

**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 Logan<sup>1</sup>  
Reverend Sidney Cox  
Colonel and Mrs. Albert Pepper<sup>2</sup>

**Highlights**

Congregational Singing – Cox Chorus, *Make Jesus King*  
Congregational Singing – Cox Chorus, *When His Love Reached Me*  
Devotional and singing – Colonel and Mrs. Sharp  
Congregational Singing – Cox Chorus, *Just Sing Me A Song About Jesus*  
Sidney Cox Sermon – II Timothy. *Words Profitable and Words Unprofitable*

**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.**

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

**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:

...Dr. Logan for another challenging message tonight.

[Congregation singing of Sidney Cox chorus]

No. 1 in the green book. If there are any that haven't received his copy, well we do have a few copies left. If you haven't got your copy, see us and we'll see that you get one.

Let's read the first stanza together. It's so meaningful.

Make Jesus King, within thy heart enthrone Him,  
And let thy voice to His great glory sing.  
Give to His cause thine uttermost devotion,  
Crown Him today thy Lord and King.

Let's sing the chorus, shall we.

Make Jesus King, make Jesus King,  
Crown Him as Lord in everything,  
And to His feet thy tribute bring,  
Make Jesus King, Make Jesus King.

Written 31 years ago...

[Audio switches to congregational singing of the last lines of *The Lord's Prayer*]

Good night.

[Audio switches]

...will be coming to the platform. That's right, find a comfortable seat.

[Ward then leads spontaneous congregational singing of Cox chorus]

When His love reached me, He set my heart a singing,  
When His love reached me, wondrous love reached me.  
And the bells of Heaven with harmony are ringing,  
When His love, when His love reached me.

That's right.

[Audio switches]

...very happy that some of our comrades, four of them that I know of – five, six, six have come from the other side of the border and they have the opening exercises this morning. We'll turn the meeting over to Colonel Sharp and his good lady and they'll carry on until the first speaker of the morning. Thank you. We're mighty happy to have you with us. Let's give them a welcome, shall we.

COLONEL AND MRS. SHARP

[They are Canadian officers but apparently had relationships with many Southern Salvationists. They lead the congregation in the singing of a chorus and Colonel Sharp offers a devotional. Not transcribed.]

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING & PRAYER: Salvation Army Songbook #425, A  
*Charge To Keep*

COLONEL HARRY WARD, PRESIDING:

[Piano playing in the background, *Just Sing Me A Song About Jesus*. Congregation noise and Sidney Cox's voice in the background as they discuss distributing a copy of this new Sidney Cox chorus.]

...Yes, if there are any left, please bring them back. There may be some here tomorrow and Sunday, that come in for the weekend that might appreciate a copy.

Brother Sid said that after tomorrow we'll find out how many are left, because there will be some folks visiting Sunday and if there are any left, if you'd like an extra copy, we'll give them out as far as they go. You might like to take one to someone else when you return home. So, see him after tomorrow and we'll know how many are left over.

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.<sup>3</sup>**

**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, let's sing it again. Turn them [their songsheets] over. Repetition is the first law of learning. Repetition is the first law of learning. Some of us are still using the songbook to look at words that we learned 15, 20, 25 years ago. All right. Now let's just 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.

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<sup>3</sup> 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."

Let's sweep the commissioner off his feet with this one. Now, in connection with the one that Dr. Pepper... Colonel Pepper brought to us, we've tried vainly to have that duplicated in the city – spent most of yesterday afternoon running from printer to lithographer and office supply houses and all over there, and the First Baptist Church. No one in this city has any way of duplicating it inexpensively. The best we could do was \$17.15/hundred and I just wish I had \_\_\_\_\_ outfit here, we could clean up. Yea, and having an electric stencil made. But, you'll all be receiving a letter not long after you return, from our office and we will duplicate it and put it in that letter, a couple of copies so that you'll have that song as well.

#### SIDNEY COX

I do want to thank you for the way in which you have received this new chorus and I hope you'll keep on singing it. I would like to ask you to take care of the piece of paper, you know usually when you get a piece of paper in your hand, the first thing you do is to crush it up, all out of shape. Well, don't do that. If you're going to do anything with it, fold it carefully in half so that it'll fit into your Bible and when you open it again it'll look as nice as it is now. Take care of it. And then, I want you to take care of the chorus too. You avoid as you would the plague that inevitable person who comes along and wants to improve it – change a word here and there, or a note here and there. You have my permission to take him outside and drop him in the nearest lake. I've suffered from that creature many a time, and I hope he isn't anywhere around where you are. But if and when I come to your corps, I shall hear this song just as we've been singing it here. Will you do that?

