

## **THE SERMONS, LECTURES AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

**Editorial Note: This is one lesson of a 14-lesson weekly series of Bible studies that Sidney Cox delivered to the congregation of the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama in late 1972 and early 1973.**



**This is a 2011 picture of what was the Eastlake Alliance Church in 1972. It is located at the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North and 85<sup>th</sup> Street in Birmingham and is the current home of the 46<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church.**

**In 1972, at age 84, Sidney Cox had moved from Detroit, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama to be near my parents, John and Jean Cox. Still remarkably healthy and independent, he lived in a small efficiency apartment on Birmingham's south side. His beloved wife, Violet had earlier passed away in 1967 while they were residing in Detroit.**

**From the time of their commissioning in Toronto, Canada in 1910/1912 to 1944, Sidney and Violet Cox had a well-chronicled career as Salvation Army officers – a journey that took them across the breadth of Canada and ultimately to Atlanta, Georgia in 1928 to be part of the founding of The Salvation Army's Southern Territory.**

**However, during the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (“CMA”). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a “denomination.” During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sidney had served as Professor of New Testament at two Bible institutes – The Miami Bible Institute and The Toccoa Falls Bible Institute (Toccoa, Georgia). These two institutes were principally supported by CMA and graduates often entered pastorates at CMA churches.**

**During this era of his life, Sidney Cox remained in great demand as a preacher, evangelist and Bible teacher both in Salvation Army and CMA venues. The Eastlake Alliance Church was a CMA church and they took advantage of his residency in Birmingham by engaging him to teach this series. The pastor of the church was Glen Tingley, Jr.**

**John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.**

**Gospel of John**  
**Part 8**  
**The Pathway of the Portraits – Chapters 13 through 17**  
**The Servant of God**  
**The Comfort of God**  
**The Fruit of God**  
**The Giver of the Holy Spirit**  
**Our Great High Priest**  
**February 4, 1973**

*Sunday School at East Lake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson Number 020473.*

*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 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 12 words as follows:*

- 1. Word.*
- 2. Cleansing.*
- 3. Salvation.*
- 4. Satisfaction.*
- 5. Judgment.*
- 6. Bread.*
- 7. Water.*
- 8. Light.*
- 9. Sight.*
- 10. Shepherd.*
- 11. Resurrection.*
- 12. King.*

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

We started in last week and reminded ourselves that in the Gospel of John and in every chapter there is a distinct and beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the more you look at Him and the closer you follow His footsteps and the more you see what the Holy Spirit is doing chapter by chapter in the Gospel of John, the more the fire in your heart begins to burn and continues to burn; and out of this class we ought to be saying together by the time we get through, if we haven't already said it, we all ought to be saying, "Did not our hearts burn within us as we walked with Him through the pathways of the portraits of the Gospel of John." Now that is the hope that is in this old teacher's heart and I am quite sure it is in yours too. I am only saying in my blundering words what your heart is saying and I am quite sure of that.

We started right at the beginning and I put these words as best I could upon the board and if you want to make notes of them, that is just fine, and if there's any that you missed, don't hesitate a moment to ask me about it because I will be glad to remind you and check your memory any time. We are here as a class, not just a teacher performing a teaching objective, not at all. We have got something more in mind than that.

Now, we start at the beginning and at Chapter 1, He is, "The Word of God.

And in Chapter 2, "The Cleansing of God." Remember the incident, the cleansing of the temple.

In Chapter 3, He is, "The Salvation of God." This is the great "salvation chapter" of the Bible where our Lord talks to Nicodemus as He does not talk to anybody else about the new birth, which is the beginning of salvation, and then gives the ground for it in John 3:14, "The Son of Man must be lifted up," and then the product of it in John 3:30 where we read, "He must increase and I decrease".

And then in Chapter 4, He is, "The Satisfaction of God," giving to the Woman of Samaria the word about living water within; not merely temporary water without, but living water within.

