

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

CD 84 contains two Messages
Themes From I Peter Chapters 1-2
Delivered at the Christian Business Men's Committee – Toccoa Falls, Georgia

Editorial Note: From 1960 – 1962, Sidney and Violet Cox lived in the small town of Toccoa Falls, Georgia where Sidney served as Professor of New Testament on the faculty at the Toccoa Falls Bible Institute. Sidney was 73 years of age in 1960 and they were in a state of semi-retirement. They lived in a small home which I believe was faculty housing on the small campus of the institute. The Toccoa Falls Bible Institute was sponsored and supported by the Christian and Missionary Alliance organization, with whom Sidney had developed a close relationship. The Institute trained ministers to enter pastorates at CMA churches.

As always, during this period, Sidney was often invited to preach and teach in surrounding churches and to other groups. In the case of these sermons, he was presenting a series of Bible lessons to the Christian Business Men's Committee of Toccoa Falls. Following is a brief history about this organization:

CBMC began as Christian Business Men's Committee in the United States in 1930, when a group of Christian businessmen coordinated a series of pre-Easter rallies. With the Great Depression in its second year, these men saw a need for a spiritual revival in the Chicago area, and a six week evangelistic crusade was held at the Garrick Theatre, located in downtown Chicago.

The noon, weekday meetings soon were extended beyond the scheduled six weeks into six months, then one year. Similar groups were being started in San Francisco, Seattle, and several other large cities throughout the country. As the years passed, the work spread throughout the world, into Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, India, and more, over 60 nations in all.

Today, CBMC has grown from a small group of men in Chicago to over 18,000 members in 700 teams across the United States. Worldwide, CBMC is active in over 70 countries with over 50,000 members total. Their methods continue to evolve to reflect the circumstances of modern men, but their purpose remains the same: to evangelize and disciple business and professional men for Christ.

John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. February 2009.

**Tracks 7-11. Themes from I Peter Chapters 1-2.
"Strangers Scattered"**

Now, I'd like to read the first verse to you. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."¹ This is a miraculous letter. In the first place, all you have to do is to read just a little bit of it and you will find that you are reading one of the most wonderful things that was ever written; one of the finest pieces of scriptural literature that you can

¹ I Peter 1:1

find anywhere. Now scriptural literature is the crown, the peak, of all literature.

One of the things that distresses me is that in this world of ours with folks with great big heads and small hearts, are so efficient in the matter of literature, they know literature and that sort of thing. When you ask them a simple question about the Bible, they don't know anything about it. And as a matter of fact, a man is an ignoramus in the field of literature unless he knows this literature. There isn't anything like this. It doesn't matter how many letters he's got at the end of his name, and how much he knows about other literature, he remains fundamentally an ignoramus if he doesn't know this. This is the place where God himself has put the crown of literature – literature is the way in which truth is expressed or the way in which ideas are expressed. And there is no other book like this.

Now when you get to old Peter and you begin to find you're reading a book that he wrote and you find it's almost the crown of all the Bible literature. Then the miracle dawns on you – how could Peter ever write a thing like this? Take a look at his hands. He was much more used to fishing boats and nets and all the rest of the stuff that went with it, than he was to a pen? I wondered how often Peter used a pen, a quill, a very small thing. His hands weren't made for that sort of thing; hard and horny and smelly. I sometimes wonder if Peter ever did get rid of the smell of fish off himself. He may have done, I don't know. But it sure sticks around sometimes, especially when you've been in it as many years as he had. He never smelled anything else but fish. And it clings around.

Here's this man, with his hard, horny hands, writing a letter. And he uses words in it that could not possibly have come out of his heart. If you want to know the words that were in Peter's heart and in his mind until God the Holy Spirit got hold of him, all you have to do is to stand with him beside a fireplace with a little crowd around. There's a trial going on in an adjoining room and Peter finds himself face to face with something, and out of his heart there comes his natural language. Out of his mind there gushes this cesspool of his natural language. He denied him with, "Oaths and cursings."² That's the natural language of Peter. Now here's a man with that background, and yet out of this man's heart and this man's mind and from this man's hands comes one of the most precious, beautiful, magnificent things that has ever been given to mankind - this letter that Peter wrote to his friends scattered here and there. This is the first thing that we see. Peter could not possibly have written it apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

For example, you will find a word repeated seven times and this is worth remembering, because it is in seven different connections. It's the word, "precious". Now Peter repeats it over and over and over again, always in a different connection. Seven precious things he mentions. Now the point about it is, can you imagine a word like "precious" on the lips of Peter? Now, it's alright for kindly, gracious, tender folks to say something is "precious." We look at a little girl here and we say, "Isn't she precious?" But that hardly fits Peter, does it? That word, precious? It's almost out of place; you can hardly imagine. And yet that's the word he repeats, see? And he talks about precious faith, and precious blood, and a precious person, and here he goes, Peter, talking about these things.

