

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 7
The Pathway of the Portraits – Chapters 6 through 12
The Bread of Life
The Water of Life
The Light of the World
The Creator of Sight
The Good Shepherd
The Resurrection and the Life
Christ, the King
January 28, 1973**

Sunday School at, East Lake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson Number 012873.

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”

Next, there are 5 words, each numbered as follows:

- 1. Word.*
- 2. Cleansing.*
- 3. Salvation.*
- 4. Satisfaction.*
- 5. Judgment.*

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

Now, you dear nice folks, we are going on with what we have been doing in this class. I am hoping that you can see some value in it and the thing that we are doing. We shall not continue it indefinitely. We could, but I have no intention nor present thought of continuing this particular line of teaching indefinitely because if we did, then we would move out of the pathway we have been treading into the realm of Bible interpretation and exegesis and so on. All we have been doing in this class in the matter of the lessons in the Gospel of John, all we have been doing is

looking at the distinctions, the differences in the Gospel of John and seeking to find some kind of an adequate answer in our own heart to the question, “Why should there be a 4th gospel at all? Why was a 4th gospel ever written?” Now that is the basic question, back of it all, and we have been seeking to find the answer to that, noticing the differences between the Gospel of John and the other three gospels.

You will know the path we have been traveling: written at a different time, to a different people, for a different purpose. We looked at different men and a different method, and a different message, and different material, and then we looked at some of the almost incidental differences, although they are not incidental at all, such as the occurrence of the “double verily’s” and the appearance of the phrases beginning with the words “I am” and then we looked at the difference between the record as contained in other gospels and the number of days that were mentioned in the Gospel of John; only 20 days of the 1260 days of our Lord’s ministry are pinpointed in the Gospel of John; one here, one there, one there. And we looked at this. We saw the difference in location, as the movement and teaching of the events take place rather in Judea rather than in Galilee.

And, you won’t mind if I review that way occasionally because you will know that what’s in my heart and I think ought to be in yours and probably is, is that we get something out of this class that we can pass on to somebody else; because that is the main thing about it. It is not what we receive. It is what we receive in such a way that we can pass it on to somebody else; and the moment we do, it becomes ours. If we retrain it, we lose it and that is one of God’s eternal principles that the only thing we retain is that which we give away; and I am just hoping that the influence of our class and of what is being said and the value of the teaching, if there is any, will reach far more folks than gather in this room.

Now let’s go on with the particular phase of this teaching that we have in mind. We started last week by stating that the most important thing we shall ever consider in the Gospel of John and almost the most important thing we shall ever consider period is what the Lord Jesus is as He is presented to us in every chapter of the Gospel of John. The great purpose of the Father is that we might see His glory in His Son. Now God the Father is more interested in us seeing Jesus than He is in seeing mountain sides and all of the rest of the evidences of His creative genius. That is one thing. But in the heart of God the Father is the longing that we might be able to see Jesus because when we see Him we see the Father.

You remember a question that was asked by a man named Phillip in an upper room in the 14th chapter of John, “Show us the Father and it sufficeth us.” And the Lord answered, “He that has seen me hath seen the Father.” This is God’s way of revealing Himself and consequently the great work of the Holy Spirit is to do what the Father desires - to reveal Himself in the Son, and so on every conceivable occasion the Holy Spirit is magnifying the wonder of the Son in His relationship to the Father and His work as the Savior of sinners and the one in whom all eternity will be centered. Now that is what the Holy Spirit is doing; and the person who knows most about the Holy Spirit is not the one who talks most about the Holy Spirit, it is the one who talks most about Jesus. That is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is guiding us. Not when we are talking loud and long about the Holy Spirit and particularly about the gifts of the Spirit, which make us a little better than somebody else, not at all. But the person who is most possessed by

the Holy Spirit is the one who talks most about Jesus. That is the evidence that we are doing what the Holy Spirit wants us to do. And it is just as well for us to recall and find some of these basic things that we know quite well brought before us again; and in the Gospel of John as perhaps nowhere else the Holy Spirit seems to have extended himself, if I can use a term like that, to give to us the ultimate in the beauty and magnificence and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So much so that we've got 21 pictures of Him. Every chapter has as its key, some picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and every one of them, as we were suggesting last week, throws a ray of light on the great central face in which you see all the glory of God, "God has shined out of darkness to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" – II Corinthians 4:6. And you find that.