And then in Chapter 5, He is, "The Judgment of God." Remember the suggestion that Chapter 5 is a court room scene and that the incident at the beginning of it of the impotent man by the Pool at Bethesda is only an illustration of the truth that is in the heart of it. Follow that through, don't forget it. Sometime in your own personal reading, check that court room scene there. The judge on the bench and the standard by which he judges and the authority by which he sits there and the cases that are brought before him and the witnesses and the prosecuting attorney and it is all there. We've got a court room scene.

And in Chapter 6, He is, "The Bread of Life."

In Chapter 7, "The Water of Life, "If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink."

And in Chapter 8, He is, "The Light of the World," and He says it more than once.

In Chapter 9, He is, "The Giver of Sight," not merely the curer of blindness, but the giver of sight. There had never been sight in those eyes of this man there in the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, He is, "The Good Shepherd."

And in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, He is, "The Resurrection and the Life."

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And in Chapter 12, He is, “Christ the King,” riding into Jerusalem in fulfillment of an ancient prophesy that those folks there, difficult as they were and blind in many ways, they knew what was happening before their very eyes. There was a fulfillment of prophesy.

That 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of John is a very interesting thing. One of these days we may come back to it again and look at these chapters more in detail, but for the moment no. But in that 12<sup>th</sup> chapter you find two or three things that mark it out as very important indeed. That incident of the Greeks that came and stood on the outside of a little circle and when somebody went to them they said, “We would see Jesus,” and the response that came from the heart of our Lord, it’s terrific, the response, the most unusual thing. Not, “I’m glad that there is somebody there,” but, “This is the fulfillment of why it was that I came. Here are the folks that the Lord sent me for, not merely the Jewish folks but the Gentiles as well.” There is the world vision suddenly appearing and out of the skies we hear the voice of God for the very last time in the scripture, this audible voice of the Father saying, “This is my beloved Son and hear Him.”

And then in the final words in that chapter, remember, this is the last word that the Lord ever spoke to the crowds. From then on He doesn’t say one word to the crowds. We find Him talking to His disciples. We find him saying things in the incidents connected with His death and resurrection and so on, but not once after that did the Lord ever say anything to a crowd again. This is His last word to sinners, doesn’t say anything more. He is saying it. And that fact in itself marks the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of John as very important.

When you come to the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, and here is where we are today, when you come to the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter you feel you’re treading on holy ground. Here from now on you find Him in the company of His disciples saying His last things that He ever said to them, and here is the word; and you find here He is going into that upper room with all the beauty that there is connected with that - the way that the disciples found that upper room. There would be a man bearing a pitcher of water on his shoulder, you follow Him and that will tell you where to go. Why would that be extraordinary? A man bearing a pitcher of water? The answer to that is, my dear, that men didn’t bear pitchers of water. That was the woman’s job, the women of Samaria. You don’t find a man in the scripture unless it is an extraordinary thing, bearing a pitcher of water. That wasn’t his job at all. But here was something so that the moment that they caught sight of this man they would know it wouldn’t be one of the dozen men bearing a pitcher of water, He would be the only one. There was no mistaking Him, and so they followed Him, and then into the upper room they go and there begins these final beautiful things - the observation of the last Passover and the first of the remembrance feasts that are there.

But the beautiful thing that happened in that upper room immediately was the washing of the disciples’ feet. And here, don’t forget dear, what we are looking at; we’re not looking merely at an incident, we are looking at somebody, somebody, somebody in that upper room, the Lord of glory. He had already divested Himself of all of the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. He had already put His heavenly garment aside. He had already clothed Himself in the common place mud that we carry around with us that we call our flesh. He had already clothed Himself in this, and now He puts even that on one side, because remember that this was a task that no ordinary servant would ever be called upon to do. This was a task for a slave - somebody who didn’t even own himself. This was his task.

If you'd gone into an eastern home the one who would have offered and performed the task of cleansing the feet from the dust of the road would not be a hired servant who was somebody and who had control over himself to a certain degree, but our Lord comes down until he is the slave and has no control over himself. He comes from the highest glory down to the lowest position and here He is. Are you looking at Him? - because that is what we are doing. If He can do it, what about us? When we pride ourselves on some little old thing that belongs to us, that makes us so that we hesitate about doing the menial things, what does it say to us? It surely says something. If He can do it, does He expect us to do it? Is this servant greater than his Lord? What about that? What about that?

