

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 6
The Pathway of the Portraits – Chapters 1 through 5
The Word of God
The Cleansing of God
The Salvation of God
The Satisfaction of God
The Judgment of God
January 21, 1973**

Sunday School at, East Lake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson Number 012173.

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

The chalkboard contains the following information:

On the first line are the words, “The Gospel of John.”

On the second line is the word, “Different.”

On the third line are the words, “The Pathway of the Portraits”

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

The Gospel of John is different and this morning we shall commence what is perhaps the most important distinction of the Gospel of John that you can consider. This is the heart of the matter.

Now before we do it, before we get into our lesson, just a moment of review. We started in at the beginning saying the Gospel of John was different. Now that was our basic statement, and when we said different in times, the time it was written, different in the people to whom it is written, and the purpose for which it was written; and now we went from there to the different people that you meet, the different men that you meet, the different method that our Lord employed, the difference in the message of it and the difference in the material that makes up the Gospel of John.

And now I think in our last lesson we touched 1 or 2 individual, almost incidental things, although there is nothing that is incidental in connection with a study like this - such as, the concentration of the “double verily” in the Gospel of John as you do not find them elsewhere. The great affirmations beginning with, “I Am” this and “I Am” that on the wonder of those pictures that open up before us

when we see our Lord as the way and the truth and the life and the resurrection and the life and the door and the good shepherd and the bread and the light and the water. It is almost overwhelming as you find all of these things are concentrated in Him and you find them there.

I don't know whether I mentioned this one of the incidental things. I am not quite sure. But of the 1260 days of our Lord's ministry, and remember, did I mention that? - no, I don't think so. You forgive me for adding this on. But our Lord's ministry was 3 1/2 years and that is 1260 days because the old Jewish year was 360 days. It was 12 months, all of them alike with 30 days in each. That's 360 days. They did not have any leap year or anything like that. Now 360 days, 3 1/2 years, 1260 days - and you don't have to strain your intelligence to come to that conclusion because it's told us in the Bible how much it was. Daniel tells us; twice in the Book of the Revelation you will get those figures, 1260 days. And of that time, 1260 days, only 20 days are mentioned in the Gospel of John. Now not 20 consecutive days, but you can see what the Holy Spirit is doing in producing a different fourth Gospel. He reaches in and takes the event of this day and of this one and of this one and of this one and takes 20 of them; and then like the skillful weaver He is, He fashions the tapestry of the Gospel of John from those 20 threads, and it is almost overwhelming the beauty of the thing he produces because now we are going to look at the beauty of the Gospel of John and it is not something but someone. There's were the beauty shines and we are going to see it today and next Sunday in a way that you won't find it anywhere else.

The most beautiful word picture of our Lord that is given anywhere is in found in the Gospel of John. And we are going to expose our eyes and hearts to it and absorb its loveliness and bring something of its beauty into the midst of our own lives; and perhaps, if we want to the Lord might put a little of that beauty on us; because don't forget that one of the Old Testament prayers is that the beauty of the Lord our God should be upon us.

Now, our theme scripture please, and then we will have as we have done before a simple affirmation that has to do with our Christian life and that you will find, not the affirmation but the truth of it over and over again in this little book that is called the Gospel of John. First five verses, first chapter of the Gospel 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.”

And as a class of believers seeking to be what God wants us to be, we have said together one or two statements that the more you think about it, the more important they become. For instance, we have said together, say it with me, “What we are is more important than what we do.” Now the second one was, “Worship is more important than work”. Let's say that together, “Worship is more important than work”. And the third one was, “Adoration is more important than activity”. And we've got the three basic things. Now, our lesson leads us right into this beautiful thing that we see where the beauty of our Lord is seen as you can't find it anywhere else. It's here. This is the Holy Spirit's great effort to make Jesus beautiful to us as well as powerful. He wants us to see how wonderful He is.

Now my dear, this is the thought that's before us. In every Gospel you will find in the center of it some lovely picture of our Lord. There's one in every Gospel. For instance, the central picture in the Gospel of Matthew is Christ the King; and in Mark, Christ the Servant; and in Luke, the Son of Man; and in John, the Son of God. But the distinction is this: that in every chapter of the Gospel of John, 21 of them,

you have in each, a separate, distinct, I almost said smaller picture. You have to be careful how you use that word when you're talking about Jesus because nothing about Him is small. But you know what I mean. Here are 21 pictures, one in every chapter, and every one of them different to the others, and it seems as if the light of the chapter pictures cast a ray of light upon the great central face that's in the midst until by the time you get through it is almost overwhelming; and very few of God's children have made the journey and have looked at the loveliness, and have discovered from whence the light is coming that illuminates this. That is what we are after. We are calling our lesson, *The Pathway of the Portraits*.