Now we started on that pathway and I am hoping that we shall not only find it of interest as we realize this is the key to the chapter. It hangs right inside the door. If you find out what Jesus is in any chapter, you've got the key that unlocks the truth of it and the beauty of it and the value of it and you've got this.

Now we started right at the beginning and we found that in some chapters He tells us what He is and in others we have to look a little closer. We didn't have to look very closely in Chapter 1 to find Him – "The Word of God" because in that chapter, four times you find Him designated as "The Word," and remember John's the only one who ever speaks of Christ as "The Word," and we find it four times; so we've got one word hanging right inside the door. "In the beginning was the Word," and there is the key.

Now, the Holy Spirit wants us to take the key and fit it into the lock and unlock the door, open the door of Chapter 1 and see Him as "The Word of God," God's means of communication because that is what a word is. A word isn't just a sound, a word is a means of communication. It is a line along which thought can travel and thought travels by means of words, and God's thought comes to us by means of the Word, His only begotten Son, and we both see and hear God the Father manifesting Himself, communicating with us, having communion with us; because communion, my dear, that lovely, beautiful word that we use so frequently, and very few people have any idea of the real depth of meaning in it, but communion means unbroken, unhindered communication. There is nothing between my soul and my Savior. Now that is communion and we find right at the beginning, this is what God wants; and He opens the book by showing us the Lord Jesus Christ as "The Word of God."

Now we went to the 2nd chapter and we find He is "The Cleansing of God," because there the big incident is the cleansing of the temple.

And we move to the 3rd chapter and found he is "The Salvation of God," and we saw the way of salvation, "Ye must be born again." The ground of salvation, the reason why salvation is possible at all is that the Son of Man must be lifted up; and the product of salvation, the kind of person that salvation produces, is the one in whose life Christ is preeminent. "He must increase and I decrease." And we looked at the great "salvation chapter" of the Bible.

Then we turned to Chapter 4 and we find him, "The Satisfaction of God," and here He is giving living water from a well on the inside and telling a woman that if she should, "Drink of the water

that I give you, you shall never thirst.” There shall never be that area of dissatisfaction in the life. And, we are all adults in this class - we are not children. We passed that a long time ago but we know quite well that generally speaking, the average Christian doesn't know too much about real satisfaction, do they? And there is a well, a well. If they continue to go a well on the outside, there will always be an element of dissatisfaction, but if there is a well on the inside, my, what wonder in our unbroken communion with Him then. And we found Him “The Satisfaction of God.”

Then I made a suggestion about the 5th chapter, and I am repeating it this morning in the hope again that you will tell somebody else about it; because it is a key that transforms the 5th chapter of John. If you can once see what He is and what He is doing in the whole court room scene. He is “The Judgment of God.” “All judgment is committed unto the Son,” and there you find Him the judge on the bench and the standard by which He judges and the authority by which He is there, the authority given by the Father, the cases that are brought before Him, the four witnesses, the name of the prosecuting attorney and what the result of the trial will be. One case, a man goes around aback because he believed God's word with his bed on his shoulder and a song in his heart and he had been hopeless for 30 and 8 years, and the burden was lifted, and others went away with the deep condemnation of God upon them because they refused to believe the word that He had spoken. Now, this is as far as we have gotten.

