

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

The Salvation Army Southern Bible Conference – Summer 1968
Shamrock Village. Ft. Pierce, Florida

Special Guests:
Dr. John Sutherland Logan¹
Reverend Sidney Cox
Colonel and Mrs. Albert Pepper²

Highlights

Congregational Singing – Cox Chorus, *Just Sing Me a Song About Jesus*
Sidney Cox Sermon – II Timothy. *The Seriousness of the Christian Life.*

Editorial Note: What follows are excerpts from the meetings conducted during the week long Salvation Army Bible Conference of 1968. Officers from throughout the Southern Territory all congregate for this annual camp-style conference which is a Salvation Army institution.

Following the death in August, 1967 of his beloved wife, Violet, who had been a near invalid for many years, Sidney Cox was once again able to travel. Although he was 81 years of age, he was much in demand as a speaker and teacher, and resumed his extensive travel schedule. On this occasion, he had been invited to participate as a special guest speaker for the duration of the conference.

Sidney and Violet Cox voluntarily left the work of The Salvation Army in 1944, and in the summer of 1968, he had been a former officer for over 20 years; yet, he remained extremely close friends with the Southern Salvationists and in popular demand as a speaker, preacher and musician at their meetings. Many of the officers at the conference had been closely associated with him or had even been trained by him at the Army's College for Officers Training during his Salvation Army tenure in Atlanta from 1928 – 1944.

This occasion was an emotional reunion for him and the officers in attendance at this conference.

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

COLONEL HARRY WARD, PRESIDING:

[Prayer in progress]...seated in one of these seats this morning. We sense Thy presence. Thou hast blessed us in the past. Bless us again this morning. May we absorb all that that has been prepared for us. We thank

¹ Dr. Southerland was a Scottish evangelist who was president of Vennard College, a Wesleyan-Holiness college in University Park, Iowa. He was a popular speaker at Salvation Army events such as Bible Conferences, Officers' Councils and at the Army training colleges in the late 1950s and 1960s.

² Colonel and Mrs. Pepper were well-known Salvation Army officers. Of note, Colonel Pepper became the first principal of the Brengle Holiness Institute, named for another Army icon, Colonel Samuel Logan Brengle. Like Brengle, Pepper became a noted teacher of the doctrine of holiness and was a personal witness to holy living.

Thee for this book. We thank Thee for its unfolding meaning to us in this day. We thank Thee for the one who has prepared his heart and his mind that we may receive these great truths and blessings. So guide him, we pray. Whatever we learn, may we apply it to our everyday life and living. In Jesus name. Amen.

SIDNEY COX

I think you look 24 hours nicer than you did the last time I saw you, and that's the way it ought to be. We should be daily growing more like Him.

I want you to sing once more the little chorus that we have brought with us, the one, *Just Sing Me A Song About Jesus*. And I want you to do from memory this morning. Now one of the reasons why I haven't brought the copies with me is that I'm going to take time to autograph all of them so that you folks can have your own autographed copy of this chorus. I was working a little bit on it this morning. I'll get them ready before you leave, long before you leave. I can't do much for you, but I can do that for you at any rate. And you can take it away as a little souvenir.

I think this is a good chorus. This is a pretty baby, no question about that. If a woman had had 200 babies, she'd know whether the latest one was pretty or not, wouldn't she? She'd have had lots of practice. I've got files at home with 200 songs that have been given to the Army and a lot of others that have been given elsewhere. I ought to know by now whether the song that comes is a pretty baby, or not. I think it is. You sing it with me if you please. There isn't anybody at the piano now. Mrs. Holtz, would you mind coming to the piano please? Now I'm doing this for two reasons. One, here's one of God's gracious ladies if ever there was one. And I've been watching Mrs. Holtz at the piano for 40 years, and I just wanted to see her there again. (Here you are, my dear).

Just Sing Me A Song About Jesus, and everybody singing it together, now. You trust your memory, all right. Together.

