

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 4
Difference: Different Men-Method-Message-Material
December 31, 1972**

Sunday School at the Eastlake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama, lesson number 123172.

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.

On the chalkboard is the following information. On the first line are the words, "The Gospel of John." On the second line is the word, "DIFFERENT." On the next four lines arranged one over the other are the words, "Men – Method – Message - Material." Each of these four words shows the same large M.

Now let us now listen to this study with Dr. Cox.

Now we've been studying the Gospel of John, and we've been approaching it from a particular angle. And I'd rather just mention this, and then we'll come back and do one or two things that we usually do in this class, like our theme scripture for instance. We'll come back and do that in just a moment or two.

But I want to put this in your mind so that you can be thinking about it, pondering it for the next few minutes. One of the distinctions of the Gospel of John is, not only that it was written at a different time to a different people and for a different purpose - now we've been over that ground; but, that in the Gospel of John, you find these additional distinctions. You find different men, or different people; there not all men, most of them are. You find different men, you find our Lord is employing a different teaching method all together in the Gospel of John for what you find him doing in the other three gospels. There's a different message there. There is something emphasized in the Gospel of John you will not find elsewhere. And, it is made up almost entirely different material- men, method, message, material.

Now, there's the outline of what we're going to be doing for the next little while. We shant of course be completing it today, but this is the path we're going to be traveling.

Now, we have our scripture theme - our theme scripture, and shall we say it all together. And you forgive me if I remind you again, because I shall do it constantly, that when we say from our hearts a short passage of scripture like this, and release the perfume of it in the air, we do something to the room.

E:\Sidney Cox Library Project\Subject Folders\Gospel of John\1972-73. Eastlake Alliance. B'ham, Ala. Glen Tingley, pastor\Gospel of John Part 4.doc

It makes it easier for a teacher to teach when the right atmosphere is there. When you walk into a room and there is a pleasantness around, somebody has released some perfume in the room, you get a sort of a satisfaction down in your heart about it. Now we do that whether we're aware of it or not when we say together our theme scripture. John, the first chapter, first five verses of the first chapter. Let's say it together out loud:

“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 one or two other things that we've been reminding ourselves, practical things to do with our, not only our ordinary lives, but our Christian lives as well. We said over, and I want to repeat them, just to remind you of them. Things like this - **What we are is more important than what we do.** Now I made the sort of timid suggestion that when you write a letter to somebody, instead of sending it with sweet or empty nothings, and that's what we do, usually with our letters. They're not worth the paper on which they're written. How would it be if you include something like this, say “What do you think in our class on Sunday morning where a strange old teacher reminded us that what we are is more important than what we do?” You see? Put it in a letter and send it to somebody.

The second thing we were mentioning was that - **Adoration is more important than activity.** Adoration - more important than activity. **Worship - more important than work.** Three little things. And in this class you'll hear them over and over again. Now, let's get down to our lesson.

We've been talking together from the Gospel of John - its difference, its distinction. It is not in any sense a repetition of Matthew and Mark and Luke; a distinct gospel written at a different time, for a different people, and for a different purpose. Time. People. Purpose. This is the gospel that was reserved. It was not written at the same time that the others were, and the reason is that in the world during that _____ time, a new people had arisen - the “Church of the Living God,” or if you prefer, “the Bride of Christ.” Or, the title that I like best, the “Family of God.” It began there generally speaking, we can agree on this or come somewhere near it, it began on the Day of Pentecost and something new appeared - wasn't there before. Before, the Holy Spirit was upon people. Now it was in us; to abide with us forever; and there's a new people in the world; and the Gospel of John, written 60 years after our Lord went back to heaven again, 60 years went by and during that time this people had arisen. A different people.

The Acts of the Apostles, I think it's 15:14 says that the Holy Spirit in these days is, “Taking out from the peoples of the world - the Gentiles,” if you want to use that word, “a people for His name.” Now that's what he's doing. And everything we do, either in this class or anywhere else, it ought to contribute to that. We ought to have the knowledge that whatever we're doing, we are treading alongside of the Holy Spirit in His great purpose of winning this one and this one in order that the body of Christ may be completed. Now that's what He's after, and that's what we ought to be after, too. And

we ought to fashion our lives and our activities and our church machinery to keep step with what the Holy Spirit is doing. A new family circle.

