man. All we know is what was wrong with him and what our Lord did to put it right. And it was a very wonderful thing indeed, for this man is the man born blind. Now, let me ask you, what was it that made this particular miracle that our Lord performed there so different to the others? Because we've seen our Lord restore sight in blind men on a number of occasions, but never anything like this. This was quite different. This was quite distinct.

Here was our Lord restoring sight or bringing sight to eyes that had never seen. He wasn't curing blindness, he was creating sight. And our Lord in this instance is not merely the Great Physician, but he is far more than that. He is creating sight where sight had never been before. You may recall what the people said about that, who were watching. And they said, 'Never since the world began has it been known that a man born blind ever received his sight.'³ Now once more, notice, he is unnamed, and notice what is more important - you will not find this man, the only man like him, you will not find him outside of the Gospel of John. He is one of the distinctive characters that we're talking about in this brief little study that we're, I hope, enjoying together.

Now, when you go to the eleventh chapter, you find a man whose name is quite well known to all of us - a man who belonged in a family. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha, and his name is Lazarus. And you will remember that Lazarus had been ill, and then for some strange reason our Lord did not come to cure Lazarus of his illness, but Lazarus died. And when our Lord arrived at this little place of Bethany, Lazarus had been buried four days. And you will recall that our Lord stood by the side of his tomb and called him forth and said, 'Lazarus, come forth.'⁴ Now, here's a man whose name we know, a man whose family we know. We feel that we are much nearer to Lazarus than we are to a great many others. But here is this man, but the point that we are making is this, don't look for Lazarus outside of the Gospel of John because you will not find him there. He is one of the distinctive characters of the Gospel of John that you do not find elsewhere.

Now, I want to mention just one other and this man is someone who appears at the entrance to the Garden of Gethsemane during that dreadful time when the crowd had come to take our Lord prisoner. And you will remember that amongst the crowd were some of the servants of the high priest, and Peter became so incensed and angry about the treatment that was being meted out to our Lord that he drew

3 John 9:32

4 John 11:43

his sword and cut off the servant of the high priest's ear. And our Lord had to rebuke him and put that ear back again and perform a miracle of healing. Now, let me ask you this question, what was the name of that servant of the high priest whose ear was severed and when our Lord put it back again and healed him? What was his name, do you remember? Now, you'll find him there. What was his name? Well, now let me give you the name there. His name was Malchus.⁵ Now, I want to remind you of this, that you do find that incident of the servant of the high priest and what Peter did, you do find that in another gospel, but you will not find the name of the man whose ear was severed anywhere else except in the Gospel of John. And in that respect, we can refer to him as one of the distinctive characters of the Gospel of John - this man, Malchus.

Now, let's go back over that ground again, take another look at it, shall we? Here we've got Nathaniel, and Nicodemus, and the Woman of Samaria, and the impotent man by the pool of Bethesda, and the man born blind, and Lazarus, and Malchus, and now, listen, there are quite a few others whose names I have not mentioned at all. Now, I want to give you some homework. After all, if we're a class, we do just a little more than just sit and listen. I want to give you some homework. The next time you read your Gospel of John, and I'm hoping that one of the things that will happen because of our class will be that we shall read it again and again and again, but when you do, you notice these characters that appear. If you find the name of a person, you stop and ask yourself, does this person appear elsewhere or is he one of the distinctive characters of the Gospel of John? And if you do that, you will find yourself with a very interesting project before you, that may give meaning to your reading and a point to your thinking. See what you can discover about that, because we've only just touched the fringe of it.

Now, we've been talking again for quite a little while about these distinctive features of the Gospel of John. We started off by saying the Gospel of John is different because of the people that you meet. And now, for these few minutes we've been looking at some of them. And I hope it has been an interesting time.

Now we shall go on with the rest of them and take it step by step, talking about our Lord's distinctive ministry, the method that he employed in teaching and so on. And we shall be going on doing that.

But in the meantime, I want us to stop for just a minute or two just to find out if there is any point that we have covered that you would like to hear over again. Because don't forget that this tape can be turned back any time and if there are any questions, we can just stop at any time at all and see if we can answer the questions. I can't do it because I may be a thousand miles away from you by the time you hear this tape. But in any event, you can talk it over amongst yourselves and it's amazing what happens when we talk things over among ourselves and how quickly we can discover things. And so just for a moment let's pause a little bit, perhaps you could stretch a moment there. If you want to move to some other chair, well that's alright. There's nobody here but us and we can do just as we please. And so let's just stop for a minute or two and then we'll talk for a moment or two more later on.

One of the things that I was wanting to do was to find out how much tape we had left on this machine and also to clear a little frog that was in my throat. Now, we've done the first of the four of these distinctions of the Gospel of John - the different men or the different people that you meet in the Gospel of John. And I hope it has been an interesting pathway.

5 John 18:10

Now, the second of these words that we used or the thoughts that were before us was that, in the Gospel of John our Lord uses an entirely different teaching method. He preaches His sermons, that's true, but the way he does it is quite different to that which we have observed in Matthew and Mark and Luke. Now, when we talk about our Lord's sermons, immediately our thoughts go back to certain great sermons that are named.

For instance, we think of Matthew 5, 6 & 7 and what we call the 'Sermon on the Mount.' And Matthew 13, where you've got these great Parables of the Kingdom. And then toward the end of Matthew, where our Lord gathers his disciples together and gives them that great discourse that is called the 'Olivet Discourse' that has to do with the last things, the things that are coming - describes the day in which we live, for instance. Now, when you get into the Gospel of John you will not find that the emphasis is on great sermons to great crowds. He did preach great sermons, but this is the difference.

In the Gospel of John, his method was that of the private conversation rather than the public address. And you will find all the way through the Gospel of John that our Lord is talking particularly to individuals, persons. We have mentioned before that His great sermon on the new birth was given to one man, one person, and all the way through the Gospel of John you will find our Lord talking to one individual, like the Woman of Samaria for instance. Now, these are the great sermons and the distinction is: the private conversation rather than the public address.

Now, let me give you one simple fact that will undergird the thing that we're talking about. In the Gospel of John you will find 15 private conversations where our Lord is talking to one person. Now, we've only mentioned one or two of them there, like His conversation with Nicodemus and His conversation with the Woman of Samaria. But that's only the beginning. Now, will you accept another bit of homework? And as you go through the Gospel of John stop every time you find the Lord talking to one person because it's always a matter of very great importance. Now, this will conclude our class for ...

(audio ends)