Just sing me a song about Jesus,
My wonderful, wonderful, Jesus.
Others may sing of birds on a wing,
Of flowers that bloom in the brightness of spring,
But if to my heart you would comfort bring,
Just sing me a song about Jesus,
My wonderful, wonderful, Jesus.

[Editorial Note: Sidney Cox had composed this chorus especially for this conference, a practice that he used on many occasions. Later in 1968, during an address to the cadets at The Salvation Army College for Officers Training in Atlanta, he told the story of his writing this chorus. On that occasion, this is what he said:

“I want you to sing that new chorus of mine so I can carry the memory of it. You know the one; *Just Sing Me A Song About Jesus*. Do you know that? Everybody know it? Have you got the music for it there? Fine.

I want you to sing it there. I wrote it in a hospital room in Detroit a couple of years ago or just a little less than that under rather unusual circumstances. I only have to mention that, and some of you will understand what I mean.

But I wrote it in a hospital room there in the city of Detroit a year and a half or more ago, and it came to my heart there. Because there comes a time, my dear, when the only name you want to hear is the name of Jesus. Did you hear it? And it will come to you too.³

The only name that you want to hear is His name. You don't want to hear about other things. You don't want to hear about, "Birds on the wing." You don't want to hear about something else. You don't want to hear about a, "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere" or something of the kind.

And, by the way, if you're going to a, "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere," don't look for me. I'm not going there at all. I know where I'm going, and it isn't a, "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." I'm going to a city that has foundations; that's builder and maker is God, of course. I know where it is and I know the size of it. I know what it's made of. I know what the paving stones are made of. I know what the gates are made of. I'm not going to any "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." You can go if you want to. But don't look for me when you get there. You won't find me there at all; not at all. Now, sing this little chorus for me; will you? Sing it loud. Come on, let's sing it loud together."

This story sheds light on the real meaning behind the chorus.]

Now that's nice. You've got it, and I hope it's got you. All right. Sing it once more, please. Sing.

Just sing me a song about Jesus,
My wonderful, wonderful, Jesus.
Others may sing of birds on a wing,
Of flowers that bloom in the brightness of spring,
But if to my heart you would comfort bring,
Just sing me a song about Jesus,
My wonderful, wonderful, Jesus.

You should introduce it in your Corps and I hope you will. I hope you have somebody there who can play it correctly. Don't give it to somebody who's just going to vamp along there and play what they think is there, because you can easily destroy a song that way. I've had lots of my songs just destroyed in that fashion. What happens when it comes out, heaven only knows at the end. But you get somebody who can play it, will you? If you're going to introduce it, give it to your pianist ahead of time and see that they practice it, especially that middle line where we're climbing up the scale there. Get those chords correctly. Now they are correct chords, and this music is written correctly. And I hope you'll treat it that way, will you? You

³ Sidney Cox is referring here to the death of his beloved wife, Violet in August, 1967. He loved her in a most remarkable way and often professed his love for her publicly. Upon her death, his family, friends and comrades naturally tried to console him. In his grief, this theme and these thoughts came to his mind, "Just sing me a song about Jesus."

forgive me for saying this to you, but I've suffered considerably with that kind of thing. I hope this is going to be just wonderful for you. I sure do.

This is so simple, isn't it? There isn't a chord in it, there isn't a note in it, that attracts attention to itself and away from the message. There isn't any marijuana music here. Did you hear? We made this one out of do-re-me, not LSD. I wanted you to laugh, but you'd better watch out. You'd better watch out, for not only outside in the world, where they haven't got any thoughts, and their music is the only thing they have. You find a lot of songs in these days that are LSD, not do-re-me. Just lots of them. You'd better watch out so that it doesn't creep into the Army – songs where the chords attract attention to themselves rather than to the word that's there. You can get a chord you know that will startle you and stop the flow of the thought and that's tragic.

