

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 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.

**Gospel of John
Part 3
Difference: Written For A Different People - The Family of God
December 24, 1972**

Sunday School at the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama, lesson number 122472.

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: On the first line the words, "The Gospel of John." On the second line in capital letters, the word, "Different." On the third line, the words, "Time, People, Purpose." And on the last line are the words, "God's Family Circle."

Now let us listen to the study with Dr. Cox.

As most of you know, in this class we are following a specific line of thought. We're centering our thought in the Gospel of John, not a verse by verse or a chapter by chapter study at all; but we are looking at it from the standpoint of its distinction – its difference. The Gospel of John is different to Matthew and Mark and Luke. Now it's easy enough to make a statement like that, but for several weeks we shall be seeking to put fact underneath that so that we see the distinctions of the Gospel of John; so that we can get at least some partial answer at any rate to the question, "Why should there be a 4th gospel anyhow?" What was in the mind, not of John, but of the Holy Spirit when He caused the Gospel of John to be written – written as we know, 60 years after our Lord had finished His work, and when most of the other books of the New Testament had been written long ago; and then years afterwards, a final gospel appears.

Now when we look at it, we ask the question, "Why?" What was the purpose of it? What did God have to say in the Gospel of John that He had not said in Matthew and Mark and Luke? And, why did He delay 60 years in producing it, and for whom was it produced? Was there somebody in the world, or a group of somebodys in the world 60 years after our Lord went back to the right hand of the Father; a group that was not there when He was on earth? Was there a new group of folks here on earth to whom a gospel must now be written that would have in it God's last words to us?

Well, when we come to the Gospel of John we remember, this is part of the final words of the scripture. When you turn to The Revelation and the Gospel of John and three little explanatory letters that bear John's name, you are listening to God's voice for the last time. He hasn't said anything to us since. He may have underscored something that was already in the Word of God, and does. Did you hear God's voice out of an earthquake? Did you hear God's voice? Now remember my dear, He wasn't saying something new to us through that circumstance. All He was doing was repeating something that's already here. He's underscoring it all the way along. We're living in an age when you can see, if you care to look, God's underscoring.

One of the marks of the age in which we live, it is a disregard for the Word of God; it is a world filled with pleasure, when men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; when natural things say lively to us what this book has already said, because we're living in an age now where we can hear the voices of things that were mentioned in this book – pestilence, earthquake, wars and rumors of wars. What kind of a world do you live in, my dear? What? Now we're not living in a world where God is saying some new thing to us. We He's doing is underscoring this – He's already said it. What He's saying to us, if we have ears to hear, what He's saying to us is the repetition of something that's in here; and we're listening to God's voice, the last recorded words are here before us; and that brings us to the interest in the Gospel of John; because John was the writer of these last words. It wasn't John's words, I don't mean that. It was the words of the Holy Spirit that used John's hand and John's stylus and the parchment on which John wrote. John wrote these things as the, shall I say, the secretary for the Holy Spirit. You can put your own word in there. They're lots of other words we can use there – a scribe, or anything you please. Anyhow.

Now, that's the thought that we've been following and we discovered that the Gospel of John was written at a different time, and it was written to a different people and it was written for a different purpose. And we spent a little time on that first item – the unusual fact of a man, no better than the rest of us; let's not glamorize John. John wasn't one bit better or different to the rest of the disciples, not a bit. He happened to have perhaps a little charisma around him that made him a pleasant person to have around, but when you've said that, you've said it all. There isn't anything unusual about John. Not at all. It wasn't because of him. But he was the one, an old man 93 years old, somewhere or other, writing these final things. And we look at the miracle of it – the miracle of the man who could remember at 93 years old and 60 years after these things had been said and done, he could remember them exactly and we rejoice in the fact that he did remember, and we remind ourselves that in the book that John wrote that we call the Gospel of John, we find the secret of that; and there we discover that somebody who was going away in a few hours; because remember, that within 24 hours of the time the disciples were in that upper room where our Lord said to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you."¹ Within 24 hours, they were taking His dead body down from the cross. There was the shadow of the cross over

¹ John 14:1-2.

it all. And a man sat in that upper room and heard these words, and one of the things that was said was this, “The Holy Spirit, when He is come, and I will send Him unto to you; when He comes, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”² And the Gospel of John is the literal fulfillment of that promise that the Lord made in that upper room.

Now my dear, before we go any further, there are one or two things we do in this class. For instance, we have what we call our theme scripture. We can’t very well sing, but we can recite quietly, thoughtfully together as our theme song for this class, the first five verses of the first chapter of John. Now you say them with me, will you? And I won’t fuss at you, and don’t you fuss at yourself either if you happen to stumble over a word here or there. That’s not important. You’re important. Now, let’s say it together, shall we?

“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.”

And then, another of the perhaps unusual things that we do together in this class is to remind ourselves of certain basic truths; truths that are so important that we forget them so easily. Don’t forget this my dear, that Satan knows the truth that is important for you; and he’ll not stir your memory so you can retain it, he’ll stir your faculty for forgetfulness so you forget it; and we forget so soon this for instance: ***What we are is more important than what we do.*** Right? And last week, we reminded ourselves of this: ***That adoration is more important than activity.*** Did you hear it? You’d better.

And now, this morning I want to remind you that ***worship is more important than work.*** Worship. God can get on without what you do. He’s not looking around for somebody like you who can do odd jobs for Him. It’s nice when we do it. It’s wonderful when we do it, but don’t forget, the things He’s after is the worship of your heart; because unless the thing we do that we call ‘our work’ – unless the work is the product of worship, then it’s simply sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, or hay and wooden stubble, and that’s all. And we’d better remember it because the easiest thing we do to forget.