Now to that family circle, there are certain truths that belong in that family circle. No use talking to the unsaved outsider about it. You do talk to them, of course, but you don't expect to get any response, they don't know what you're talking about, but we do. They're standards in the family circle. We do things because we belong in the family of God; and I've got a heavenly father, who's rich in houses and lands and holds the wealth of the world in His hands, and I'm a child of a King. As a child of a king, can I go walking through the miserable, smelly mud puddles of the world, not at all. Not at all. I don't belong in that. I'm one of the sheep, I'm not one of the goats. Not at all. You see what I mean?

Now, when you turn to this special gospel, you will find it's different all the way through. For instance, there are different people that you meet constantly in the Gospel of John that you do not find anywhere else. Now for a moment or two this morning let's, let's just go down the line and check on one or two of them. If you want to follow me in your Bible, so much the better, but it won't matter at all, because what I'm going to do, you can follow me in your minds, and maybe in some ways it will be just as well to do that.

The different people that you meet. Let me give you two or three illustrations. When you turn to the first chapter of John, you will find our Lord talking to a man - a man of whom He says this, "This man is an Israelite in whom there's no guile."¹ Now that's what our Lord said about a man who appears in the first chapter, and you can't find him anywhere else except in the Bible and in the Gospel of John - you'll find him there. And our Lord said, "He's an Israelite without guile." Now children, what was the name of that man? Can somebody tell me?

From the class: Nathanael.

Nathanael - exactly so. Nathanael - "An Israelite without guile." Now dear, don't look for Nathanael outside of the Gospel of John, because you won't find him. He's there and there will you find him, and suddenly a new character appears. You can't find him in Matthew and Mark and Luke, but here he is in the Gospel of John. And we've got a man named Nathanael.

Now, let me remind you of another one. When you go to the third chapter of the Gospel of John, and this is easy, you find our Lord talking to a man who came to him by night. And he's name was?

From the class: Nicodemus.

Nicodemus - exactly so; a ruler of the Jews, who came to Jesus by night. And it's marvelous what our Lord said to Nicodemus, but my dear, you won't find Nicodemus or what our Lord said to him outside of the Gospel of John. Here's this man who suddenly appears before us, majestic in his religious

¹ John 1:47.

righteousness. Tremendous, and yet here he is, and we say to ourselves, he's one of the different men that you find in the Gospel of John.

Men – Method – Message - Material. Now, we've got Nathanael and we've got Nicodemus. Don't look for them outside of the Gospel of John.

Now again, when you go to the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, and here we are treading on very familiar ground, you find our Lord talking to somebody, not at night, but in the middle of the day. It was at the sixth hour, and that's noon, high noon. The old Jewish day began at 9:00 in the morning and it ended at 6:00 at night. And the 9:00 in the morning was the third hour, and high noon was the sixth and 3:00 in the afternoon was the ninth hour, and here it is, in the middle of the day He's talking to somebody, and He's talking to her by a well in Samaria. Now, we speak of her as the Woman of Samaria. Will somebody tell me her name please? What was her name? Now, you forgive me again, that was a catch question, because her name isn't given. And I say that deliberately because, one of the interesting things about the Gospel of John, in fact about the New Testament, is so many important people appear whose names are not given at all. By the way, what was the name of the little boy who had five loaves and two fishes? See what I mean?

From the class: His name wasn't given.

His name isn't given, exactly so. Exactly so. It isn't his name that mattered, it's what he did that mattered and he did something because he became something. And you find it all the way through. Here's a woman of Samaria. Now, that's a very important point isn't it? Because you won't find the Woman of Samaria outside of the Gospel of John, and you won't find what our Lord said to her. And do you know that He said the most important thing that He ever said about God, the Father to a woman by the side of a well in Samaria, and not much of a woman at that, was she? And yet He said the most wonderful thing He ever said about God, the Father, when He said to that woman, "God is a spirit. And they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Now, I don't think that our Lord ever said a more important thing to anybody than that. And He said it to the Woman of Samaria. Now, my dear, don't look for the Woman of Samaria outside of the Gospel of John, because you won't find her.

Now, we've got three of them, haven't we? Nicodemus, Nathanael, the Woman of Samaria. By the way, can we see something else there that you could include in that letter that you're going to write to somebody, and tell them what it is that you've been listening to; because, my dear, it'll turn sour on you and after awhile it will vanish all together, unless you give it away to somebody. The only way to retain anything is to give it away. You give it away, and you'll have it forever.