Back in the early days of my Army experience, I was privileged to know one of the great early songwriters of the Army. His name is in your songbook. You wouldn't remember him, of course. But, he was one of the great ones – one of God's great men as well. And he said to me when I was starting out songwriting, he said, "Remember, that the important thing about a song that is our song, not out there in the world, but inside our circle; the important thing about the song is not the tune or the harmony or even the poetry. The important thing is the thought. Did you hear that? The thought. And the music and everything else ought to bring out clearly the thought that is there. The thought. And we've got it here, *Just Sing Me A Song About Jesus*. And I'd like folks to be able to see Him all the way through, every note of it, every chord of it, every thought of it. It should bring Him out. And don't allow anything to happen that'll make Him foggy. Indistinct. Blurred. Don't do that. We can do it so easily. Forgive me for saying that to you, but that's one of the things that's upon my heart.

Now, I want you to turn with me please to the 2nd chapter of Paul's letter to Timothy. II Timothy, 2nd chapter. We have been following what I believe is a very interesting pathway. We have watched an old man writing a letter in a Roman prison cell. We have watched a lovely, wonderful physician whose hands were writing, "spiritual prescriptions." And we watched him and we rejoiced in it – this lovely letter that came out of the damp, darkness of a Roman prison cell.

We have watched the opening of it, where before us, an old man writes to a young man about the God man. You could almost hear Paul's voice as he said, "Grace, mercy and peace to you." We've watched him as he followed the familiar pathway that is found in all of his letters, save one – the pathway of thanksgiving and remembrance and prayer.

We went into a lovely home where there was a grandmother and a mother and a son and we noticed that the important thing about it, the thing that shone out of their faces, the atmosphere of the home was faith. I've often wondered whether Lois wouldn't have looked nice in an Army bonnet. Wouldn't Eunice have made a fine Young People's Sergeant Major? Or, Corps Cadet Guardian? There wouldn't have been anybody that ever came in or went out of her corps cadet class who would have doubts in their hearts about where they stood in the presence of God. They wouldn't be, as Dr. Logan was so eloquently telling us this morning, something on the outside but empty on the inside. If she was the Young People's Sergeant Major, you can be quite sure of what would be in the center of that YP Corps or the corps cadet class. You can quite sure of that.

And we saw young Timothy receiving some instruction and we reminded ourselves, and we need to this morning, of Paul's pattern of teaching where he begins always with instruction and he moves on to exhortation. And then he moves further still to illustration and then always, there's the note of warning at the end. Instruction – this is what we should do. Exhortation – be sure you do it. Illustration – this is the way to do it. And warning – this will happen if you fail to do it.

And the great task that Timothy had was not merely looking after the affairs of a great church, and that was his responsibility, he was the young bishop of the Church at Ephesus. That was a big responsibility because there from that center flowed responsibilities to other churches. It was a responsibility, but his big responsibility was a personal one. He was to guard the faith, the faith that had come down in this from grandmother to mother and to son. And it was the gift of God within him, this gift of God that brings us out of darkness into light, this precious deposit of God's eternal truth that was dwelling comfortably in the heart of a young man. "Guard it, Timothy." Here's the instruction. "Watch over it as you would over a fire. Put fuel on the top. Keep the ashes cleaned out underneath. Don't let them accumulate. And it's a big job. You will find all kinds of opposition."

All he had to do was to look at the letter. It had come out of the Roman prison cell. It felt like it. All he had to do was to remind himself, "Timothy, this may be your end too." And it more than likely was. But here he was with this thing in his hand and he was to guard the truth and to recognize that there would be opposition to it all the way around. And so Paul very graciously and wonderfully reminds him of God's threefold provision for living the Christian life and working for God. He doesn't give us the spirit of fear, but he does give us power and love and a sound mind. And that storehouse of power and love and the sound mind is as full today as it was then. All we need to do is to reach out our empty hands and our empty hearts; and don't forget, my dear that the only kind of hands God ever fills are empty hands. Don't forget that the only kind of heart God ever fills is an empty heart. You turn your hands upside down and let everything in them go, and then you can turn them to God and you will be amazed at what he'll put in those hands of yours and in that heart of yours. You will. That's all you need to do. Just turn them upside down and then turn them right side up and you'll find there's a supply there, just as it was in the days that we're talking about.