I don't think we are entitled to create a doctrine out of that, although there are folks that are better than we are who believe that that is a doctrine and carry it out in their regular church affairs and their worship system, and I am not quarreling with them either. Not at all. But there it is. What we are looking at is the fact of it, and here was somebody whose name you spell in capital letters washing the feet of somebody whose name you can't even spell in small letters compared to Him. It is one of those miraculous things where you find our Lord, "The Servant of God." Note the word there, put it at the head of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, "The Servant of God."

Now, when you get into Chapter 14, you find again, His last words to His disciples. They were distressed because there was a question in the minds of the disciples as you find them in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. They were saying, "You've been with us for 3-1/2 years. You've been everything to us. Now you say you're going away. What are we to do? What are we to do when you go?" And our Lord answers the unspoken question and it came to the surface at least to a certain extent, and He answers that question and He says to them in those words that shine with a heavenly light on them, "Let not your hearts be troubled."

If you were going to a home where there was deep sorrow and you only had one little fragment of scripture to take with you, which one would you take? Now we wouldn't all take the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John but it would be surprising how many of us would take the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John and say to somebody wrapped in the icy garments of a sorrow indescribable, "Let not your heart be troubled." It isn't any use in you saying it. It isn't any use in me going and saying to somebody, "I say unto you let not your heart be troubled." It isn't any use going and saying, "God's \_\_\_\_\_ today". But when you quote His words, then you've got something there. These are not our words. They are His words and we go and say, "He said let not your heart be troubled." And he said, "I'm going away." And then He said, "I'm coming back." And between His going away and His coming back again there was a great gap. What were they to do in the meantime?

That is the picture in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. What are these disciples to do in the meantime? My dear, I'm looking right straight at you. What are we to do in the meantime because He is gone and He hasn't come back again and we are in the meantime? What are we to do? Does He have anything to say to us? He's had something to say to his disciples and the wonder of it is, He is saying exactly the same thing to us. He is saying, "When I go away, I'm going to send somebody and He is going to be more to you than I have been. I have been with you for 3-1/2 years. When He comes, He shall be with you forever. I've been walking with you and you've been walking with Me, but when he comes He shall be in you and abide with you forever. I've been saying things to you and you couldn't remember them. Those disciples couldn't have

remembered what he had said the day before, but somebody is coming and when you need to remember the things that I have said to you He will quicken the springs of your memory and bring back to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.”

You need guidance as to where to go and what to do and how to do it. When He comes, He’ll be your guide. He’ll be your strength. He’ll be your wisdom. He’ll be all that you need and in the strength of it you can almost see those broken hearted disciples taking heart and the little bit of flickering light come into their almost blinded eyes and you can almost hear it. And you find Him in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, “The Comfort of God.” Write it at the head of the chapter, the word “comfort.” The Comfort of God.

Now, when you get into the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, you find continuation of what He is saying, although there are certain questions naturally that would arise. There are folks who think, and I’ve got a good deal of sympathy with them, that the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of John was probably spoken after they had left that upper room and were on their way down toward the Brook Kidron and into the Garden of Gethsemane, which was their immediate destination when they left the upper room. That is where they were going and on the way, on the hill down, it has been suggested that these disciples with our Lord turned around to look back and caught sight of the glory of the temple in the moonlight and the glory of the temple was, or one of the things was, that over the great gateway or doorway of it, was a beautiful golden vine that had been placed there; and some folks have said that these disciples with our Lord turned back to look at this and said, “Isn’t that beautiful, look at that vine,” and then in response to it our Lord says, “I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman and every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit now.”