Now, when you go to the fourth chapter, or the fifth chapter rather of the Gospel of John, there's another very important, interesting character that appears. We speak of him as the Impotent Man by the Pool of Bethesda. You remember that at the beginning of the fifth chapter of John, there is the story of a man who had been ill for thirty and eight years, and when we find him, he is by the Pool of Bethesda. Now a strange thing happened at the Pool of Bethesda, and don't ask me to explain it, because I can't. I don't

know what it means, but there seemed to be at a certain moment, perhaps in everyday, a peculiar phenomenon that happened in the pool itself; and the others stepped in first when that thing happened received some physical benefit. Now, it is called the 'Troubling of the Waters,' and the Word of God says, "An angel troubled the waters."² Now again dear, don't ask me to explain it, I can't. All I know is what it says in the book, that's all. But here's a man who had been there thirty and eight years, and nobody had been there to help him to get in first at that moment of unusual impulse in the Pool of Bethesda. He couldn't get in. Thirty and eight years. And here you find him. And the more you look at him, the louder he'll talk to you. What would you do if you'd had something that had rendered you practically and almost totally helpless for thirty and eight years? And don't forget, he didn't have Medicare. Don't forget it. Now, here's a man like that. Now we don't know his name again, and we find him in the Gospel of John. Listen, don't look for him outside of the Gospel of John, because you won't find him. Nathanael, Nicodemus, the Woman of Samaria, the Impotent Man by the Pool of Bethesda. Do you see the picture appearing before us of the different people that you meet?

Now, I'm going to take a big jump and go to the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John, and there you will find an extraordinary character. As a matter of fact, you won't find one like him in the Bible, and he was a man who was blind; and our Lord worked a miracle of healing or a miracle of some kind; I think it was far more than healing for this man. Now you tell me, what is it that makes him so different to the other blind men that our Lord had rendered benefit to? He had met blind men over and over again, but no one like this. Now what was the difference in this blind man in chapter nine, and the others? What was the difference? Can somebody tell me?

From the class: He was blind from birth..

He was blind from birth, exactly so. He was born blind, that's the way we speak of him, as the man born blind; and we remember what the folks said about that when our Lord had worked this miracle for him. The folks who were watching it said, "Never since the world began has it been known of a man born blind ever received his sight." This is something different. You won't find the man born blind outside of the Gospel of John.

Now, I want to take you one more. There came a time when our Lord, leaving the upper room, had gone to the Garden of Gethsemane and there, at the close of His vigil there in the Garden of Gethsemane, there came a crowd from the high priest to take him captive; and you remember that they came so rudely, and ____ him in such a manner that at least one of the disciples was right angry about it, and he drew his sword and cut off the servant of the high priest's ear. Now dear, you will find that story in another gospel, but in the other gospel, you won't find the man's name. But in the Gospel of John, you'll find the name of the man whose ear was severed, and our Lord had to put it back. Now you tell me, what was the name of that servant of the high priest whose ear was severed? Tell me that.

² John 5:4.

From the class: Malchus.

Malchus, exactly right. His name was Malchus. Now we've got a string of them, haven't we? We've got...you'll have to say it with me. We've got Nathanael and Nicodemus and the Woman of Samaria and the Impotent Man by the Pool of Bethesda and the man born blind and Malchus.

Now I'll tell you one other. You will find this one in the eleventh chapter, and he's a man who had been dead four days, and his body had been in the tomb, and our Lord called him forth; and he came forth and they loosened him from his grave clothes; and his name was?

Class: Lazarus.

Lazarus, exactly. Now, don't look for Lazarus outside of the Gospel of John because you won't find him, but here we've got these new people. Aren't they interesting? Nathanael.

When we get to heaven, you hunt up Nathanael and tell him we were talking about him in our class. He'll be so glad to know that we are among the semi-intelligent Christians who were studying the Gospel of John to find out what was different about it. You tell him. Find Nicodemus, you won't have much difficulty there because he must be somebody _____. Find the Woman of Samaria and tell her we were talking about her and what a blessing it was that we heard over again in the quietness of our Sunday School class those majestic words that our Lord said to her. Wouldn't it be wonderful? Wouldn't it be wonderful? Tell it to somebody. Don't keep it to yourself. The genius in this class will be how much we pass on to somebody else. It'll just be one more class if what we get, we keep. But, if what we get we give away to somebody, it can be something tremendous. That's what God wants.