Power and love and a sound mind. He's not to be ashamed of the Gospel, the gospel that has saved us. The gospel that glorified the Lord, Jesus, for he was in the center of it all. He wasn't to be ashamed of it. And then Paul breaks out into his own exalting glory song and says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." Of course. Timothy is not to be ashamed. Paul isn't ashamed. And there's one of those lovely characters at the end. By the way, did you underscore his name? You are looking for these 29 names, are you? And are you trying to find the 12 that are not mentioned anywhere else? Because there's one of them. You won't find him anywhere else. You'd better take a good look at him there. See what Paul says about him. See how Paul puts the crown upon his brow. He surely does – the brow of this man, Onesiphorus. You'll find him there.

And now we come into chapter 12. Paul has been telling young Timothy not only to guard the faith but to see that it's made intelligent, receivable - that the words that are used to express it are understandable. "You take care and see that the sound words are arranged in proper order." That's to make them receivable, digestible. And he's to see this. We call it "sound doctrine," he does in this same letter. But now he turns to this other phase of his teaching in chapter 2 and you find there seven illustrations and all of them say to us, "The Christian life is serious business." All of them. There are seven of them. And they're so familiar. But I think it would be nice to just look at them all, even if we have looked at them so very often before.

I want us to start if you please with verse four and there you will find the first, that is the first we're going to use. It isn't really the first, the third verse really. You will find the first of these illustrations. Paul is saying to Timothy, "The Christian life is like soldiership and the Christian is to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Now we don't need to remind ourselves in these times that soldiering is serious business. I wouldn't be at all surprised if some of you folks have got boys a long way away from here facing the seriousness of soldiership.

I was in the Carolinas Division in the early part of February of this year. Colonel and Mrs. Swyers were there and it was at that time that they had received word that there boy had been wounded in Viet Nam. Soldiership, my dear is serious business. And remember, the soldier we're talking about here was not a soldier on parade at all. He was a soldier at war. "No man that warreth." This is a soldier that's at the front. He's not in the background somewhere or other. Not at all. He didn't burn his draft card. Not this one. Not at all. Here he is at the front. And there are three marks, notice the old number three again – the three marks of the good soldier of Jesus Christ. And they are here.

First of all, he endures hardness. Then, his great purpose in life is to please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. This soldier wasn't an accidental one. He was a chosen one and we've got it here, that this one, he avoids entanglements, he endures hardness and his one business is to please him who called him to be a soldier. That's his business there.

Now, this business of enduring hardness, hasn't that gone out of date a little bit. If there's anything that even approaches hardness in these days, do we not run away from it rather than run toward it and welcome it? Do we not seek to avoid it rather than welcome it as one of God's instruments for our development, for the producing of the person of Christ more beautifully within our lives? It seems to me that in these days, we are running away from hardness. We are majoring on our right to softness. We've got to have this, and we've got to have that and we've got to have the other. Do we have to have these things? Do we? Do we? And if we don't get them, we are very apt to fill the air with our complaints. Did you hear it? I hope I'm not altogether right about that and if I'm wrong, I'm prepared to join the procession along with Colonel Ward and offer you my apologies. I sure do. I will. But isn't that so?

Quite some time ago, three or four years ago now, Mrs. Cox and I were on the Pacific coast and we were doing an officers council in Olympia, Washington, the lovely city that's the capital of the state of Washington. And there were these officers there, and it was a great privilege. And we met them and enjoyed them; and as far as we could, we took the little lady to meetings – wheeled her in in her wheelchair. There was a woman among those officers. She was a capable, fine woman. You could tell with one glance at her, she had what it takes. She was the wife of a Brigadier. But somebody had whispered to me, "She's always complaining about something." And I can hardly believe it. But when we came to the end of that council and did what we felt the Lord wanted us to do, most of the folks that were in that room with us were kneeling at an improvised altar, saying things to the Lord that they couldn't say back where they were sitting so comfortably before.

