

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

**Editorial Note: This is one lesson of a 14-lesson weekly series of Bible studies that Sidney Cox delivered to the congregation of the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama in late 1972 and early 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.**

**Gospel of John  
Part 12  
Chapter 5 – Christ, the Judgment of God  
March 11, 1973**

*Sunday School at the East Lake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson Number 031173.*

*This is Glen Tingley, Jr. welcoming you to this Sunday School Class. Our teacher, Dr. Sidney Cox is continuing a study in the Gospel of John.*

*The chalkboard contains the following information:*

*“The Gospel of John”*

*“Different”*

*“Chapter 5”*

*“Christ the Judgment of God”*

*Let us now let us listen to this study with Dr. Cox.*

Now there are certain things that we constantly remind ourselves of in this class, and then we’ve got a theme scripture that we say together and it’s nice. I think it does more for us than perhaps we realize. When we say together, and let’s say it together, the first five verses of the first chapter of John:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

Now dear, that reminds us of something that we discussed together, doesn’t it, and that is that at the beginning of almost every chapter in the book, some dark picture, and we talked about that in one class period and we gave it the title of, *Through the Dark Curtains*.

Now one of those dark curtains is at the beginning of the chapter that we’re going to talk about today, and we find at the beginning of Chapter 5 this dark picture of the man that we speak of as

the impotent man by the Pool of Bethesda and what happened to him; and then we find what happened to a group of antagonistic bitterly hating Jews who sought to kill Him.

Now this thought of the antagonism of the Jew towards Christ and that it was coming to such a point that it was death for Him, that begins to take shape now and we begin to see that thing developing. You can see it all the way through. And so this is the chapter. It has two illustrations in it, but when we give an illustration, we ask ourselves, illustrations of what? What is the illustration illustrating? Because sometimes, an illustration doesn't illustrate at all. It may interest us but it doesn't throw light on it, and we've got two illustrations and one is the man healed by the Pool of Bethesda and the other is the deepening antagonism of the Jews who are now seeking to kill Him. We've got two illustrations there and we ask ourselves the question, illustrations of what?

Whenever you begin a subject, sooner or later you face the question of an illustration - somebody saying, for instance, give us a for instance. Now the Word of God is amazing in the way in which it is accurate in its teaching methods, and whenever you find particularly in the teaching of our Lord a great statement that is made, you will always find an illustration, as if He knew long before this book was ever written that somebody listening to Him would be saying, "Well now, that's alright to say that but you give us a for instance, show us or give us an illustration of it, let's see it in actual life."

Now, it may sound a little strange when we say, "Christ the Judgment of God" and we find two illustrations - the impotent man by the Pool of Bethesda and the antagonism of the Jews, and they are both illustrations of, "Christ the Judgment of God."

Now the other thing we've been doing, and I've been tremendously impressed with this thought as we go on through the word of God, that is that what we are is more important than what we do. And it is absolutely amazing as the characters appear in the Word of God that what they are is more important than what they do. Now what they do isn't \_\_\_\_\_, it's there, but it's what they are that gives value to what they do and we find it over and over again, and when I get a little time as I usually do to do a little thinking and pondering and praying, I think about you folks and I think of our class and hear the sound of a phrase and it comes to me again, what we are is more important than what we do. Then, sure enough, what I'm looking at there in God's book is an illustration of it, you see. It's a for instance. What we are is more important than what we do.

Now dear, let's take a look at this chapter and we will begin by reminding ourselves that when you talk about judgment you're not merely talking about the wisdom to do the right thing, you're talking about a subject that is far greater than that, and you're talking about something that happens practically in the court house in any city or anywhere else any day, every day almost in the week and you see judgment exercised. Now if we went down to the courthouse to sit in the audience and listen while a case is being tried, when we enter that room in the courthouse, what would we see?