And here He goes, and there is this matchless parable of the vine and the branches that teach a very important lesson because, my dear, it is not merely looking at grapes that grow on a vine in order that we may have some pleasant thing on our table; because that isn’t the ultimate fruit of the vine. The ultimate fruit of the vine is another grapevine. That is what God is after. Leave the grape alone. Let it fall to the ground. Let it do the thing that comes naturally. Let it do that and, my dear, you go back 3 or 4 or 6 months afterwards and you will find what the real fruit of the vine is in the sight of God, it is another grapevine. That is what God is after. And, the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of John says to us loudly, “As the fruit of the vine is another grape vine, so the fruit of the Christian is another Christian.”

Will your life bring forth another life? Because God’s great law of reproduction is, there isn’t a thing alive in the natural or the spiritual realm that is ever really satisfied until it has reproduced itself. The thought of it is almost overwhelming. Somebody touched your life sometime, somewhere. Somebody who had spiritual life touched your life and the Holy Spirit using that tremendous impact of one life upon another through the seed of the word brought your spiritual life into existence and that is the way it is done. That’s God’s way, and here we are at a tremendous moment like this talking about our spiritual lives reproducing themselves and we are looking at heaven’s great illustration of it and somebody who says, “I am the vine and you are the branches and herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples. By this token shall ye be my disciples.”

Being a disciple, my dear, means much more than being a pleasant, useful member of a church. It includes that but it means somebody whose life under the touch of the Holy Spirit can be

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reproduced in another life. That is the way life comes anyhow. That's the way life comes. If you've got children in your family, how did they become your children? Your life reproduced in theirs, of course. And we've got our Lord as, "The fruit of God" in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of John.

When you turn to the 16<sup>th</sup>, He is, "The Giver of the Holy Spirit." Write at the head of the chapter the words "Holy Spirit" but you will know what we mean by that because here is the great teaching of the Lord Himself sending the Holy Spirit to us. "I will send Him unto you and when He has come, He will do what you cannot do." Now He had told his disciples you've got to go and preach the gospel and make disciples and reproduce yourself in other spiritual lives, but we can't do that unless we are in the control of the Holy Spirit Himself; and this is the thing that we are talking about now; and the Lord says when He comes He will do what you cannot do. He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

Now let me ask a practical question. When you go to try to win a soul for Christ, to take your witness of what the Lord has done for you and what He came to do for somebody else, and you go and tell that somebody and the somebody is a sinner quite satisfied to be a sinner; because the sinner who is sick and tired to death of his sin and wishes he was something else, he is the odd one. The average sinner around here doesn't want to be anything else and doesn't appreciate it when you go and tell him about it. They don't want you telling him that sin is the control of your own life and you ought to hand your life over to God. They don't want you telling them that at all. The hardest thing you ever have to do in trying to win a soul for Christ is to convince the sinner to whom we are talking that he is a sinner. That is the hardest thing we have to do. You can convict him of being this and that and the other but of being a sinner, no, no, you can't do that, you can't do that. He'll listen to all you have to say about the outward evidences of his sin and you ought to say, "You ought to stop smoking because every time you smoke a cigarette you drive a nail in own coffin," and they will sit there and look at you and laugh and listen to your argument and probably agree with you, you see. But he has got one argument that he uses and we are defenseless against it. He says, "I like it and when you can prove that I don't like it, then I'll quit." Now that may sound crude, but that is his formal argument in everything. Now who is going to convince him of something like that? Well we can't but somebody is coming, our Lord said, and when He comes, He will do with your witness that which cannot be done any other way. He will put the eternal point to it that pierces the heart of a man dead in trespasses and sin and causes him to realize something about God's righteousness and judgment. You can't do it but He can, and in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of John He is, "The Giver of the Holy Spirit."

Now don't forget that the importance of this upper room discourse is not merely the pleasant things He said like, "Let not your heart be troubled," and so on and "I am the vine, ye are the branches". All of this is nice. But there is something that is there in that upper room discourse 14, 15, 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of John that you can't find anywhere else in the Bible and that is the concentrated teaching about the Holy Spirit and it comes direct from the Lord Himself. He says more about the Holy Spirit in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> chapters of John than you'll find anywhere else in the Bible and it comes direct from Him. Now that it is the importance of the upper room discourse.