Now, let me give you one other point here. I've only touched the fringe of this. There are any number of other characters in the Gospel of John that you will not find elsewhere. I haven't mentioned them and I did that deliberately because I want you to find them; and I don't want you to write it down on a paper and bring it to me. You just do it for your own soul's sake, will you? When you're reading the Gospel of John, you come across a name, stop long enough to ask yourself the question, "Is this one of the distinctive characters of the Gospel of John?" And I want to tell you my dear, as you're going down this familiar pathway of the Gospel of John, you stop here and there and ask that question, you'll get something that will throw a ray of light not only on the gospel, but on your own heart; because everyone we discover like that becomes a new friend to us; and we can say to ourselves as we find them there, "I'm going to hunt that one up when I get to heaven. I'm going to check on that one, and I'm going to tell him where we found his name and how it came to me, and I discovered he wasn't mentioned anywhere else, except in the Gospel of John. There are any number of them. You do that – accept that little bit of homework, and you don't need to write it out and give it to me. I'm not going to grade your paper on that. I'm too busy, but don't forget the suggestion, because that's worthwhile.

Now, we've got a few minutes left and I want to mention the rest of it, at least one, a different method. Now, what I mean by that is that in the Gospel of John you find our Lord applying a different teaching

method. Now, in the other gospels you find that the emphasis, not exclusively, but the emphasis is on great messages to great crowds.

Let me mention one: What is the name of the great sermon that is recorded in Matthew 5, 6 and 7? What's the name of it?

From the class: The Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount, exactly so. The Sermon on the Mount, and there it is and it was a great utterance; and you will find them over and over again.

When you turn to the 13th chapter of Matthew, you will find a great utterance that comes there in the string of parables that we speak of as the, "Parables of the Kingdom" - such parables as the Parables of the Sower, and so on. You can go all the way down, and here are these parables, and it's a tremendous thing; and you can go over and over again and find our Lord talking to great crowds and giving great messages.

Now, when you get to the Gospel of John, you will find there is a different emphasis. Now, you will find great sermons to great crowds, but generally speaking, those great sermons to great crowds are merely recorded as sermons, but what He said isn't given us. There are one or two exceptions to that, like the sermon that He gave on the Bread of Life in the 6th chapter of John. But, generally speaking, He speaks to a great crowd, but we're not sure what He said to them. But, this is the difference. Instead of great sermons to great crowds, it's His message to the individual - the private conversation method rather than the public address. Now, that ought to be comforting to us; because most of us in this room, in fact all of us in this room are not called to give great addresses to great crowds; but, what about that private conversation method?

Now let's go over it again and just briefly review, and this is where we'll close for this morning. Let's stop a minute. How many people were in the audience when our Lord preached His great sermon on the New Birth in the 3rd chapter of John, and there was never a greater utterance that ever fell from human lips than that. How many in the audience? Somebody tell me? One. Just one. Just one.

How many were in the audience when He talked to a woman about a well on the inside, that if she should drink of the water of it she should never thirst again? Tell me, my dear. How many people were in the audience? Just one.

Now, let me give you a figure here. You can remember it, and then please, don't forget it. Keep in mind. There are 15 private conversations in the Gospel of John. Now, we've only mentioned a few of them, you see, like the private conversation with Nathanael and Nicodemus and the Woman of Samaria, etc. There are 15 of them and they're like sign posts along the road as you read the Gospel of John. Whenever you find our Lord in private conversation with some one person, stop! It's always a moment of tremendous importance. Always. Always.

Let's come close to each other, shall we? The most important moment that ever happened in your life my dear, was a moment sometime, somewhere when the Lord Jesus said something personally to you. He said something personally to you, and that was the transforming moment in your life. 15 private conversations.

You know, preachers are strange people – a peculiar breed. I belong to them and I'm not so sure that I'm proud of it. In fact, I don't think that I am. But anyhow, they are strange people. Supposing some morning I was to preach somewhere and I spent time getting a message, and I got myself all fixed up so that I looked like a preacher, and all the rest of it. You know. And I walked into the church with my Bible under my arm – you know, all ready to deliver my great message, you see. And I looked down into the audience and there was one person there, and not much of a one at that. What would I do? Would I go through with it and preach my sermon to that one person? Would I? What would you do if you were in that fix? What would you do? Would you go, or would you reach into the barrel of your memory and bring out some old moth-eaten thing and say, "Well, this is good enough for this." That's what somebody who's as ___ anymore than I am might would do, but that isn't what our Lord did. He gave the best He had to an audience of one; and my dear, one of the things in which we can share His most intimate activity is in the matter of the private conversation.

By the way, when was the last time you talked to somebody, some one person about Jesus? When? The private conversation. You see what I mean. God bless you.

Let Thy blessing be upon us, our Father as we conclude this class. Hide Thy word in our hearts, we pray. For Jesus sake. Amen.