

## 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 2  
Difference: Written For A Different People - The Family of God  
December 17, 1972**

*Sunday School at the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama, lesson number 121772.*

*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 words. On the first line, "The Gospel of John." On the second line, "Different." And on the third line, "Time, People, Purpose."*

*Let us now listen to the lesson with Dr. Cox.*

In our class, we started something last week that was a \_\_\_\_ formula for our procedure. It was this - that we have together what we called then a theme scripture. That is in every class period, we would recite together as our theme scripture the first five verses of the first chapter of the Gospel of John. Now, that was one thing. Then, the other thing that we started last week was what I called an affirmation. That is we would say together in a sentence something that we could ponder, chew on, pass onto somebody else that may be a key to open the door for a conversation to somebody, and it's something worth remembering; I'll remind you of it in just a second. And then the third thing is, we'll spend a minute or two in review. First, our theme scripture. Second, our affirmation. And third, a minute or two of review. Now we'll do each one of them.

Let's say the scripture first of all. First five verses of the first chapter of John. Together:

"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 anything 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, do you remember the sentence that we suggested as our affirmation, something we could chew on all week long? The one we mentioned last week? It was this: What we are is more important than what we do. Now a simple thing like that; turn it over; pass it on to somebody else; chew on it; think about it while you're driving along the road. What you are is more important than what you do; and what you're

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going to do as you drive along the road can be terribly important, but you are more important than anything you do. Now that was the other thing.

This morning, I want us to listen to another brief sentence, and then hide it away in your heart, and that is this: adoration is more important than activity. Did you hear it? Adoration is more important than activity. Because, unless the activity is the product of the adoration, then it's just sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, isn't it?

A moment or two of review. We started with this proposition - that the Gospel of John is different to the other three gospels. And it was written at a different time, to a different people, and for a different purpose. And last week we spent a little time considering that fact: that the Gospel of John was written 60 years after the other gospels had appeared and almost that time since the other writings of the New Testament had appeared. And then there was this strange pause of time, and then the Holy Spirit produced as the final act to complete the Word of God the final riddle of the five books that bear John's name: The Gospel of John, and The Revelation, and First, Second, and Third John, those three little letters. One was written to the church. The second one was written to a family. And the third one was written to an individual.

And here are the final things. We remembered the importance of final things. The fact that God, the Holy Spirit, had been gathering together the Word of God for 1600 years, and now the time had come for a final period, it began, and the book closed. And written right at the end of it was the warning: "Don't you dare to add anything to this." We've got a number of finished things.

When our Lord said on the cross, "It is finished," nothing could be added to that. When the Holy Spirit finished the Word of God and said, through John, "Don't add anything to this," He meant exactly what He said. And I suggested for your thought, seeing that we're a class of mature folks, that every false cult is based on some addition to the Word of God; some additional revelation that came to a lady in Boston, or through golden tablets and a dozen other ways. But every last one of them, and don't forget that in these strange days in which we live, a new one appears almost every day. It's amazing. But the Word of God was finished. Nothing else needed to be added to it.

Dr. W. Stamen Martin wrote a poem, and I came across this; and in it he said this:

"It is finished so that never can it more than finished be.  
Finished once and finished ever, nothing can undo the plea.  
Finished, fainting heart be glad.  
Finished, I could nothing add."

And that's what the Holy Spirit is saying, "It's finished. You don't need to add anything to this." Not at all. Not at all. It was final.

Then we thought of the miracle of those 60 years. Here's a man as common place as John, who could remember word for word what had been said in the upper room for instance 60 years before. And we

say, "That's a miracle." And, my dear, it sure is. We couldn't do it. We don't remember what was said five minutes ago, let alone 60 years and produce it word for word. It was written at a different time.

Now, for a few minutes I want us to think together of the fact that this book was written to a different people. Now that's not a new thought - not at all, because it was generally thought that each of the gospels was written with a certain group in mind. For instance, this is common place: Matthew was written for the Jew; and Mark was written for the Roman; and Luke was written for the educated Greek. But the Gospel of John wasn't written for any of those. It was written for a new group of people all together - a group of people who were not in existence 60 years before. They came into existence as the fruit of Calvary. And I'm talking about the "Family of God." Now, my dear, here is the family letter. This is the family gospel, because there are any number of things that cannot be understood unless you are a child of God, and when you realize your position in the family of God, these things that John writes, they shine like heaven's neon lights on them. And it's a family letter.

