

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 9
The Pathway of the Portraits – Chapters 18 through 21
Our Sorrowing Savior
Our Atoning Lord
Our Risen Lord
Our Fellowship and Returning Lord
February 18, 1973**

Sunday School at East Lake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson Number 021873.

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:

“The Gospel of John.”

“Different.”

“The Pictures Continued.”

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

Now you will see from the board that we are following the same old pathway that we have been traveling together for quite some time, and I’m hoping that you have found it to be unusual. It is not an ordinary study of the Gospel of John at all and we shall go on for some time, keeping in mind one thing: not only is the Gospel of John different but what was in the mind of the Spirit in giving us a fourth gospel? I think there are any number of answers to that. We found quite a few of them, the distinctions, and we have been looking at them, but the great central thing, of course, is that the Holy Spirit was giving us in the Gospel of John, His final portrait of our Lord. Here is the picture perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now all we have to do is to remind ourselves that the great business of the Holy Spirit is not to give gifts to folks. He does that, of course, but it is all part of one great central thing. The Holy Spirit is here dwelling in us in order to glorify the Son. Just as the Son came to glorify the Father, so the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son, and the way He does it is to reveal to us how beautiful He is, and He gives us a picture album with 21 lovely portraits of our Lord. And as you

go through it and see Him in this aspect and that of His character, it is almost breathtaking, because we won't see anything like it until we actually see Him face to face.

Now the reason why the Gospel of John was delayed and why the Holy Spirit did not give in exactly the same way the portraits of our Lord previous to this time is that now there is in the world a group of people born of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Holy Spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit. They are members of the family of God and you know as well as I that family portraits mean more to members of the family than to anybody else. One of those things in which we bore sometimes our visitors that will come to our home, excuse me for saying that, but I think there is an element of truth in it, is when we get out the family album and we take them through the varied pictures of the family, in the hope that it may be of interest to them. It would astonish us sometimes if we knew just what they were thinking. But these things are of interest to us. We belong to the family of God. We have been made members of the Body of Christ. We have been given a new nature all together. We've got different eyes. We've got a different thinking apparatus up here. We've got a new controlling person within that is entirely different to anything or anybody that was ever there before. Here is something that is entirely new and because we've got new eyes and a new thinking perception, we can see things that other people can't see. You know, even the average Christian can go through the Gospel of John and miss the main thing about it. The main thing about it is not the people you meet, it's the person you meet. The main thing about it is not the words that are there, the teaching that is there, the main thing about it is, it's His teaching. He's the one. We are brought face to face with Him in a way that we have not been able to before entering into the Gospel of John. We see Him.

Now in our recent studies of three weeks now, we had been traveling through, quietly, through the Gospel of John, just taking a look at these pictures and why it is that we find our Lord in a certain aspect of His work and character in Chapter 1, and then we see him differently in Chapter 2; and we see him again in another aspect in Chapter 3. And we've been through it. Now I want to just go over that ground again just to repeat it up to Chapter 17 because that is where we stopped in our last lesson two weeks ago. We stopped at the 17th chapter of John. Now that was not an accidental stopping place because there are things about the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John where we need to take a careful look at it and I want us to do that. I may have some suggestion so that you can have just more than a look at it or a listen to it. We may have something more than that. I will explain what I mean in just a moment or two.

But in the 1st chapter, we discovered Him, "The Word of God." "In the beginning was the Word." And we suggested that that's a good word to put right at the beginning of the chapter because that's the key that unlocks it.

Now when we get to Chapter 2, we find He is, "The Cleansing of God." The cleansing of the temple was the incident from which we title that particular picture of Him in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 3, He's, "The Salvation of God," because salvation begins with the new birth and it develops into responsible children in the Family of God, and the mark of our responsibility, John 3:30, is that He increases and we decrease. Now you will find this in the 3rd chapter in a way in which you will not discover anywhere else. You will find enlargements of it or additions to it and so on, but this is the way in which it is developing.

When you get to the 4th chapter, He is, “The Satisfaction of God.” “If you drink of the water that I shall give, you shall never thirst but it shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life,” and He gives us there the antidote for one of the most difficult things that we find within the circle of the Christian church. It is this, my dear, the unsatisfied Christian. Now that is one of the most difficult things that is found anywhere within the Christian church, but you see it everywhere and He is giving us the antidote to that, the answer to the problem. “If you drink of the water that I shall give you, you shall never thirst but it shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

In the 5th chapter, He is, “The Judgment of God.” “All judgment is given unto the Son.” The courtroom scene, remember. We may come back to that one Sunday morning and spend time looking at it because the picture is so tremendous that we ought to get it in detail and not just a general passing view of it.

And in the 6th chapter, He tells us what He is; He is, “The Bread of Life.”

And in the 7th, He is, “The Giver of Living Water.”