Now, another thing I want to tell you about it, and ask you to be careful about it is that this song has already become the property of the Zondervan Publishing Company, Singspiration. Now that doesn't mean that you are not at liberty to use it, of course you are. You can do anything you please with it but one thing. It must not be published in a publication. It can't be printed in any publication without their permission. And I thought I'd just tell you that and my friend, Pat Zondervan caught sight of this sometime ago and immediately wanted it. And so that's where it is and you'll be able to get it after a while in one of the Singspiration books. I don't know when and I don't care, but – because you've got it anyhow. And, I want you to take care of it and just keep that in mind if you please and thank you very much indeed.

Now, I want us to go back into our Bible study that, this time the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of II Timothy. We have been following as all of you know this very interesting pathway and we've been gathering a flower or stopping to look at the views at someplace or other along the line. I hope it has become familiar to you, not so familiar that you neglect it, but so familiar that you'll be glad to walk along the pathway of it for yourself and perhaps lead somebody else along. It would be lovely to take some person as nice as you are – now I know that will be difficult to find, but if you can find somebody as nice as you are, take them on one side sometime and tell them what we did at the Bible Conference. And tell them that one of the things we did was to walk through the pathways of II Timothy, and what you found there. And I'll tell you what'll happen, the person you are talking to will be blessed and helped and you will fasten this little bit of scripture securely in your

mind. If you try to keep it to yourself, it won't be long before it becomes indistinct and blurred and then perhaps fade away altogether. But if you give it away, you've got it forever. It will never leave you, not at all. If you give it away. And I hope you will.

Take the folks along the pathway and get them to stop at that first verse and take a look at the old man writing to the young man about the God man. Tell them about it. Be sure to do that. Tell them about the Roman prison cell where it came from. Tell them about Dr. Luke who was writing spiritual prescriptions here instead of physical prescriptions. He had written lots of physical prescriptions but here he was writing a spiritual prescription.

Tell them about the pattern that you find there, the lovely invocation at the beginning of grace and mercy and peace. Point out to them that these words have five letters and a little mechanical thing of that kind may start them along the line of investigation. So many of the lovely words connected with our redemption are five-letter words. Ask them to find out, and at the same time, you do your finding out too, and together you may be doing a fine bit of investigation.

Tell them of Paul's pattern of teaching, how he starts off all of his letters with one exception, he starts it off with thanksgiving and remembrance and prayer.

Take them into the home where young Timothy was born. Introduce them to Grandma Lois, will you? Tell them about her. Tell them what was the lovely thing that made that unearthly glow in her face possible, from whence it came. Tell them about the deposit of faith that was in her heart that was so lovely that it rubbed off on her daughter. And then more than that, the faith rubbed off on the boy and it dwelt comfortably in their hearts and in his also. Take them into that home. Point out some things about them. You don't need to talk about the things you won't see, talk about the thing you did see – the unfeigned faith that was there. Tell them the meaning of the word, unfeigned. Tell them what it means, that it was the genuine article. It wasn't wearing a mask. You tell them about that, will you?

Tell of the responsibility that young Timothy had - was not only to receive the faith but to guard it, to take care of it. And explain to them that faith is like a fire and it needs to be tended, "You guard the fire of faith." See that they put the fuel on the top and keep the ashes cleaned out underneath. Tell them about it. Tell them about the responsibility that Timothy would have for this. It's too great for us. Our arm of flesh will fail you all the time, so would his. But God has provided a threefold equipment for us – power and love and a sound mind. Give them that little formula about the threes that are there and it'll fasten the thing in your own mind. You'll find somebody to whom you can pass this on and that's the big thing about it. If we come to a Bible Conference just to get our buckets filled, you will find that your bucket will be half empty before you get back home.

I heard Dr. McQuilkin of the Columbia Bible College once say to a group of young folks that we not only need to come to a Bible Conference in order to get our buckets refilled, or something of the kind. What we need is to sink a well of our own. That's what we need. And the best way to sink a well of your own is to take the stuff you've got here and

give it away to somebody else and you'll find it's going down and down and down and down and there'll be rivers of living water coming into your life out of it. That's what happens when a little bit of the Word of God lodges comfortably in your heart. It'll turn sour on you if you try to keep to yourself. You just give it away to somebody else and you'll find its beauty will not only last, but it will increase. Sure it will.

You tell them about what Paul said to young Timothy about, "You shouldn't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."<sup>4</sup> Tell your young folks about that, the young folks that are in high school and in college. Tell your young folks about that. About a young man who received this instruction, "Don't you be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." And you could tell them what's included in it, sure you could. You know what's included in it – it saved us, we were called with a holy calling, and all of this kind of thing. And then Paul exhaltingly says, "I've been made a preacher and a teacher and an apostle." Seldom do you find three of these wondrous gifts of the spirit in one personality, but you do here. You tell them about it. Tell them how much God can do with them and how wonderful it would be if the Word of God so dwelt within their hearts that they were not ashamed of their testimony. Not at all. You tell them about it. Don't you be ashamed.