When we get to Chapter 6, my, what interest this is because there we find ourselves in one of the most beautiful spots, a little way away from the Lake of Galilee, and we find a great crowd there, one of the few incidents that is mentioned in other gospels, and we are talking now about the “Feeding of the 5000,” and there are all the fascination of that particular thing and out of the midst of it comes the declaration from the Lord Himself as to what He is. “I am the bread of life. I am the bread sent down from heaven,” and it is repeated. There must be a very important point there because it is not only said once but several times. There are things that we ought to notice in connection with this. This crowd that were there in this place where there was grass growing, and if you turn to your geography of Galilee you will find that there is a certain place there where grass was growing much more readily and beautifully than any other place. This was it - in a place where the folks could sit down, where the grass was plentiful; and a little boy with five loaves and two fishes. I've sometimes wondered what he did that morning and why he did it, because in the little home where he lived, right in the entrance, the living room was a little round fire bucket and in it there were coals burning and on the top of it every eastern housewife would place little barley cakes. Now this was all part of this strange thing that we know so little about - eastern hospitality. We don't know the meaning of hospitality but it was all part of their lifeblood and anybody going by would have a right to stop and help himself. That is what the cakes were there for. Notice, they were barley loaves. They weren't whole wheat bread. You see. It wasn't some fancy product of a fancy bakery, not at all. It was barley loaves, which intimated that the family was a poor family, and most of the folks were. And the boy takes his barley loaves and two little fishes and goes on.

And you find the disciples that are there because when our Lord said to them, “You give them to eat,” they lifted their hands almost in horror at the thought of it, “Well, we can't do that, we can't do that, you know it would take 200 pennyworth of bread to feed that, and it'll only be a little for each one of them.” You see, they were financially competent and they were statistically correct. They knew how many and how much, and it is amazing you know in this religious realm in

which we find ourselves how many times we underscore how many and how much. They are the big words with us. But you see, there they were, the disciples had forgotten to take bread. They had everything else you see. They had the statistical ability. They knew how much it was going to cost. They knew how much work it was going to take but, they had forgotten to take bread. And you've got a picture there that is entrancing. Right in the center of it you find Him and you find His wonderful hands at work. You find His wonderful hands taking barley loaves and two little fishes and breaking them and feeding a multitude, and you find it right in the middle of it and you hear Him say, and it is like the sound of golden bells, "I am the bread of life."

Now when you turn to Chapter 7, you find the picture changes again. And you see him standing on the great day of the feast and saying, "If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink and we find him there, "The Water of Life."

When you turn to Chapter 8, you find him saying several times again, "I am the light of the world." Here is a chapter that begins with the darkness of personal sin, and in the midst of it, you find our Lord saying, "I am the light of the world." Now, we've got three words, haven't we? - bread, water, light; three chapters - 6, 7 and 8. Now the reason why I stopped there, and underscore that is because these things happened at practically the same time. Within a short time distance from each other, these three chapters all took place, the great day of the feast in Chapter 7, the feeding of the 5000, the revelation of our Lord as, "The light of the world," - it all occurred about the same time; and right in the center of it there was a feast time - and it was "The feast of the tabernacles."

Now we know that in "The feast of the tabernacles" the people of Israel were bringing back to mind, bringing back to their remembrance that which had happened when God delivered them from Egypt and carried them through the wilderness. Let me ask you this, what three things did God provide for the children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness that they could not have provided for themselves? Now it centers in three major things. Every step was overshadowed by God's provision, of course, but there were three things that stand out.

One was bread - manna that fell. The second one was water out of the rock. And the third one was light for their journey through the wilderness, particularly at night; and there were three things that God provided.

Now my dear, at the great day of the feast, these were the three things that the children of Israel were remembering and rejoicing in. They were saying with an exuberance of joy that was not seen at any other time of the year, "God took us out of the wilderness. God carried us through to Canaan. God provided bread for us. God provided water out of the rock. God provided light." - and they were thinking about it and the sound of their rejoicing was so great that historians tell us that it was impossible to understand the ultimate in joy unless you heard the joy that was expressed at the feast of the tabernacles.