You know, my dear there are things that you can say to the Lord at the altar that you can't say back there. And there are things He can say to you at the altar that He can't or doesn't say when you're sitting so comfortably back there. It's amazing what intimacy suddenly appears when you walk down an aisle and kneel at an altar. I mean intimacy between you and your Lord. It's amazing. There are things, this woman could say things at the altar that she couldn't say anywhere else. And I spoke to her afterwards. I said, "I

was so glad to see you come. I don't know why you came." She said, "Oh, I'll tell you. I'll tell you why I came." She said, "You know, I've been one of these folks that have been constantly complaining about things if things didn't go right, or if I didn't get just what I thought I ought to have. Up went my complaints. And it's been going on, this has been my trouble all the way along." But she said, "I have been looking at a little lady in a wheelchair and I made up my mind I would never complain again." And she said, "I came and knelt at the altar to tell the Lord how ashamed I am of myself and to promise Him that I'll never complain again, and to thank Him for sending somebody that made me feel thus ashamed of myself." Did you hear it? Did you?

These complaints that pollute the air all the way around us, the good soldier of Jesus Christ endures hardness. It isn't a burden on him at all that he doesn't understand. It may be a difficult thing but that's the first thing.

Have you been noticing the television pictures of our boys in Viet Nam? Have you? Have you seen where they have to put their feet sometimes? Have you watched the load, the burdens that are upon their backs? Have you? Have you watched the faces of some of those boys as they were carrying back one of their buddies who had finished his term of duty? The good soldier, my dear endures hardness, and remember we're talking about a circumstance where persecution was surrounding them in its most terrifying forms. They endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Now the second thing is, he avoids entanglements. You know my dear, the person who invented barbed wire entanglements was not some military general, the devil had done that a long time ago. He's an expert at spreading barbed wire entanglements to us. And I'll tell you, he's an expert on camouflaging them too so that they look so right and so necessary and so harmless. And we look at them when we find everybody's doing it, and there we are. And the first thing you know, our feet are caught in some spiritual barbed wire entanglement. He avoids entanglements. And some of the entanglements you know that a soldier has to lay aside and avoid are not bad things at all. For instance, a soldier has to lay aside so many things that are of prime value to us. He doesn't take them to Viet Nam or anywhere else. He has to leave them behind. So many things. There are thousands and thousands of wives, this very morning whose hearts and eyes are turned in that direction. They were left behind. There are lots of children who will meet Daddy for the first time if and when he comes home. Just lots of them.

Now, these nice things, these necessary things, it is sometimes an obligation to put them on one side. We don't claim everything that we have a right to, my dear because if we do, then we're no different to the world. That's what the world does. We don't claim everything that we've got a right to. I think we said before that our highest right is to put our rights on one side.

I remember a great preacher, I think it was Dr. Redpath⁴ who was telling us a story of an old deacon, a deacon in a church that he was connected with. And I can tell you the name of the deacon, his name was W. D. Longstaff. Now, that doesn't mean anything to you, does it? Or, does it? He was the man who wrote the words, "Take time to be holy, speak oft with Thy Lord." And we haven't bothered to find out who wrote them. W. D. Longstaff, he was the chairman of the board of deacons in this church. Hard of hearing. And

⁴ Dr. Alan Redpath was born in the United Kingdom in 1907. He trained as an accountant, but soon felt the call to preach, and became an evangelist. Dr. Redpath is best known as the former Pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, serving from 1953 to 1962. In 1966, Alan Redpath began an itinerant conference and missionary ministry, in which he labored for the Lord well into his 70's. Dr. Redpath passed away in 1989 in England.

there was a little group of the deacons there and one of them was loudly claiming his right to something or other. He had the right to this, and he was going to have this. And the old man was listening there and he cupped his ears after a while and he said, "My brother, did I hear you talking about your rights? May I remind you that if you had your rights, you would be in Hell, right now!" Did you hear it? We have no right to be in this room at all. When you're under grace, my dear, rights go out of the window. The atmosphere of grace isn't polluted with that word, rights. Not at all.