Something must have happened to Peter, and it did, it sure did. Now, one of the things that you notice when you begin to study this lesson, is what did happen to him and when? Because this lesson, this book, takes you right back to the place where something tremendous happened in the life of Peter. You

² Matthew 26:74.

go back to the first chapter of John, or the beginning of it, this is the first thing. It's the most clearly stated thing that he has, and he goes right back to it there, and this is what I mean. There was a day when Peter's brother, Andrew, saw the Lord, and the first thing he wanted to do was to win his own brother, Peter, and he goes to Peter and tells him what has happened to him. He has found the Lord. Now, here is this thought in connection with it – when Andrew brings Peter to Jesus, Jesus for the first time says something personal to Peter. Well, he looks at this rough fisherman and says, “You are Simon, but you shall be Cephas or Peter, which is by interpretation, a stone.”³ He says, “I can see something in you that other people can't. Other people can see sand, mostly quicksand, but I can see rock in you and I'm going to give you a name that will indicate what I can see in you. I can see rock in you.” Now, that must have been an amazing thing to Peter. It must have been an amazing thing to his old Father.

I've sometimes wondered what happened when Peter and Andrew got back to the Johnson household, because that was their name. If we put it in ours, he was, “Simon Barjona,” which it simply means, son of Jona, and that's only another name for Johnson. And here is old man Johnson, back there, the man who ran the fishing boats, see, and he'd given it over to his sons. And these two boys go in and say, “We've found the Messiah.” “You did? What did he do?” And old Peter speaks up, “He changed my name.” “He changed your name? Well, what name did he give you?” “Well,” he says, “I was Simon, but now I'm going to be Cephas, which means a rock.” I wonder if old man Johnson didn't laugh out loud at the very idea of it. Because he knew this boy; he knew how much quicksand there was in Peter and how little rock was there.

You don't see much rock in Peter until after Pentecost. You can follow him all the way through. You can't see much rock in Peter at that time that I mentioned there when he stood by the side of the fire. You can't see much rock in Peter, even though he did fling himself into the water and come onto the sand when the Lord Jesus called to them and said, “Have you got have any meat?”⁴ Because just a moment or two afterwards he was saying, typically Peter, pointing to John, “What are we going to do about this fellow? What are we going to do about him?” You see? This is Peter. “What are we going to do about him?” You see. And our Lord had to put him on one side, as he'd done many a time, and say to him, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.”⁵

Now here was this, this is the thing that we're seeing now, the change in Peter. I want you to notice this, that our Lord Jesus said two very personal things to Peter, and he didn't forget either one of them. Now, it looked as if he had, but the Lord Jesus had dropped something into the heart of this man and he didn't forget it. This matter of the rock, let me read you something here. Let's go to the beginning of the second chapter, and here he is beginning to describe the household of faith.

In the first chapter he tells you how do you become a member of the household of faith – we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, and he's going to give us an inheritance that's incorruptible and undefiled, and we better behave ourselves as such, and he's going to take us through the two pillars that hold the door into the household of faith. One is redemption in verse 19, and one is regeneration in verse 23. You've got a door hanging, he's going to take us through into the household of faith.

3 John 1:42

4 John 21:5

5 John 21:22

And in chapter two he describes the household of faith, and he says in this way, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone," now watch it, "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: and unto them that be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is become the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."⁶ And in five verses he uses the word Jesus used about him. You shall be a rock, man. He uses that word six times in five verses. So it hadn't gotten by, and when he's trying to describe something here the old figure comes up before him. Here is this lovely thing.

The other thing the Lord Jesus said to him personally was, "Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs."⁷ Now, you put lambs and sheep together and you've got a flock, see. Now, when Peter writes the last chapter of this book, and he knows he isn't going to write anymore, he writes the last chapter of this book and now he's going to give advice to the elders of the church, and he says to them, "Feed the flock of God."⁸ Exactly the same thing the Lord Jesus had said to him. He didn't forget after all.

We wonder sometimes when the Lord Jesus goes out of his way to say something to somebody, whether it just goes by and nothing happens. But every once in a while the Lord Jesus says something to somebody and it sticks. Do you remember the day when his lovely hand was put upon your shoulder, and you heard him say, "I want you. I want you. I want you." And it didn't go by, did it? Oh, no, it didn't go by, it stayed right there. It didn't go by. You didn't forget it. Now, let's look again.

Here is old Peter writing this lovely book, and I want you to notice something else about him. He was not only a changed man with a changed name, because that's very significant. The thing I want to remind you about is this, that the two most important men in the New Testament and the two most important men in the Old Testament were men whose names were changed. There was Abram to Abraham. There was Jacob to Israel. Now, you watch a minute, and see what God does when he changes the name of a man, because you can see what happened to Peter. This wasn't Peter at all after that name was changed.

Now you see what God did with Abraham - A-b-r-a-m, Abram. Now the great name of God is Jah - Jehovah, Jah. J-a-h is the way it's spelled, a-h is the syllable. That's the name of God. And you will see this, that God took that name of Abraham, broke it into two parts, and pushed his own name right in the middle of it, until it's now A-b-r-a-h-a-m. And you've got God and Abram all mixed up together, till you can't separate them. Now, that's what God does when he changes your name.