Well, the first thing you would see if the case was going on, the first thing you would see would be a judge on the bench. That's the first thing because he's the center of it. He's the important one and he's there in that seat of authority. Now, the second thing you would ask if you were thinking your way into the situation would be, "How come he's on that bench? Did he wake up some morning and polish his brief case and say, well I'm a successful lawyer, I think today I'll

“go down to the court house and I’ll be a judge today?” No it doesn’t work that way does it? Now he may have the ability but he’s got to have something else besides ability, he’s got to have authority because he doesn’t go there and sit in the seat of the judge just because he wants to; he goes there because he has been appointed, and appointed there with the authority that goes; and it’s the authority, my dear, that makes the difference.

You stood before somebody one of these days and most of us did, we stood before somebody one of these days, you and your wife or husband as the case may be and somebody said to you, “I declare you to be man and wife together,” and it was wonderful. But the important thing was not just the words he said, not the sound of the words, it was the authority that was back of it. Suppose he hadn’t had the authority? Then his words wouldn’t have been any good and it’s the authority that gives weight to the judgment.

Now the next thing you would discover would be that the judge determines a case and pronounces judgment not because of what he thinks, it’s because of what the law says and back of his chair in his chambers back there are the books that give him the authority to measure a case according to what the book says, not just because of what he says. The judge on the bench doesn’t sit there and listen to all the stuff that goes on and says, “Well, I figure it ought to be this way and I think if I made the judgment, well it would be reasonable.” He doesn’t talk that way at all. He’s got the precedence that goes before it and he’s got the law that says thus and so and he pronounces his judgment according to the standard by which that case ought to be judged. Now, somebody gave him authority. He didn’t pick it up in the post office. Somebody handed him the authority.

Now in addition to that, if the case was going on, you would find certain witnesses. You would find what the case was all about and then there would be witnesses that would be brought to say what they knew, not what they thought but what they actually knew. What did you hear? What did you see? Not what did you conjecture about this at all. It’s what did you see and what did you hear, and that makes a witness. You would expect to find that.

Then in addition to that, there would be somebody there who would represent the court itself as the prosecuting attorney; and then you would find at the close, the judgment was pronounced and the case was either judged and judgment rests upon it, or the case was dismissed because there was not sufficient evidence to put the judgment on it, and you would find it all.

Now I’ve rather labored that because, my dear, I think that would be worthwhile if you attempt to tell the story of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John to somebody, wouldn’t that make a good approach to them, some fine intelligent young person who is wanting to know something about the Word of God. I don’t mean some smart alec that’s trying to criticize it, I don’t mean that, because you’re not going to get to first base with a person like that, but you meet a person every once in a while who really wants to know, and you could say to them, “By the way, have you noticed this about the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. Have you noticed the courtroom scene? Have you noticed the detail of it?” And I’ve rather labored that. I hope you forgive me, but I’ve rather labored that this morning in the hope that we can see a pathway by which we can make this real to somebody or other.

Now the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, and I want you to turn with me and read a few verses of scripture. Now don’t forget the judge on the bench. That’s the first thing that you see. Look at verse 22

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please, and I've marked it in my testament here #1. Here's the starting point. Will you read it with me please, verse 22, together:

“For the Father judgeth no man but has committed all judgment unto the Son.”

Now, there's the beginning of it. Here's a judge and it's the Son who is sitting in the judge's seat and He is there because He has been appointed to do that by God the Father. Now that's the first thing we say and it answers the question, “How come He's there? Who gave Him authority?”

Now, there's a standard by which He judges and He's not judging according to the Ten Commandments. This is a judgment that is quite different to that, but He has a standard by which He judges. Would you look at verse 24 please, these old familiar words that we've heard over and over again, and here's the standard, not whether you do or do not something or other that is in the Ten Commandments. Now I'm not speaking disparagingly about the Ten Commandments because my Lord didn't speak about them in that way at all. He enlarged them. He glorified them. So, but out of the midst of it there comes a standard that is peculiar and distinctly His standard. Here it is, let's read it together:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Now there's the standard by which he judges. Not whether we do something but whether we believe something and don't forget, my dear, that in the word of belief it's not merely accepting a statement, but belief means accepting what is said and acting accordingly; because there are any number of folks who receive what is said, but they don't act accordingly. Faith, my dear, which is the equivalent word for belief, faith means believing what God says and acting accordingly.