Here was this wonderful thing that was happening here. A good soldier of Jesus Christ, he avoids entanglements and his one business is to please him who called him to be a soldier.

I stood in the railway depot at Cincinnati three or four or five years ago – been doing a meeting in the neighborhood there. You don't ride the trains much anymore, but this was a convenience to me. And you know the railroad station at Cincinnati is a very large place. And there was a train leaving. I wasn't on it or going on it, but I noticed the crowd that were making their way down the steps going to board the train. And I noticed how carefully the man at the door examined the tickets as the passengers passed through the door and down the steps to the train. And he did it so carefully that there was a little delay, a long line there. And I could hear and he could too, the sound of grumbling and that sort of thing that was going on at the end of the line – "why doesn't he hurry up and this." You know, the usual stuff. The kind of stuff we do. You know. There it was, that same grumbling atmosphere around there. And when the line had ended, I noticed another man who was watching just like I was, went over to this ticket collector and smiled at him and said, "It didn't sound to me as if some of those folks were very pleased with you." And the ticket man said, "Well, I like to please folks if I can, but you know," and he turned his eyes up to the balcony and there on a door was the name of the station master. He said, "I like to please folks but my big business is to please him. When he's satisfied, that's what I'm after." You see. And our big business is to please him who called us to be soldiers.

And you know, my dear we can so easily be sidetracked along that line. You won't mind if I say this, and I'm sure you won't because I'm so much a part of you. And I know a good deal about the things that you are facing. But sometimes we are more anxious to please the community than we are to please our Lord. Sometimes we deteriorate into servants of the community instead of servants of God in the community. Did you hear it? And it's one of the entanglements of the day in which we live. And the trouble about it is, it looks so right usually. It looks so necessary usually to be the servant of the community rather than the servant of God in the community. May I remind you that sometimes the servant of God in the community doesn't do what the community wants him to do. His big business is to please him who called him to be a soldier.

Have you got a little outline there? I suppose the last time you preached on *A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ* you made your own outline that was probably a good deal better than that. But maybe when you preach it again, and you ought to preach some of your sermons the second time, and the third time, and the fourth time for that matter – change your outline. Use a little bit of this. You could perhaps make it become a little useful to you there.

Now the second of these great illustrations is the illustration of the athlete. Notice what it says about him, "And if a man also strive for masteries yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."⁵ The athlete, striving for the mastery. Now you know what's back of it when you follow them as we shall be following

⁵ II Timothy 2:5.

them. I shall whether you do or not. I tell you, I'm going to keep my eye on those Olympic Games there that are coming off in Mexico City before very long. I sure will. I'm just anxious to see who's going to win that 100 yards and the mile and all the rest of it. I don't know whether that's something detrimental to me or not, but I'm confessing that I'm very fond of that kind of thing. I just love it. I sure do. I like to see these boys. But, you know what's back of it, don't you? It isn't just a matter of a man walking out onto the track and then running a hundred yards or a mile or jumping over this or that or the other. Not at all. What's happened in the past? What's back of that? How many hours and hours and hours and hours of strenuous training, discipline has gone into this? As you watch those athletes as they march in that original, march in the games there in Mexico City, and the throng of them that will go by your very eyes, you look back and see what a price they paid for that. They've paid a price for that, my dear. How many times they denied themselves of the three things that causes us so much difficulty. I hate to mention them but they're there and they've caused some of you folks difficulty too. And that's pop, peanuts and popcorn. Something like that, you know. They didn't have anything left. That wasn't part of their training diet at all. They wanted them. Sure. They like them. Sure. But they were not going to be athletes on that kind of a diet. Not at all.

And here they were, these men who had endured the training. You know these men in the old Grecian games not only trained in their own back yard, they were taken by government decree and put out into a training camp for months and months and months before these Grecian games ever took place at all. And under the eye of their coaches and their trainers, they went through this, enduring this, enduring that. Denying themselves of this, until when they came to the moment when they would strive for the mastery there wasn't one bit of superfluous flesh on them at all. They had paid the price.