And in the 8th, He is, “The Light of the World.”

And in the 9th, the man born blind, He is, “The Creator of Sight.” Remember the distinction between healing blindness and creating sight and you’ve got the two things. He healed blindness with blind Bartimaeus, He created sight in the man born blind.

And in the 10th, He is, “The Good Shepherd.”

And in the 11th, He is, “The Resurrection and the Life.”

And in the 12th, “Christ the King,” riding into Jerusalem, and you can hear the sound of an ancient prophet’s voice 700 years before saying, “Behold, your king cometh, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” And here right before our eyes we’ve got something there that is not only tremendous in its aspect of the moment that it happened, but the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy.

In the 13th chapter, He’s, “The Servant of God,” the slave, the bond slave because there He washes the disciples’ feet.

In the 14th, He’s, “The Comfort of God.”

And in the 15th chapter, “The Fruit of God.” That is the chapter of the vine and the branches and the tremendous declaration, “Herein is my Father glorified, not that ye bear fruit but that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.”

Then the 16th chapter, He continues his teaching about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He started it in Chapter 14 and 14, 15, 16 tells us more about the Holy Spirit from the lips of our Lord Himself than any other one place in the scripture. You’ll find a lot about what the Holy Spirit does, what is His purpose, but His coming, who sends Him and what’s the primary thing that the Holy Spirit does? He is the one who convicts of sin and of righteousness and of judgment and so on.

And in the 17th chapter we have perhaps the central glowing light of all these things in a very real sense when we find our Lord, “Our Great High Priest.” And here He is.

Now that’s the moment where I want to stop and add something because this is where we stopped two weeks ago. Now this morning, I want to add something to it, and I want to read you something, an analysis of the 17th chapter of John that would show unanswerably that it wasn’t a human production, this Gospel of John, at all; that no man could of himself have written the 17th chapter of John out of his own imagination. Now this is one of the reasons why you find a concentrated attack upon the Gospel of John as you will not find upon any other gospel, or almost any other book. It is this demonstration of the beauty of our Lord on the one hand and the absolute perfection of the Word of God, the record of it on the other.

Now, let me read you something. I am reading now an analysis of the 17th chapter of John that was made by one of the greatest Hebrew/Greek scholars that I have ever met. I knew this man and knew him personally, worked with him for that matter, and he made an analysis of the 17th chapter of John and this is what he found:

“John 17: There are 7 paragraphs in the prayer, 7 sentences in each paragraph. The number of words in each paragraph is a multiple of 7. There are 490 words in all. Seven parts of speech used. The persons of the Godhead, 91 times. God the Father, 7 times. His unity with the Father, 7 times. Statements about the disciples, 14 times. Statements about himself, 28 times. Seven distinct petitions. Desires for His disciples, 14 times. As being sent, 7 times. Gifts of God to Him, 7 times. The disciples as God’s gift to Him, 7 times. And, “As so,” 7 times.””

Now that is the analysis of the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John. Now my dear, when you caught your breath on that, I want you to lift your heart in thanksgiving to God for an unanswerable evidence of the inspiration of the scripture. It would have been utterly impossible for anybody to write the 17th chapter of John out of his little old head and produce something like that.

Alright, now the next thing we are going to do is to travel the rest of the way, 18-21, and complete the thing that we are doing.

When you get to the 18th chapter of John, you will find yourself in the Garden of Gethsemane and the great word that is there in the Garden of Gethsemane is “sorrow.” Now you will find, He is, “Our Sorrowing Savior” in the Garden of Gethsemane. The moment that you enter into that shady place where the olive trees are shedding or giving their refuge, their shadowy refuge to somebody in deep sorrow. Let’s not try to explain to each other. You don’t ask me please. I won’t ask you the meaning of the sorrow that we see in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Remember, if you please, that there are three things that our Savior had to bear in His own body when He made atonement for sin. One is the fact, the guilt of sin and the other is the sorrow for sin that not only comes to the sinner but comes to the heart of God as well. And the third thing is the separation that sin causes. Sin has separated. Now in the Garden of Gethsemane, the crushing weight of a world’s sin was coming down upon Him. Now there are moments there when we can at least faintly understand the sorrow that’s there. When He says to his disciples, the sleeping disciples, when He says to them, “Could you not watch with me one brief hour?”

Now we understand something about that. We may have had friends who have disappointed us, I don't know, but there are folks who know something of the sorrow that comes because of unfaithfulness on the part of those who should have been faithful. We can enter into that. But when we watch Him with great drops of blood falling from Him to the ground, and we wonder why, there is sorrow that we can't understand at all, because I'm deeply convinced and here I'm only talking out of my heart, I can't give you chapter and verse for this, but I'm deeply convinced that those great drops of blood came because at that moment He was feeling the intolerable, crushing weight of a world's sin upon Him, and I'm deeply convinced that in that moment there was such a pressure upon Him that the great drops of blood were the outward evidence of it. Now that's only just an opinion. Anyhow, in the 18th chapter, He's, "Our Sorrowing Savior."