Now here's a judge and he's going to try a case and he's going to try it on that basis. Did they believe what God says and act accordingly? If they did, case dismissed. If they did not, judgment rests upon them. Now it's just as simple as that. Now in case we needed confirmation as to the authority vested in the Son, verse 27 gives us that. Notice. Now here it is speaking about the Father and it says, read it together:

“And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man.”.

Now we've got three things there: we've got the judge, we've got the standard by which he judges and we've got the authority by which He executes judgment.

Now dear, this matter of the witnesses - I want you to notice them. There are three, perhaps four witness that are here. When you turn to verse 32, you find the first one of them. Now there was somebody who preceded Jesus and witnessed of Him. He was the one who went before Him. He was not the judge but he was the one who witnessed about Him, verse 32 - 33:

“There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness of the truth.”

Now here standing beside whoever is being tried by the Son, by authority of the Father, here’s John the Baptist saying, “The judgment He is going to exercise on the basis of whether you believe His word and act accordingly, I came in order to bear witness that not only what he says is true, but He is true. He not only speaks truth, He is truth.” And so you’ve got one witness there. Now when you turn to verse 36, you find a second one:

“But I have a greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father have given Me to finish the same works that I do bear witness of Me.”

Now there’s the second one. First, John the Baptist bears witness and don’t forget they are bearing witness of the one who is the judge. Their talking about Him because the value of what He does depends what He is. It’s our old statement again isn’t it? What He does depends upon what He is. And so the witnessing is not connected with the cases but it’s connected with the judge. Now, so the second witness is the works.

When you turn to verse 37, you find a third there:

“And the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath born witness of me.”

And we remember when we say that how the Father did it, because it almost hushes our hearts doesn’t it when we turn our eyes in the mystery of our minds we can almost hear the sound of somebody saying, “This is my beloved Son. Hear Him. This is it.” And so the Father is there.

Now, in addition to that, verse 39, you will find the witness of the Word of God – the scriptures:

“For in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify (or witness) of me.”

And so you’ve got four witnesses and they’re all connected with the judge, not the case. Now there’s a distinction there. They are all saying, “He is the One. He has the authority. He has the standard. He is there because the Father appointed Him, the Father witnesses to his excellence, the works that he did testify of Him and the word is written,” which of course is the Old Testament “that testifies of Him.” Now we’ve got witnesses, haven’t we?

And when we turn to the end of this chapter we find we’ve got a prosecuting attorney and he is so obvious that he is named twice. Verse 45:

“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed on me; for he wrote of me.” Moses testifying of the excellence and the authority of the judge. Now when you’ve got a judge like that, and it’s just as well to comfort our hearts with the thought, “We have somebody like that.” We have somebody who understands us from the center to the circumference of our being and he not only checks with the fact of our infirmities but with the very feelings of them. Does He care, this one that we are looking at? Does He care in those moments when feelings \_\_\_\_\_

and we say, “Well, you’re not saved by feeling, you’re saved by fact and all,” and that’s true, so we are. But isn’t it nice to know that there’s somebody like this, somebody that God the Father approves, the word approves, the works approve and Moses approves; and He’s the one who not only knows about you, my dear, when you’re facing a fact, but when you’re disturbed by the feelings that cluster around the fact, and we’re so apt to find ourselves wrapped up in this something or other that we call feeling, and He knows the feelings of our infirmities.

Now, two cases. That’s how they look at them. Now we’ve got the judge, we’ve got the standard, we’ve got the authority, we’ve got the witnesses. We can depend on Him. Four voices say, “You can trust Him.” Now two cases come and here are the two cases, your illustrations, here’s your for instance, you see. Here it is. For instance, what about the man by the Pool of Bethesda. This man 30 and 8 years and there hadn’t come a ray of light in those 30 and 8 years. At the end of it, he was just as helpless as he was at the beginning. I don’t know how many times he had turned away with that sickening feeling in the heart, “Nobody cared enough to put me in, nobody helped me, nobody cared, nobody cared, nobody cared.” And then suddenly, somebody comes. What does this somebody do? Does He give him a prescription for the drug store? No. Does he send him to the hospital? No. Does he prescribe some method of physical reconstruction for this man? No. He doesn’t do anything of the kind. He simply says to him, “You do this.” And the next thing you know, here’s a man who believes what he says and acts accordingly. You see, this man could have said in his heart, “I believe that He’s all that He claims to be. I know that He’s done it for other folks. I have a feeling that He can do it for me.” But, suppose he had ended there. Because it didn’t end there, not at all. It ended when our Lord said to him, “You roll up your bed and put it on your shoulder and start walking and go and sin no more,” and the man believed what our Lord said and he acted accordingly, you see.