When you come to the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, you will hush your heart and instinctively you'll reach down to take your shoes off. Or do we? We reach down, here is our Lord and we've got a glimpse of it standing there, looking into the face of His Father and praying what we call, "His

great high priestly prayer,” and He is saying, “I finished the work thou gavest me to do”. You won’t be able to say that, my dear. He is the only one that could ever say that, “I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.” A great philosopher once said that the greatest argument for immortality is the unfinished task of earth. And when you come to the end of a life, my dear, as me, when we come to the end and we face eternity and we step from time into eternity, there will be a lot of unfinished business left behind. You can be quite sure of that. But there was somebody who said, “I’ve finished. I’ve finished the work thou gavest me to do.”

By the way, have you ever discovered yourself in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John? Have you ever found yourself there? Let me point out where you are, dear, in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. This prayer is divided into three sections. One, He prays for Himself and renders an account of His stewardship to the Father. In the second part, He prays for the disciples, “Those whom thou hast given me out of the world”. And then He prays in the last part for you and you have a right to write your name in the last part of the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John because this is what it says. It says He is now praying for those who will believe because of the word of the disciples. Now those disciples started a chain reaction that reached you one day and down through this mysterious pathway of witness started there - these disciples said something that ultimately reached us, “Those who would believe because of their word.”

Now, will you write yourself in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John? If we haven’t done anything else this morning, we have made the discovery we are mentioned particularly in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John because we are among, “Those who believe because of their word.” They started the chain going. They started the pathway of witness and someday, somewhere it reached us. Isn’t it wonderful? Isn’t it wonderful?

A man whom I have never seen in my life, didn’t know anything about him, preached a gospel sermon in the little city of Calgary, Alberta out there in western Canada. It is not a little city any more, it is a great big city. But 60 years ago it was a little city, just a little place and he preached a sermon and he said the same things that the disciples had heard from the Lord and that they were to say to somebody else. Somebody I didn’t know. I’m hoping I’ll meet him someday in heaven and say to him, “You’re the one. You didn’t know anything about it. You were the one. You’re the one who said that message. You were the one who said, “If you’ll receive Christ as your Savior and Lord, stand up and say I will.” And I stood up and said “I will” and the whole mysterious chain of power and blessing that was started then suddenly reached this heart. You see, now that’s the way it’s done. That’s the way it’s done. We are in a holy succession. When we go out to tell somebody what Christ has done and why He came to do it, we are in the holy succession.

Now my dear, in that 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, you can put your own word there. He is, “Our great high priest” and that’s the part of His ministry we seldom think about.

By the way, how many of us in this room, and you won’t mind me saying that, you know me well enough now to understand, how many of us in this room have thought this morning of what our Lord is doing for us right now at the right hand of the Father? We are so busy thinking about what He did when He came or what He is going to do when He comes again that we are so apt to forget, He is still our great high priest. He is still the one.

I read a little chorus a little while ago and put it on a Christmas card that I usually send out at Christmas time and the words were these:

Today my Savior prayed for me before the Father's throne,  
Today He mentioned me by name and claimed me for His own,  
In this I find my strength and stay,  
My Savior prayed for me today.

Did you hear it? The 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, not just what He did and not what He is going to do but what He is doing right now, right now, right now, right now, right now. One of the things we shall seldom hear in this week is that the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father is praying for us.

Now, we have the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter where he is, "The Servant of God," and the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter, "The Comfort of God," and the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, "The Fruit of God," and the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter, "The Giver of the Holy Spirit," and the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter, "Our great High Priest."

And when we meet together like this again, we shall step over the Brook Kidron into the Garden of Gethsemane and there is where we will go.

Our Father, let Thy blessing rest upon Thy word. As we have listened in this class this morning, we pray that Thou will cover up its imperfections and that which is lacking, wilt Thou supply it by the Holy Spirit Himself so that out of our hearts may come adoration for the one who is the glory of God personified. In His precious name we pray, Amen.