We talked about the Family of God, the People of God – the fact that in this period of time, a new people had arisen. Calvary – a completed fact. Now, Pentecost – just around the corner; 10 days afterwards when our Lord said goodbye to His disciples and a cloud received Him out of their sight. I wonder why God, the Father wrapped His son around with a glory cloud when He was going back home again. Why? Because don’t forget, He was going to pass through enemy territory, and there must be something around Him that would protect Him from the onslaughts of the prince of the power of the air; and God looked after it. And I want to tell you my dear, when He calls you home, he’ll look after it for

² John 14:26.

you too. He sure will. He'll wrap you around. He'll put the glory cloud around you. You'll be safe when you pass through enemy territory. Yes you will. Yes you will.

Now, there's a people that are here and they weren't here in the final years of our Lord's ministry. They came into existence on the Day of Pentecost. A new thing appeared: the Church of God, the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ – call it what you will, it means all the same thing. The term we like best and which is emphasized more in the Gospel of John is, "The Family of God" – a new people there that were a new re-creation. Not a new creation, a new re-creation.

Don't forget that God has done three tremendous things. One is generation and the other is re-generation; and the one that He used to do is consummation. Now here's something appearing that wasn't there before – a new people, the People of God, the Family of God.

Now when you look at a family, you've got two things that make a family. It isn't the fact that we enjoy the same food or live in the same house. Not at all. There are things that make a family. One: we share a common life – father, mother, children, all share the same common life that is theirs, particularly. And the other is, we have family standards. There are standards of behavior that we follow in the Family of God because we belong in the Family of God, you see. We think as our father thinks. We act as He would have us act. We are more concerned with His glory than we are with our welfare.

A young boy in school belonged in a Christian family and he was asked to take part in something that was detrimental, and he said, "No. I'm not going to take part in that at all. We don't do that in our family circle." And one boy said to him, "Oh, you're afraid of what your father will do to you." And the boy said, "No. I'm not afraid of what my father will do to me. I'm afraid of what I would do to my father if I did that."

That's the way a child of God, in the Family of God thinks and behaves; because don't forget my dear, we are what we think. "As a man thinketh, so is he."³ We belong in the Family of God.

We turn to the book and we find in the Gospel of John, as you will not find anywhere else, family terms. Where does a family begin – it begins with fatherhood, there is motherhood attached to it; and don't forget that in the person of our Heavenly Father, we have not only fatherhood, but motherhood as well. Very seldom do Christian folks, even folks like us think of the motherhood of God, but God is not only father, but He's mother as well. What was He saying, what was somebody saying when He looked to Jerusalem and said, "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but you would not?"⁴ What was He thinking about? "Under His wings shalt thou trust," said an old prophet six or seven hundred years before Christ was born at all.⁵ "Under His wings." What was he

³ Proverbs 23:7.

⁴ Matthew 23:37.

⁵ Psalm 91:4.

talking about? He's talking about the motherhood as well as the fatherhood of God, and we've got these terms. We've got fatherhood, we've got birth, that appears. You can't find it in the other three gospels. But here, no matter, just as soon as you get into it you find, "That those who receive Him are given the right to become the sons of God," members of the family, "Even to them that believe on His name, which were born," John 1:13, "Not of blood or the will of the flesh, but of God." Born of God. You won't find teaching like that anywhere else. That's the reason why this gospel book delayed in order that God might tell us not only the fact that we are His children, but how we became His children. That's what He told to Nicodemus. He said, "We're born of water and the spirit."⁶ And, water is always a symbol of the Word of God, always – with a cleansing, the washing of the water of the Word. It's always a symbol there, and the Holy Spirit brings us to new life by implanting the seed of the Word in our hearts and then brooding over it, and a new life appears.

That's what happened with you my dear, if you've been born again. God planted the seed in your heart, watched over it, and a new life appears. That's the way new lives appear anyhow, isn't it – by the implanting of a seed and a period of brooding and a new life comes. Now, you won't find that anywhere else except in the writings of John - this tremendous truth.

You know, this business of the Family of God is one of the most important things that we can ever consider. One of these days God will complete this work of gathering together His family circle - His "Love Gift" to His son. Check the 17th chapter of John and see how the Lord thanks the Father, "For those whom thou hast given me out of the world."⁷ You see. You're the Father's love gift to His son. This is it – made a part of Him.

One of these days that work will be completed. The last one will be gathered in. I don't know when. I don't know where, and you don't know either. But it's the thing that makes sense out of everything. Why do we meet in a class like this? Why do we have a church like this? Why? It is in order that God may do something here and through this church, and through this class that may contribute to the final moments of the gathering and completing of the Body of Christ. And when that happens, there's going to be a shout in the sky, and the trumpets shall sound as the bridegroom comes back for his bride, now completed. This is the Family of God. It's the thing that makes sense so that everything we do – we just play religion apart from it, that's all. We just want a nice little religious club there where we enjoy each other and do pleasant things and all the rest of it. But when you see this, then it gives meaning to it all, and that's the thing we're talking about in this class. God's purpose is to bring together a people for His name.

Let me give you a scripture for this and this is the final thing. Acts 15:14 – "The Holy Spirit in these days is gathering out a people for His name." That's what the Holy Spirit is doing and that's what we

⁶ John 3:5.

⁷ John 17:6.

ought to be doing in this class and in this church and in our homes and in our personal lives – that ought to be the paramount thing. And when God can find folks that will major on the essential thing, it's amazing how God can work miracles through us.

Our Father, we pray that in some way the vision of it may grip our hearts so that we may know what God is about – what's it all about. O God, our Father, make us the unusual group in this class who are keeping their eyes upon the goal that God has in mind. May we be instrumental in Thy hands of winning somebody, for that somebody may be the very last one to be gathered in. Let Thy blessing be upon us we pray in Jesus name. Amen.