Now my dear, take a good look at it because I want you to tell somebody else about it and I will tell you, that is the way we express it. But I will tell you something else. The one of whom we are speaking, He wants you to tell somebody else about it too. Now it doesn't matter whether you do what I want you to do. But it matters whether we do what He wants us to do; that's for sure.

Now my dear, let's start at the beginning and we will go as far as time will permit, and we will look at the pictures of our Lord in the chapters and moreover what we see can be reduced down to one word; and the reason why that's important is, that if you take this one word and write it in your Bible, your testament, your Gospel of John at the head of the chapter, you've got the key that unlocks the teaching of that chapter. It is not a matter of understanding details. It is not a matter of understanding even the depths of teaching, but it is a matter of seeing what Jesus is in that chapter. That is the key to it. If you can see Him, you've got it all, you see, because all the incidents and all the teaching and all the value, it all centers in Him. If you can see what He is, then it lights it all up and sometimes it will be maybe a confusion, and maybe a bit of scriptural twilight unless you see what Jesus is in it.

Now let's look at the first chapter of John and we will see, what is He? - in the first chapter of John. Well, we don't have to look far do we? And in many of the chapters, we shan't have to look at all because He tells us. For instance, when He tells us in the 6th chapter, "I am the bread of life," well that's it isn't it. When He tells us in the 7th chapter and the 8th chapter, "I am the light of the world," and He tells us in the 7th chapter, "I am the water of life." We don't have to look. When we turn to the 11th chapter and you hear Him say, "I am the resurrection and the life," well that's it you see. But there are some chapters where you have to look a little carefully, and that is the path we are going to be traveling together and there is sure delight in my heart and I can't tell you how grateful I am to you folks for giving me the chance to just talk to you about this.

Now my dear, what is the word, "W-O-R-D" that we meet in the 1st chapter, and no other writer ever refers to Jesus as the Word of God. Now you've got it. It is the word, "W-O-R-D". Write that at the head of chapter one and you've got the key that unlocks it because a word is a means of communication. We talk to each other. We transfer thought from one to the other by the pathway of words. And, if that is so, then the word that is made flesh and blood among us, and the word that is repeated three times in the opening sentences of that chapter is somebody talking to us. And we find right away, He, our Lord Jesus, is God's means of communicating with us. He has in times past spoken unto us in the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken unto us in His Son, and whatever the Lord our Father has to say to us, He says it through the Son; and whatever He has to do for us, whatever blessing comes, whatever provision comes, whatever protection we need, whatever the Father is doing for us as His children, He does it through the channel of His Son, who is the Word, the means of communication. Now that is the thing you see first of all in chapter one, and you see what kind of folks God talks to through his Son in chapter one.

There you will find the light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehends it not. And you will find He's in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. And then you turn and you find He came unto His own and His own received Him not - comprehended Him not, knew Him not, received Him not. My dear, do you like the picture of what you were and what you still would be but for the grace of God because that is us, you see. Right in the middle there, I find a name and it is somebody being described, and I know him quite well because his name happens to be Sidney Cox, because I remember the time and so do you, when we comprehended not. You know, one of the things that we said to anybody who was trying to tell us a little bit about the truth of God's word, one of the things we used to say, "Well, I don't see that". You remember. That was it, you see; and we didn't respond because knowing is a matter of our hearts. And we didn't obey, we went in the opposite direction. He came, but we received Him not, and then God's word broke through. God's Son broke through. The Holy Spirit quickened us so that we could see faintly something of what He did for us on Calvary, and quickened our hearts and gave us faith to receive it, and we find in the 1st chapter, He is the Word of God, you see.

Now you put the word down and put it at the head of your 1st chapter and you've got the key that unlocks it, because it is Him, the one stamping before us, "The word made flesh and dwelling among us" that we see, and we push the door open of the Gospel of John, and the very first thing you see is, "The word made flesh and dwelt among us."

Now my dear, when you turn to the 2nd chapter of John, you have to look a little closer because don't forget that you will not always find in any one chapter our Lord telling us what He is. Now how does the 2nd chapter of John, how does it begin? It begins with the story of what?

From the class: the wedding at Cana of Galilee.

The wedding at Cana of Galilee. But, as you go down the chapter you will find you're facing another incident that is tremendous because there you will find our Lord with a whip of cords in his hand driving out the folks who were selling animals for the sacrifice and who were turning the tables of the money changers and saying, "My Father's house is a house of prayer but ye have made it a place of merchandise," you see. And you look at that and we say, "That is a picture of Christ cleansing the temple." Now that is obviously more important than these incidental presents at a wedding because He was the incidental one. He wasn't the chief character at that wedding. He wouldn't have said that. He was simply a guest who turned water into wine at a moment when there was a desperate need for His touch of grace and power. But then we come down and you find Him cleansing the temple.