Now, when you get to the 19th chapter, here we find Him, "Our Atoning Lord," because this is the chapter where you find Him upon the cross and the great center of all of God's revelation is there at the cross. Remember that in the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, one of the things he says is this, "God trusted in Him". Now at Calvary, Chapter 19, at Calvary where you see our atoning Lord, we find the place where God Himself puts all of His trust, where God invests everything that God is in that cross. He put all of His love and all of His grace and all of His power and all of His purpose, it's all centered in the cross and the cross is saying primarily to God the Father; it says it to us, but the cross is saying, "This is sufficient to satisfy everything that God's righteous character demands in the handling of the problem of sin." You'll find it all there. There isn't anything that needs to be added to Calvary. Calvary covered it all. Now, 19th chapter and, "Our Atoning Lord."

Now let's take a good look at Him. Let's take a good look at Him. There was never anything else like that you know, never. Because this was the ultimate in satanic attack upon the one who was God's atoning lamb. There wasn't anything else. There was no suffering like it. A victim tied to a stake and burned at the stake, it wasn't anything like that. That victim at the stake would have been dead in five minutes, you see. This intolerable thing went on for six hours. There wasn't anything else that the diseased mind of men could possibly think up that was worse than that. And He endured it not alone but in the company of sinners. Now here we've got Him. He's, "Our Atoning Lord."

Now, when you come to the 20th chapter, you find a different picture all together because while it is true that just for a little while we stood by the side of a tomb and we watch somebody buried there; we watched the stone rolled to the mouth of the tomb; we watched soldiers guarding it; we watched the seal that was placed upon it, but when we come into the 20th chapter of John, then you find light is breaking on the picture that is as indescribable as was the darkness in Chapter 19. When you come to the light in Chapter 20, it is utterly impossible to describe it there - what these disciples must have seen in the emptiness of that tomb. And don't forget, my dear, that sometimes we can see more in emptiness than we can in fullness. Now God is the only one who can do that. He can sometimes show us more in an empty thing than in a full one. Now that tomb was sacred enough when it held His body, but now here is the light of it and here are the heavenly visitors, here are the disciples filled with a joy they didn't understand, that they never could have felt any other way, and we find Him in Chapter 20, "Our Risen Lord."

Now my dear, Chapter 21 is the final picture of Him. I wonder what it will be. What would be the final ray of light from the picture in 21 that would show the face of Jesus to the best advantage? What would it be? Well, in a very real sense, the 21st chapter of John is a postscript as if the Holy Spirit having finished the book at the end of Chapter 20; and you remember that the last verse of Chapter 20 says, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing ye might have life through His name," period. That is the end.

And then, a postscript, as if the Holy Spirit was anticipating a question, a problem that will arise; and He gives this indescribably beautiful 21st chapter to answer a question. Have you ever thought that this question might arise? Did the resurrection of our Lord change Jesus? Or was He just as accessible, just as understanding, just as near as He was before the resurrection? Now these disciples could walk with Him, talk with Him, argue with Him, depend upon Him. They could do it all, you see, but now they'd watched him die. They'd watched him buried and now they've gone to a tomb and find it's empty, and when they look around at least one found him there right close to it and within a very short time, the disciples were in an upper room gathered together again and suddenly our Lord is in the midst of them, and nobody saw Him come through the door or the wall and yet here He is.

Supposing you had attended a funeral and then three days later you saw the person whose funeral you attended walking down the street towards you. What would you say to them? Well, it might have been, "Hi, Bill" or something like that before, but what about it now? Would that fact take Jesus to a distance from His disciples so that they would think they mustn't come near? They mustn't touch Him, not now. They mustn't expect to be on the same intimate terms that they used to be, and the 21st chapter of John answers those questions.

One of the lovely things that we notice about the gospels is that they begin and end in exactly the same way. The first of the gospels is the Gospel of Mark and you find in the Gospel of Mark that the opening scene is by the Lake of Galilee.

"Now as He walked by the Sea of Galilee He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for they were fishers and He said unto them, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.""

Now that is where it started. It started by the Lake of Galilee. It started with a group of fishermen. It started with a Savior walking along and calling to those fishermen and do you know that the last of the Gospels ends in exactly the same way in exactly the same place with exactly the same people, and He is there by the Lake of Galilee. Now these disciples had gone up there and they had known that He had said to them, "You go there and I'll meet you in Galilee," and time went by and He didn't come, and some of them, probably Peter as the spokesman, said, "Well, if he isn't coming, I'm not going to wait for Him any longer, let's go back fishing, let's go back fishing." And they hadn't been fishing for 3-1/2 years, you know. They'd been in boats but not fishing for 3-1/2 years and they soon found out when they got into the boat and got out on the lake, they soon found that they had forgotten their skill as fisherman for they caught nothing and there they were.