The Christian life, my dear is serious business. Paul likens it to an athlete who trains diligently and faithfully and constantly for the task that is ahead of him. If he broke the training rules, out he would go. Oh yes.

I don't know whether you remember it or not, but it isn't too far away when a great athletic accomplishment took place. Up to that time, no one had ever run the mile in less than four minutes. And then a young English student, who afterwards and is now a doctor in England, Roger Bannister ran the mile in less than four minutes. The first time it had ever been done. And I was fortunate enough to catch a sight of that on television, it happened in Vancouver. And here he was out there and I watched that race, and I saw the look on this man's face as he was coming down that final stretch there. The look of agony that was there upon his face. There wasn't anything else in the world but just that finishing tape. And I watched him as he flung himself over that tape at the finish and fell unconscious at the other side. But he'd done it. He had done it. And if a man will do that for an earthly crown, what about us? What about us?

Now I don't know whether there was any crown given to Roger Bannister, but at the end of the race, there will be something waiting for you, my dear. Strenuous business, the Christian life. It surely is. This athlete who trains correctly, he keeps in the right lane. He doesn't wander off here and wander off there and get into peoples way. If he did, he's disqualified. He's got a lane to run in and he runs in that lane and he keeps his eye on the end of it and the person who is at the end of it.

By the way, Paul talks about that race in another place, doesn't he? Where he tells us we are to, "Run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."⁶ And there he is at the end of it, and there he will be at the end of it. We've heard about it this morning, haven't we? Oh

⁶ Hebrews 12:1

yes. This business of being a spiritual athlete for Jesus Christ. Oh, my dear we get to be so flabby sometimes, don't we? We're so flabby sometimes. God help us.

And then the third of these illustrations is as interesting as the other one. It's the illustration of a farmer. A farmer – and by the way, some of you look as if you had a long distance acquaintance with a farm somewhere or other, and if that's so, that's a complement to you. That isn't calling you a hayseed, or anything like that. But if any of you have had a real touch with a real farm, I want to tell you, that's the best university you can go to. It sure is. I know what I'm talking about. You wouldn't believe it, but that's so.⁷

But on the farm, there is a farmer, and he's striving for excellence. And the excellence of his crop is not merely that he can sell it without difficulty in the market; but, this farmer is so fine, so faithful, he produces such a fine crop that he's proud to put it on his own table and invite his friends and neighbors to come in and share it with him and say, "I raised these things myself." He first becomes partaker of the fruits. He's proud to put them on his own table. And you can talk to any farmer you like and you won't have to talk to him for long even in these days. And don't forget in those days, we didn't have all these farming gadgets there as we do today. Farming was a much more serious business.

Have you ever seen in some old biblical museum the kind of a plow they plowed with in those days? The two old oxen that were there and the ox goad? You remember? Shamgar had an ox goad, didn't he? Slew 600 Philistines with it, a long pole there with a sharp point on the end of it – a little bit of a persuader.⁸ And there it was. And this farmer was a success because he'd raised stuff that he was proud of. When we get to the end of the line, I hope there will be something that we can be proud of. When you get to the end of the line, that they'll be somebody that will meet you there and say, "You were the one. You were the one."

The soldier, the athlete and the farmer. Now, I said there were seven. Let me mention the others, or three others and then we'll come back to the final one, and we're going to stop on time.

The next one that you find is the carpenter, only he is working with words instead of wood. That's all. He is doing what any carpenter does – he divides the wood so that it fits where he wants it to fit. This man divides words so that they fit where God wants them to fit. He rightly divides the word of truth. That's his big business. Now, we're not going to talk anymore about that because we may say more about him tomorrow.

But the next one is a picture of a great house in which there are vessels: vessels of honor, vessels that are spoken of as vessels of dishonor. That doesn't mean to say they're not useful, but they're in a secondary capacity. Some of them are in the kitchen and some of them are in the drawing room where the very important people come. And they ought to be displayed there. And you'll find that there are different kinds of vessels in the house and you will find too, there's a secret there as to what takes place when a vessel is transferred from the kitchen to the dining room, when it becomes a vessel unto honor. What is the process there? How much work does that utensil do in order to climb out of that area into another? How much work does it do? What is the great requirement? Well, we'll find out as we go along.