By the way my dear, what was wrong with merchandise? What was wrong with what these people were doing in the temple? Were they not doing a community service? Certainly they were. Here are people who had come from all over the known world and they had to buy and to obtain by some means animals for the sacrifice. They were under religious obligation. Their money was different to that which is used in Jerusalem. They had to get it changed just as you would if you went to some other country. You would have to get your money changed. Were they not rendering a community service? Shouldn't they formed themselves, these merchandisers, shouldn't they have formed themselves into a union and made application to the United Funds for some kind of support? After all, they were doing something that had to be done, you see. But the point about it, my dear, is not what they were doing, it was where they were doing it. That's the key to it, and in a class like this, somebody says something to us when we face a fact like that. It isn't always what we do, it is where we do it. When something that made the _____ shall I say acceptable on the outside comes into the sacred realm of our lives; and don't forget, "Ye are

the temple of God.”¹ Your body is the temple of God and when it may be alright on the outside, when it comes on the inside it is all wrong and our Lord has to cleanse the temple; and we find Him, “The Cleansing of God.” Now at the head of chapter two, in spite of the beauty of the wedding and all the rest of it, write that word “cleansing” and you’ve got the key to it because this is it.

Now when you go to Chapter 3, you find another picture all together. Now one of the things we said at the beginning was that not only are there 21 pictures of our Lord, but every last one of them are different to the others. Could there be anything greater in contrast between the Word made flesh, the means of communication and the necessity and means of cleansing? God will talk to us through His Son and if the temple of our lives need to be cleansed, He will do the cleansing and sometimes we don’t like it. We don’t like it and sometimes the Holy Spirit, I know this is fanciful maybe, but the Holy Spirit sometimes has to take us across His knee and paddle us good and plenty. He needs to, to cleanse the temple. You see? “It’s my Father’s house,” this thing. “I can’t allow anything in there that would be offensive to Him. How can I?” And here it is.

When you get to the 3rd chapter, you find our Lord talking to a man who came to Him by night. Now, dear, we are looking at the great “salvation chapter” of the Gospel of John and maybe the most distinctive “salvation chapter” in the whole Bible - this conversation with Nicodemus, because salvation begins, my dear, with the new birth. It doesn’t begin by joining something. It doesn’t begin by turning over a new leaf. It doesn’t begin by accepting some or getting into some stream of uncontrolled enthusiasm, the kind of thing that you see all the way around you in these days; and it isn’t that at all. It is the simple process of the new birth. We are born into the family of God and that is the beginning of it. And in this great 3rd chapter where you find our Lord, “The Salvation of God,” you find the beginning of it. That is the way of salvation is the new birth.

But you know before God can do anything for a sinner, before a righteous God can do anything for an unrighteous sinner, God must have the right to do what He does. He must be just as well as the justifier of him that believeth, just.² Now, what is it that gives God the right to bring you, an unworthy, no good, hell deserving sinner into His family by the new birth? What gives God the right to do that? Well, when you go down the chapter to Verse 14 you find the reason: “The Son of Man must be lifted up,” and the value of Calvary that gives God the right to do what God does. God doesn’t save us, my dear, merely because He loves us, He does love us, but don’t forget that He must have the right to do it. Before your sin can be canceled in your life it must first be canceled at Calvary. Before your sin can be paid for in your life, it must be first paid for on Calvary, and you’ve got a chapter here where our Lord is not only showing us in His conversation with Nicodemus, not only showing us the way of salvation, “Ye must be born again,”³ but He is showing us the ground of salvation - what it is that makes salvation possible; and you find, “The Son of Man must be lifted up,” and then when you move to verse 30 you will find the consummation of salvation, because salvation, my dear, isn’t just a beginning is it? It is a commencement, it’s a continuation, it’s a consummation as well.

¹ 1 Corinthians 3:16.

² Romans 3:26.

³ John 3:7.

What God saves us for, the purpose He has in mind, is that He wants to produce a certain kind of person. If we are going to be members of the family of God, we've got to be different to what we were when we were children of disobedience, the 2nd chapter of Ephesians, you see. We were in the darkness, now we are in the light. And we've got to be different. Is there some verse in this chapter that not only tells us how we become a Christian and why God can save a sinner but what kind of a person we ought to be after we are saved. Does it tell us that? Because when you turn to verse 30 you will find it does and it says, "He must increase and I decrease," and a Christian, my dear, is one in whose life Jesus matters and we don't; where He is important and we're not; where He is everything and we're nothing. That is the Christian, where He increases and we decrease. And in a little class like that, you won't mind if I mention this, that that's a plumb line by which every last one of us can measure what kind of Christian we are, you see. Now, a class like this doesn't amount to much unless we see something of that kind and recognize that it is for us. It is for us, not only in our listening in the class but it is for us in our living outside of the class. Now we've got Him there, "The Salvation of God."