Now my dear, let me suggest a common place thought here. We write letters occasionally to children of other people - give them a bit of good advice, a passing on of something or other that we think is worthwhile. But when you write to your own, there's a new note in it, isn't there? You write to your own children, and you write in a different way all together. Now in the Gospel of John you can detect, if you put your ear to it, that new note; that certain something that comes through, because it's a Heavenly Father writing to those, sending the Gospel to those who have been brought into his family - a new people all together. They were not there on the earth before Pentecost. There were certain suggestions of them. There were certain implications that a new people was about to appear. But they appeared when the Holy Spirit, as the confirmation of Calvary, came upon a 120 people in an upper room, who had been there for 10 days and had met in one place and of one accord, and in accordance with his promise; the Holy Spirit took those folks and welded them together into one body. Now my dear, that had never been seen in earth or heaven before. That was something new. Now, Matthew says something about it, but very little. Mark says something about it - very little. Luke says something about it - very little. But John's gospel is taken up all together with this final message to the family of God.

Now my dear, let's talk about that for a little while. How does a family begin? And what makes it a family anyhow? It isn't just that we live in the same room, or the same house, or eat the same food, or talk the same language. There's something more than that to a family, isn't there? Where does a family begin? Listen dear, it begins with fatherhood. That's where the family originates. It originates with fatherhood, plus motherhood, plus childhood. That's a family. And the thing that makes three people one is, they all have a common life. The life a father, mother, child - all the same. It's a life that's transmitted and it becomes the peculiar possession of that family. Now, that's the heart of a family. Now I say that because we're thinking about the Gospel of John. What does the Gospel of John say about that? Let me give you a figure here that may be of interest and again, if you want to take notes I'll be tickled to death to have you do it. And if there's a figure I give you or a statement that I make and

you don't quite catch it, don't hesitate a moment to stop me and say, "Will you say that over again?" Because that's teaching, and that's learning, you see?

Now, you will find in the Gospel of John the word 'Father' with a capital "F" - you will find it 119 times in one book. 119 is as many as I've been able to find. Do you know this? That if you took the number of times the word 'Father' occurs in Matthew and Mark and Luke, and add all three of them together and multiply by two, you would find that John says twice as much about the Father, as the other three gospels combined and multiplied by two?

Now one of the things we need to observe in our Bible study, and don't forget that the hope in this class is that we may do just that - that we may learn the difference between reading our Bible and studying it. Now, we are after studying our Bible, not just reading it. But when you find repeated words like that, you can be quite sure that the Holy Spirit has got his blue pencil out and he's underscoring something He wants us to know. You see? 119 times right from John 1:14, where he first begins, "And the word was made flesh and dwelled among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and from that point on, 119 times you will find this word appearing.

Now, you can be quite sure that that is exactly what the Holy Spirit wants us to discover - that here the gospel in which the glory of the Father stands before us in all His majesty. You can hear the sound of God's footsteps through this book. You can see the loveliness of His face in the living son in this book as you will not find anywhere else.

We all love the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, don't we? It's just beautiful. If you were going to come home where there was sickness or sorrow, and you only had one fragment of scripture to take with you, do you know, all of us, not all of us, but nearly all of us, would take the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. You know how many times the word 'Father' occurs in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John? Just one chapter? It occurs in that one chapter 23 times in one chapter. You see? Right from the beginning of it, "In my Father's house." You see? And the thing you can see if you look for it, you can see the Lord Jesus leaning over and looking right into your face, my dear, and saying, "Through the Gospel of John, I want you to know my Father. If you know my Father, you wouldn't be worrying about tomorrow." You see? "If only you knew my Father, as I know him. Don't you know that your heavenly Father knows that you have needed these things." And all the way through you will find the lovely face of our Lord putting Himself close to you dear, saying, "I want you to know my Father. If you knew my Father, as I know him..."

And so you find a book where the loveliness of the fatherhood of God shines out as it does not shine out in any other book in the scripture. You've got the life and glory of it concentrated, and you see it in the face of Jesus Christ. "The Word made flesh...we beheld His glory. The glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Glory, grace, truth - that's what the Father is, and this book tells us more about that than any other book in the scripture. And don't forget, my dear, glory is what God is, and grace is what God does, and truth is what God says. And if we don't get anything else out of this little class this morning, but those three simple things, that'll keep you busy all through the Christmas

season, saying to yourself and maybe to somebody else, “Glory is what God is. Grace is what God does. Truth is what God says.” And we’ll keep it in mind - the glory.