⁷ A not well-known fact among his Salvationist friends was that his dream as a young English boy was to become a farmer. He immigrated to Canada as a 19-year old young man to pursue the receipt of a homestead on the western plains of Canada on which he could develop his own farm. In Calgary, Alberta, he was converted to Christianity and subsequently met the Salvation Army. This completely changed his life course and he became a commissioned Salvation Army officer in 1910 at the age of 23.

⁸ Judges 3:31.

The last picture there at the end of the chapter is the picture of the bondsman who has surrendered himself and his wealth and his time and has done it voluntarily. He's the voluntary bondsman. Now that's six, but you say to me with your eyes, "You said there were seven." And so there are. And I want you to notice the seventh one because that's the important one. Without this one, the other things are impossible. Did you notice that in verse one, Paul refers to Timothy as his son? Here was a young man who was outside of the fold of God and one day, God used Paul to bring him inside. He had been wise unto salvation before, but there came the blessed moment when he was wise into salvation, and he stepped over the line into the glory of sonship, not only with Paul but with the Lord, Jesus Christ. He was one of God's children! You see. Now that's the first thing. That's the first great picture here of the Christian life. It doesn't begin with soldiership, it begins with sonship!

Let me say something here, and some of you may argue about it and I shan't fuss at you if you do. But God doesn't enlist anybody in His army as a soldier unless he has first become a son. The only kind of person God ever uses as a soldier is a son! Did you hear it? We may enroll aliens in our army if we want to, but God doesn't. Not at all and there's a tragic harvest that comes when folks get into soldiership where they don't belong! You've got to have your program all revamped in order to meet the requirements of the unsaved church member. Now wasn't I careful about what I said about that. You know what I was thinking about, don't you? Because the biggest problem the church faces is the unsaved church member. And, there's nobody here but us, is there? There's nobody looking in the door, thank God. We'll say it together, the biggest problem the Army faces is the unsaved Salvationist. Do you know that we've reached the time when you can be a fine church member without being saved at all. And, softly, I'm wondering if the time hasn't come when you can be a good Salvationist without being saved at all.

I gave an invitation in a great corps, magnificent corps, just one of these wonderful places where the band is known all over the world. I gave an invitation as I always do and down the aisle walked a woman, she was wearing the insignia and the uniform of the Home League Secretary, a mature woman. She walked down the aisle and the tears were running down her face. I watched her at the altar and then I watched that mystic something happen, that always happens when the will is yielded to God and He takes possession. It's as if an incandescent bulb has been suddenly turned on within the heart and you can see it in the face. And she came to me afterwards and she said, "I've been a soldier of this corps for 23 years and I have never had the real, hard assurance that I've been born again at all. Never." Now of course, she may be an exception and we hope she is, but I'm convinced there are a lot of folks like that. Sonship.

Do you know that in those Grecian games, you're not allowed to take part at all unless you were a son of Greece? It wasn't a place for aliens at all. Not at all. It was a place for sons because the boys and girls perhaps, the boys particularly, who claimed Grecian sonship, who were in that race. And I'm deeply convinced that God requires exactly the same thing. Before we can be a good soldier of Jesus Christ we must know the glory of sonship. Before we can ever run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, we must know Jesus as our own personal saviour. We must rejoice that our names are written in Heaven.

Now, tomorrow we'll take another look at this. But we've been looking this morning, just briefly and so inadequately, at this business of, the seriousness of the Christian life. And my watch says it is just 10: 30.

Our father, let Thy blessing be upon this meditation this morning. We thank Thee that Thou still dost have sufficient bread for us. There is enough of the water flowing out of the living word to satisfy our deepest

thirst. And we pray that in some way, we may have been fed and refreshed and perhaps warned this morning through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.