Now the important thing is, we are looking at Jesus. What happened in the midst of this? - somebody stepped into the midst, and He said, "I am what you are thinking about. I am the bread of life, I am the manna that God sent down, I am this. You don't have to look any further; I'm right in your midst. I am the water and if any man thirsts, it will not only come into you but it shall flow out of you in rivers of living water. I am the light. I am your pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. I am these things."

And the wonder of this particular section is that the Lord Jesus gathers into Himself and the need – bread, water, light – becomes personified in Him, and not only personified in Him, present in Him, available in Him.

And you know the value of a class and the value of the teaching in a class consists not only in what we hear, but in what we hear that applies to us. Could it be that even in our class, mature as we are, years and years along in the Christian life and yet somebody may be whispering to us, “Don’t forget, I am the bread of life. Don’t forget, I am the water out of the rock. Don’t forget, I am the light you need.” And you know my dear, we never get to the place where the bread of yesterday is sufficient for us today, and the water supplied yesterday is all we need for today, and that the light we had yesterday is all we need for today. And somebody says something to us.

Now we’ve got three more pictures of Him – bread, water, light. And it all centers in that great feast time when the Children of Israel were thinking of these very things, and when our Lord gathers them into His beautiful self and says, “I am this.”

Now, would that be worth telling somebody else about? Would it? Would it be worth passing it on to somebody else? I hope so. I hope so. I’ve thought of it many times, but you know every time I think of it, every time I go over the old familiar ground, I find a new warmth in my heart as I think about it.

When you get to the 9th chapter, you find he is in a distinctive character. This is the chapter where the man born blind is dealt with, and you will find that here our Lord is not as we are so apt to think the “Great Physician” curing blindness. He is far more than that because don’t forget, this was a distinctive case. There wasn’t any other case like it. Those who watched said, “Never since the world began has it been known that a man born blind every received his sight.”

Now before our Lord did what He did, He cleared away some things and gave a vivid demonstration of the uselessness of certain things. It needed more than clay. It needed more than just teaching as to who was responsible for whatever sin may be in that man’s family circle. These are extras. These are things that have no central relationship to the problem itself. The problem, my dear, was not curing blindness, it was creating sight, because never had there been any reflection of light on the dark, dead retina of those eyes. Never. And here was a hand creating sight, and we find Him in the 9th chapter, “The Creator of Sight.”

Now that is one of the chapters where you have to look and think a little carefully. Now when you get into Chapter 10, we can hardly hold our rejoicing because there we’ve not only got one picture of Him, we’ve got two or three and they are just beautiful; and we find Him standing before us, “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

Now that isn’t the way the chapter opens. It doesn’t open with that statement. It opens with the dark picture of a thief breaking into the sheep fold and climbing up some of the way. He is a thief and a robber. That is where it begins, and then against that dark background of the thief breaking into the sheep fold you see the wonder and loveliness of the good shepherd.

Now, dear, the good shepherd does several things for the sheep. He not only looks after them, He not only leads them beside still waters and into green pastures, he does that, but he does several specific things.

One: He gives his life for them. Don't forget that the shepherd always lay on the ground at the entrance of the sheep fold lest there should be some marauding animal or person breaking into that sheep fold. If they did, they had to go over his dead body, and the shepherd was there, not only looking after the sheep but he gave his life for the sheep. He laid his life down - not just his sermons, not just his particular pastoral abilities, all of these things are wonderful, but the good shepherd goes far beyond that, he gives his life for the sheep. You can find shepherds a dime a dozen who will give their abilities for the sheep, but not so often do you find one who will give his life for the sheep. Now that is the first thing.

And then the second thing is, when one of the sheep was lost, strayed away, he went after it and he not only went after it but he went after it until he found it.