He's given you a new name; we don't know what it is, not yet, but we will one of these days. And you can be quite sure of this, that in that new name he gives you, he pushes himself right into the middle of it until it's an indication that God has been gracious enough to unite us with himself. You can see the uniting process in the case of Abram. Now, you take the case of Jacob, you'll find the same thing. Not

6 I Peter 2:4-8

7 John 21:15-17

8 I Peter 5:2

only is “a-h” an indication of the name of God, but “e-l” is an indication of the name of God. The great names of God are El-Shadi, El-Elyon, and so on. All the way through, you see. Now, he take this man and gives him a name and puts himself right into it, for it's I-s-r-a-e-l. And it's Jacob and God together. Just as it's Abram and God together.

Now, in the case of the New Testament men, you can see it in the meaning of the word, not in the word itself. Simon becomes Cephas or Peter. And Saul becomes Paul. Men whose names were changed. Now this is the man that God chooses, the Holy Spirit selects, to write this beautiful thing.

Now, let's look and see what he does say. The first thing he's got to do is to give his credentials. If he's going to write a letter and expect people to receive it, and be influenced by it, he's got to give his credentials, and he does. He says, “I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ.”⁹ What is an apostle? Well, now we all know what it means, but let's just pause and go over it again, just for the joy of it. Looking at an apostle, what is an apostle?

An apostle is somebody who is sent with a message, but that's only half of it. An apostle is someone who is sent to represent somebody, not just to take a message from somebody. Any messenger boy can do that, but an apostle is somebody who not only carries a message for Jesus, but who represents Jesus. An apostle has not only the right to say, “This is what Jesus said”, but the apostle should be one who can also say, “If you want to know what Jesus looks like, you look at me.” Now, that's a little different, isn't it? “If you want to know what Jesus thinks, you listen to me.” Now, Paul said that, didn't he? He said, “You follow me as I follow Christ.”¹⁰ And an apostle is one who represents his Lord. When we send an ambassador into a foreign land, this man whoever he is, they don't always do it, but they ought to. Sometimes they let the whole business down, but that doesn't alter the fact of ambassadorship. This man ought to be able to say, “If you want to know what the United States is like, you look at me. If you want to know what the United States thinks, then you listen to me.” He ought to be able to say that, so that folks everywhere, where ever they go, can say, “If you want to know what the United States looks like, there it is over there, walking in his shoes.”

And an ambassador is not only one through whom Jesus speaks, but he's one through whom Jesus can walk in his shoes. Now, that's something else, isn't it? It's a startling thought, and I want to tell you, beloved, it set me back on my heels many a, many a time, that our Lord loves to get into my shoes and walk in my shoes and wear my clothes and look out of my face, not just to use my mouth, but that's something else, isn't it? Now, Peter is saying to these folks, “I'm an ambassador. I'm here, not merely to tell you what he says, but to represent him so that you can see him in me.” Now that's an ambassador, somebody who says to a foreign land, “You can see the United States in me.” They don't all do it, but that's what they ought to do. They sure should. Now, Peter's like that. He says, “I'm an ambassador of Jesus Christ, there.”

Now he's going to write a letter; he's going to write a letter to some folks and he's going to say, “I'm going to write them to the strangers scattered”¹¹, and there are two lovely words. They were not strangers to God; they were not strangers in the place where they lived. Many of them had lived there

9 I Peter 1:1

10 I Corinthians 11:1

11 I Peter 1:1

for generations. Their fathers and mothers back there three or four hundred, five hundred years before, had been taken into captivity into Babylon or Assyria, and there they had stayed all the way through, and here they were part of a Jewish community, half a millennium away. And there they were. They were not strangers to the place where they lived. But in what sense were they strangers, in what sense? They were strangers in this sense: that everybody who belongs to God is a stranger in this world. He doesn't belong down here.

One of the tragedies that happened when the Old-fashioned Revival Hour went from one hour to half an hour was, the Old-fashioned Revival Hour Quartet was cut off, and one of the songs they used to sing, and it always gave Charlie Fuller a shot in the arm every time they sang it, you could always tell in his sermon afterwards that he'd got a real pick up when they sang it. And they always sang there, "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through." Sure, that's the thing, this isn't our home, and we are just a-passing through.

You can be quite sure that if a child of God gets too comfortable down here, something's wrong somewhere. If he begins to think more of an inheritance down here, than he does of an inheritance up there, then old Peter's going to remind them about that, you see. He's going to tell them about it, he sure does. If they become so absorbed with things down here that it blurs their vision and they lose their appetite for things up there, something's wrong somewhere. Now, he says, "You're strangers down here. Don't be surprised if the world doesn't accept you." He said, "I remember." He doesn't put this in his letter, but you can almost read it into his thoughts. "I remember hearing the Lord Jesus say to the twelve of us around here, 'The world doesn't like me and don't you expect that it's going to like you. The world has rejected me, it will reject you too.'"¹² Sure, you're going to be a stranger down here.

Now, I'm going to stop right there, and if you let me, we'll pick it up there when we come together again and if that kind of a little breaking of a fragment of God's Word and a bit of Father's bread is alright for you in the middle of the day, well, I'll be so glad to share it with you. Thank you so much. (audio ends)

¹² John 17:14