Now we've got time for just one more and I want you to go with me this time to the 4th chapter. You see, we are going step by step. We find Him in Chapter 1, "The Word of God;" in Chapter 2, He is, "The Cleansing of God;" in Chapter 3, He is, "The Salvation of God." What is He in chapter 4? Well, the moment that you mention Chapter 4, you can see a well there in Samaria and you can see the sun in the sky at the 6th hour. You can see a woman strange enough coming at that hour to draw water because no other woman would be there and that's why she came, because no other woman would be there. The other women came in the morning and the evening. She came at noon because she wouldn't meet then the other women of the village. Now you know the reason and we are not going into that. But there was a woman, and we see the strange site of a Samaritan woman and a Jewish man in conversation together; and don't forget, the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. It is a tremendous situation. And in a nutshell, what does He tell her? She came for a well on the outside, He tells her about a well on the inside. She came for water that would pass away. He came to tell her about "living water" and He said to her, "If you drink of the water that I give you, you shall never thirst but it shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life."⁴ Why, what a picture, what a teacher, what a woman, what a vision comes before us of a well within, springing up into everlasting life. You see, He had taught her the source of satisfaction - not temporary satisfaction, constant, abiding satisfaction; and in the 4th chapter of the Gospel of John you find our Lord, your Lord and mine, He is, "The Satisfaction of God," right?

Now you let me give you one hint about the 5th chapter of John. Now, we have got four words up to now. We've got WORD, CLEANSING, SALVATION, SATISFACTION. Now what do you find in Chapter 5? And we can only push the door open a little bit here because here is one place where you have to look carefully to find out what our Lord is. Now my dear, it is beautiful to watch Him doing for that impotent man by the Pool of Bethesda in the beginning of the 5th chapter of John. It is beautiful to watch Him. It is beautiful to watch the man walking away with His bed on his shoulder and a song in his heart. It is lovely. It is lovely. We even notice the dark scowls that are on the face of the opponents who hated Jesus, and they were there; but you've got to go down into the chapter to find out what our Lord is.

⁴ John 4:13-14.

Turn to the 5th chapter of John and let's look for a moment at verse 22. I believe that is it. The 5th chapter, verse 22. Now what do you find there? Fifth chapter, verse 22. Now notice it, "For the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Judgment. And in this chapter you will find Him, "The Judgment of God."

Now my dear, let me ask you a simple question. If you wanted to see judgment in operation, taking place before your eyes, here in this city where we live, where would you go? Where would you go? You wouldn't go to somebody's campgrounds. You wouldn't go to the race course. You'd go to the court house wouldn't you? And if you went to the court house to find the place where you could see judgment taking place, you'd go into a court room. And what would you see in a court room? You'd see a judge on the bench. You would see, or you wouldn't see, but it would be there, in the chambers back of him, the standard written out by which he judges the case, because the judge, my dear, doesn't say when a case is brought before him, "Well, I figure it ought to be this way" or "We might as well deal with it". Oh no, no. He has got a standard by which he judges. Then in addition to that, you would know that that judge on the bench is not there because he said some morning, a smart young lawyer, "I think I'll be a judge today" and so he picks up his brief case and he is going to be a judge today. That isn't the way it takes place. He is appointed there. He is given authority there. Now there would be cases brought before him, there would be witnesses there, there would be somebody very important standing over here that we call the prosecuting attorney; and do you know that in the 5th chapter of John you will find all these things. It is a court room scene. And you will find somebody on the bench. He is the judge and, "The Father judgeth no man but has committed all judgment unto the son." That is the one you see there.

Now the Father as you will find gives Him authority - there is a standard by which He judges. "If you hear my word and believe on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but is passed from death unto life" - John 5:24. And you find it right there. Then you find the cases and the man at the Pool of Bethesda is only one of them. And the Jews, antagonistic against, they're the other. And you will find four witnesses there; and you will actually find the prosecuting attorney is named. "I'm not going to condemn you, Moses condemns you."⁵ You see?

And here it is and we find a court room scene and He is, "The Judgment of God." Write it on it and be sure to tell somebody because, I hope you won't mind me saying an occasional thing like this, but the average person that you come into contact with, and for which we are responsible, they don't know anything about that court room scene. You tell them and it will become twice as vivid to you and maybe of some help to them.

Now we have been through 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th. When we meet together again, same time, same station, whatever you will find when we get into 6, 7, 8 and 9; anyhow, you come, bring somebody as nice as you are with you and we will soon find out.

Our Father, we pray that Thou will take whatever has happened in this room in what we call our class and in what we call for the sake of a better word, we don't know any better word, the teaching of the lesson. Oh we pray, our Father, that in some way it may have fallen into ground where the seed of the word can feel comfortable and bring forth fruit to the glory of God. In Jesus name, Amen.

⁵ John 5:45.