Now, fatherhood issues in birth. Right? That’s where it begins. That’s where it begins. And do you know that John says almost all that there is said, either in the gospels or anywhere else about the new birth. Do you know that you will find in the New Testament the words ‘born again’ or ‘born of God’ indicating that moment when we pass from death unto life by the avenue of the new birth? Do you know that you’ll find them in the New Testament, here’s another figure you can put down if you wish - you’ll find them 14 times. And do you know that 14 out of the 14 times are in the writings of John? There’s only one other New Testament writer who even mentions it. Now they imply it, sure. But only Peter ever uses the words - in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:23, where he says, “Be born again. Not of corruptible seed, but an incorruptible by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.” We are born into the family of God. You see? That’s the thing that makes us His very own. That’s the reason why God can put His everlasting arms around you and claim you for His own. Isn’t it wonderful? Isn’t it wonderful? But that’s the kind of Heavenly Father Jesus came to reveal. He came to tell us what the Father is like.

Now, birth issues in childhood. That’s the next step. A baby doesn’t remain a baby forever. Or does it? It doesn’t in the home, it sometimes does in the church. Everywhere I go I find 50 year-old babies still have that milk bottle; still get fussed up about nothing. You know what I mean? But we expect to grow, and to grow in grace. We expect this. And this is the way in which you will discover in the Gospel of John the fatherhood of God, the fact of birth, growth as a necessity, and the assuming of responsibility; because one of the evidences that a child has grown is, it now recognizes itself as a responsible member of a family.

And so we’ve got a book here that teaches us, not only that it was written at a different time, but it was written for a different people. And the people are the family of God - the folks who belong in the family of God. And one of the wonderful things that we can enjoy together as mature Christians is our standing in the family of God. I’m a child of God. You see? And we say exultingly over and over again, “My Father is rich in houses and lands.” There’s the point about it. And we’re rich.

Now my dear, you now folks who don’t realize that, who don’t know anything about the riches that we have in Christ and in God. Wouldn’t it be a mark of responsibility and growth for us as members of this class to try to get these folks who don’t know in under the influence, not of my teaching, God forbid, but of the impact of this book we’re studying? It can transform lives.

I’ve given a series of messages on the Gospel of John at the Canadian Keswick Bible Conference several years ago.<sup>1</sup> And the Vice President of the biggest Bible institute in American, if not in the

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<sup>1</sup> In the early 1960s, on the only return trip to England (the place of his birth) that Sidney Cox ever made, not only did he visit his remaining family, but he attended the English Keswick Convention. It is not known precisely how he had been attracted to the Keswick movement; however, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Keswick movement came to America and on American radio broadcasts often could be found the evangelical preaching of various Keswick evangelists. The emphasis of E:\Sidney Cox Library Project\Subject Folders\Gospel of John\1972-73. Eastlake Alliance. B'ham, Ala. Glen Tingley, pastor\Gospel of John Part 2.doc

world, came to me afterwards and said, “You’ve made this book a new book to me.” Now wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could do the same thing with other people? You see? Not just come and listen; you’re wonderful to listen. You’re just wonderful. I wish you could feel what this old heart of mine is trying to say to you. But you’re just wonderful. But don’t forget, the thing that God gives us, something is in order, that we might pass it on to somebody else. You see?

What was our affirmation? I’m just concluding now. What was our affirmation for today? Shall we say it together? “Adoration is more important than activity. Adoration is more important than activity.” And you will find a center for adoration in the Gospel of John that you will not find in the same degree anywhere else.

I have a friend in Detroit, and I love her very much. A fine Christian lady. She wrote a letter to me a little while ago and in it she quoted this, “Every morning, lean thine arms awhile upon the window-sill of Heaven, And gaze upon the Lord. Then with that vision fresh in thy heart go out strong to meet the day.” Did you hear it? If we could spend, as we have done, a little while looking on our Lord, but don’t forget my dear, He expects us to go out from these doors strong to meet whatever lies on the other side of them. Now that’s the value of our class. That’s it.

Our Father, Thou hast given us a great privilege - a quiet room, a lovely book, dear precious friends. And we pray that something may have made an impact upon our hearts that will be absolutely impossible for us to retain it for ourselves. Help us to give it away, we pray Thee. For Thy glory we pray upon every member of this class thine overshadowing wings. In Jesus name, Amen.

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Keswick theology is very consistent with the theology of The Salvation Army and The Christian and Missionary Alliance, particularly its emphasis on the doctrine of holiness.

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