Now we’ve got another case there and you can see the scowling Jewish opponents of our Lord and what they’re saying and what they’re doing, you see? Now they heard what our Lord said to that man. Why didn’t they believe? But instead of believing, they did exactly the opposite. They steel their hearts and close their minds and released the poison of their hatred that was building up overwhelmingly in their hearts and they built it up against Him, and instead of receiving what He said and acting accordingly, they did exactly the opposite. They refused to believe what He said and more important, don’t forget, the witness is not to what He’s going to do, the witness to what He is. That’s the Father saying, the witness, as it’s quite true that the works that He did bear witness of Him all together, but that’s only one of four. It’s the Father and the word and Moses. These are the important things - the works that He did. You remember how He says that, if you can’t believe the other, believe Him for the very works’ sake. In other words, what He was doing, if you can say this of anything connected with Jesus, it was a secondary thing. The important thing is what the Father said about Him and what the word says about Him and what the standard says about Him. That’s the important thing, and we’ve got this, and are those who rest under the condemnation because the standard that had been given to them as much as to anybody else, “If you receive my word and believe on Him that sent Me you shall have everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but you have passed from death unto life.” Look at the man going down the road. You’ve got your illustration. Look at the condemnation of the scowling folks as they turn their face against the Lord Jesus and plot to kill Him.

Now, my dear, we've been talking together about the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John and the center of it is a courtroom scene and there are certain things about that courtroom scene, just as there would be about any courtroom scene. We find somebody there and we take a good look at him because somebody else has been taking a good look at Him too. The Father has been looking at Him and He meets with His utmost approval; and the word has been looking at Him and what the word sees meets with utmost approval; and old Moses, thousands of years before He appeared at all, took a look at Him and what He saw down the avenue of the years met with his approval; and the works all speak loudly of Him; and there is one that walks away with life and the others walk away under the shadow of death.

Now my dear, that's the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John and I'm just hoping that somehow or other in the quietness in a room like this and in the few minutes that God has given us together in this room we may see something that not only strengthens our own faith, He's wonderful, you know, He's wonderful. Every time you look at Him we could remember, that's the One, He's the One the Father approves. He's the One that the word glorifies. He's the One where the works speak so loudly. He's the One of whom the ancient ones of centuries before spoke. He's the One. He's the One. And we say in our hearts, isn't He wonderful. Isn't He wonderful. And when you say that my dear, you've almost got to tell somebody about it. You're almost dying to tell somebody about it. You can't keep a thing like that and if we could once stir up somebody's interest in the Word of God by passing on to them this picture of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John; and now I'm coming back to the question that I asked you at the beginning of this class period. You've probably forgotten it and probably thought I had too.

But how many folks do you know honestly, there's nobody here but just ourselves, we can say these things to each other honestly, how many folks do you know who can see that in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John - the courtroom scene and all that goes with it and what a privilege it would be, what a moment of enlightenment it would be for somebody or other, old or young, reaching out their hands for something there that would strengthen their faith and arouse their interest and stimulate their understanding in connection with the Word of God. Oh my dear, let's give it away because the only thing we ever keep is that which we give away. "I wonder how much He left," said somebody and then their reply was, "Well he died a little while ago and he left everything. There wasn't one thing he could take." And out of this class, there could come to each one of us something that we could pass on and drop in the heart of another. I'll tell you something, my dear, if you do, you'll take it to heaven with you; and that's about the only thing that any of us will ever take when God calls us home is what we have dropped into the heart of somebody else.

Our Father, we thank thee that Thou dost give us these quite moments and we pray that the Holy Spirit will help us not only to hear what is said, but to act accordingly. May this be so for each one of us we pray. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.