Now, is our Lord interested in moments when our faith waivers? Now He was before, oh yes, but now he is the risen one. Does He care in just the same way? Does He care about our

moments of embarrassment, because don't forget that those fishermen, Peter and the rest of them, out there with their empty boat bobbing on the top of the water, they were the objects of scrutiny from this crowd down there at the Capernaum fish market. They were watching them and they knew they hadn't caught anything. A boat bobbing on top of the water means empty. If it had been full with fish, it would have been deeper in the water. These fellows knew all about that. And there they were watching from the Capernaum fish market and saying to themselves, "Ha ha, there they go, there they go. They left here to go into the ministry. They went to go to Bible school 3-1/2 years ago, now look at them. They've even forgotten how to fish. Ha ha ha ha."

Does He care anything about that? The risen savior? Now He did before. Does He now? Does He now? Does He care about the hunger that would come after a night of fishing and especially a night of fishing failure? Does He care about that? Does He? Because all of these questions are answered in the 21st chapter of John; and you know dear, that's the reason why we've got a 21st chapter of John. You haven't got it anywhere else. It's to answer these questions and to bring us to the conclusion that the risen Jesus is the very same Jesus. You see, now that's the thing that just shouts at us out of the 21st chapter of John. He is the very same Jesus. He hasn't changed one bit. He's just exactly the same Jesus.

Now, I want you to notice one other thing about this gospel and you will find it in each of the other gospels and that is this, that the Gospel of John ends with the sound of His coming again. You remember that almost the last thing that was said was our Lord's answer to Peter's question, "What are you going to do about John? What about this fellow?" And our Lord says to him, "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee, follow thou Me." And you will find the Gospel of John ending with the note of the coming again of the Lord, and you will find it in every one of them. The gospels are not dead end streets that end up against a blank wall, not at all. There is the pathway leading out into the glory of God's eternal purpose and His eternal purpose centers in the coming again of the Lord.

Now we've been following an interesting pathway and we've gone all the way through. Do you mind if we go over it again and see how we got along, how you go along in your thinking as we go along from one chapter to another and do something that you might not be able to do it in just the same way unless you'd been over the ground as we have been? In the 1st chapter, He is the Word of God; the 2nd, the Cleansing of God; the 3rd, in the Salvation of God; in the 4th, the Satisfaction of God; 5, the Judgment of God; 6, the Bread of Life; 7, He is the Water of Life; 8, the Light of the World; 9, the Creator of Sight; 10, the Good Shepherd; 11, the Resurrection and the Life; in 12, He is Christ the King; and in 13, Christ the Servant; and 14, Christ the Comfort of God; 15, the Fruit of God; 16, the Giver and Channel of the Holy Spirit; 17, Our Great High Priest; 18, Our Sorrowing Savior; 19, Our Atoning Lord; 20, Our Risen Lord; and 21, Our Fellowship and Returning Lord - for fellowship means, He's just one with us and we are one with Him; and if there is one thing in which the, one way in which the 21st chapter of John could be summarized it would be the Lord Jesus is just the same. He hasn't changed one bit. He's just as accessible, just as beautiful, just as understanding, just as touchable as He was before; and we find we've been through a very interesting pathway.

Now, let me tell you for the moment what we have in mind from now on because that would be a good stopping place for the Gospel of John, or would it? Is it a stopping place or is it an open

door that invites us to go further; because while we stop just a moment or two at each of these chapters, we haven't looked very much at them have we?

Now next week I want to bring to you another picture that has to do, it is related, let me put it that way, it is related to what we have been doing before; and I want to talk to you about an aspect of the Gospel of John that you will not find anywhere else; and let me explain it to you and then we will deal with it next Sunday. It is this: that at the beginning of every chapter in the Gospel of John you will find a darkness and through the dark curtain our Lord steps to meet the need. Now that is putting it in the minimum of words. But if you've got a burden or you know anybody else who has, if there is a darkness in any life, here is His answer to it, and I think it will be a follow-up to what we have been doing because it brings to mind again our Lord in His loveliness, not only meeting a need but meeting my need. Now that's the thing we're going to be doing as the time goes by and particularly next Sunday; and then we will turn to see in more detail some of these chapters there and take a good look at Him. I'd like to go over the 5th chapter, the Judgment of God with you and things like that; and I think it will be of value to you. And it will be of delight to me, you can be quite sure of that.

Our Father, Thou hast been so good to us and Thou has given us this privilege, a nice quiet room, this $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour in which we have been listening to the sound of Thy word and we pray that something may have happened in our hearts as we have taken this long and detailed look at the face of Him in whose face all of the glory of God abides. May we go out from this room with something of the reflection of it in our lives. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.