Now the 3rd thing about it is, and this you will find in another gospel, not in the Gospel of John, you will find out how many there were in the flock. How many? Now somebody's whose name is magic in the gospel song realm wrote a song about it and he said, "There were 90 and 9 that safely lay in the shelter of the fold, but one went out on the hills away far off from the gates of gold. One was out, 99 at home and the shepherd goes after the one that was lost until he found it, but how many of these 90 and 9 did he lose while he was going after the one that was lost? How many? The answer is, he didn't lose any of them. And don't forget, dear, that the mark of the good shepherd is not only that he goes after the one that's lost, but he does not lose his 90 and 9 while he is doing this. And that has happened over and over and over again. But here we've got the mark of a good shepherd. Isn't he wonderful? Isn't he wonderful? It is just amazing that the Holy Spirit should have given us pictures like this. Everybody in an eastern land would know at once the picture of a good shepherd.

Now, my dear, when you get into Chapter 11, and by the way, this morning we have looked at Him as the bread of life, the water of life, the light of the world, the creator of sight and the good shepherd, or if you want to use both of them, "I am the door," but it is all related to the shepherd and the sheep fold.

By the way, one other thing that that shepherd did for his flock and this is very important, he gave his sheep a name so that he knew his sheep by name. Now my dear, we'd better remember what that means, because he didn't name the sheep in his flock Tom, Dick and Harry and words like that because some other shepherd over there could name his sheep in just exactly the same way. It wasn't a name that he gave to each one of his sheep. It was his own name that he placed upon the sheep of his flock; and remember, there are no unnamed sheep in God's flock. We all have the name. There may be another name, I don't know, and I am not particularly interested.

I remember that one of the illustrations of our relationship to our Lord is not merely sheep to a shepherd but bride to a bridegroom. There was a moment in the life of every bride when she had one name and then a moment afterwards she had another name. And she bore the name of the bridegroom, and the biggest job she has in life is to keep that name unsoiled. That is the biggest thing she has.

Now we've got it here. He puts His name upon us. That is a name that can't be imitated. The neighbor over there with an imitation flock, he will put some other name on, but we bear his name. The 11th chapter of John and we find Him standing by the side of a tomb, and we hear Him again saying certain things and He says, calling a man forth, He says, "I am the resurrection

and the life.” Now, we don’t have to look far do we, to find out what He is in Chapter 11. He is, “The resurrection and the life,” and the picture of it is so beautiful that all we do is to stand back breathlessly and look at the majesty of it. Somebody who dared to say, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Not merely I give new life, not merely I conquered death, but I am the resurrection and the life.

Now you’ve got that and when you go to Chapter 10¹ and here we shall finish this morning, you find another of these fascinating things where you will have to go back a little way to find the key. This is the chapter in which is recorded what we call, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Remember that six months before our Lord had left Galilee and steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Now here he is. And he is riding into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass, and as we look at it we look in amazement and we say, “Was it just because a man rode into Jerusalem on a donkey that these people got so excited.” Oh no, not at all. We’ve got to go back and see just a little further. In fact, we’ve got to go back several hundred years because there an ancient prophet wrote words describing the very thing that happened there on that day when he said, “Ye daughters of Israel dry your tears.” I am just paraphrasing now “Behold your king cometh and you will see him riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” And these folks, strange as it may seem, knew their old testament scriptures much better than we know our new testament scriptures, which isn’t anything to our credit is it. Here was a whole group of people who suddenly recognized, this is the fulfillment of a prophecy. This prophet, 600 years ago said this very thing. We are looking at something that is taking place before our very eyes. It is the fulfillment of prophecy.

Now the importance of this chapter is, this is the last time the crowd ever sees Jesus until they watch Him dying on a cross. This is the chapter that has in it the last time the audible voice of God is ever heard until we hear it again when the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ shall rise to meet their Lord in the air and, my dear, it may be today.

Our Father, we pray that thou will take whatever is of value out of this lesson. Use it for they glory. Make it a value to us. In Jesus’ precious name, Amen.

¹ He mis-spoke here, intending to say Chapter 12.