Tell them about the sound mind that produces sound words that can be arranged in proper order so that it becomes sound doctrine. These little things that we've been looking at and then when you get into chapter...

Oh, by the way, don't forget to tell them about Onesiphorous, will you? Be sure to tell them. You know they'll stagger first of all at that name. They'll have to swallow twice before they get the name there. Sure they will. But you tell them what he did, will you? Tell them about this man who did so many gracious things before when he was in Ephesus and then went all the way to Rome to try to find him, to bring a blessing and a message to him and to tell him that we were thinking about him, and how he sought diligently until he found him. Did you hear it? Did you hear it? You tell them about it.

Introduce them to your friends. Tell them about these 29 characters that are there. Some of them are magnificent. You just confess, I've been too lazy to mark them all 29, but on I'm on my way and before they hold my funeral service, I expect I'll find the whole 29 of them. But there are 29 of them there, and there are 12 of them that haven't been mentioned anywhere else, that you can't find anywhere else.

Introduce them to your Bible friends. You're not ashamed to introduce other friends, of course. One of the fine arts of Christian living is the privilege of introducing your Bible acquaintances to your friends so that they know about them. Tell them about how lovely these folks are, how precious they are. Where to find them and you will find your own life being increased and blessed as you pass on to somebody else.

And then be sure to tell them that living the Christian life is serious business. This isn't a play thing at all. This is something that will keep you busy 24 hours a day, this living the Christian life. It's a full time job for full time folks. Half time people don't live the

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<sup>4</sup> II Timothy 1:8.

Christian life with any satisfaction at all. This is a full time job. It sure is. You tell them. Tell them that it begins in sonship, that the beginning of the Christian life is being born again. That's where it begins and that no one who has not passed through that wondrous, transforming experience that is so marvelous that it is called a new birth; no one but that kind of a person can ever live the Christian life. The life of the Christian is lived from within, not from without, at all. The inward life expresses itself on the outside. And you tell them about it.

Tell them how Paul gave seven illustrations to show how the Christian life is serious business. We don't play at being a Christian. Not at all. This is hard work. This is responsibility. This is serious business. Tell them what it means to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Tell them how they ought to avoid entanglements. You won't be very popular if you talk that way, but never mind, you say it just the same because the Word of God says it, you see. It's not a matter of popularity; it's a matter of truth. Not at all. You tell folks in these days to avoid entanglements and you won't be very popular. You tell them to welcome hardship and you won't be popular either. But you tell them that that's the way of the Christian. And to the person who has been born again, it will be as clear as daylight. But to the person who hasn't been born again, it will be as foggy as the middle of the night. It surely will.

This business about being a good soldier of Jesus Christ, who the Christian has to please primarily? Not the community. Not other people, but Him. Tell them about that and be sure to tell them that when they do some little task unselfishly, lovingly, even though it may appear to be a very small thing, you tell your young folks that somebody noticed. Will you do it? You tell them about that, that they please Him. The smile on His face, that's reward enough, isn't it?

You tell them about the athlete and you'll be getting right next to them this time. You tell them about the athlete; how he had to be a son of Greece in order to run in those races. What he went through for months before the races ever took place at all. What was required of him. How he had to deny himself of things that he liked. The discipline that he went through and how when the race came, his one business was to run it with patience and to do the best that he had, to give everything he had and to stay in the lane and in the line and keep his eye on the one who was waiting at the end of the race.

You tell them about it. You can get next to folks if you begin to talk the language of athletics. There are lots of folks that you can reach that way. Here you've got your chance. Here's the opportunity, you see. Don't lecture them about a lot of other things, you tell them about this and you'll be getting the truth over much better than you can with one of your paternal or maternal lectures. Sure. Tell them about this.

Talk about the farmer who was so proud of his crop that he was glad to put it on his own table and invite his friends in and say, "I raised these tomatoes" or whatever it was. Sure. Tell them about it. And then finally, you tell them about the thing that we're going to mention just briefly right now. Because here is a carpenter, or a workman, if you want to use the exact word that is there – a carpenter who is fashioning words so that they fit



where God wanted them to fit; so that they build the structure of truth. This carpenter. Talk to them about the danger and glory of words because that's the subject before us this morning – words profitable and words unprofitable.

Now dear, that's a very important subject and I'll tell you how you can find that, and come to that conclusion quite easily. All he said about the good soldier was in two short verses. All he said about the athlete was in one. All he said about the farmer was in one. But when he discusses the danger as well as the glory of words, he takes five verses to discuss it. He says more than twice as much about this subject of words as he had already said about the subject of soldiership. And five times as much as he had said about any other thing.

This is the important thing. This is the great central thing in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter and it occupies the big section of it. Words that are profitable, and words that are unprofitable. Supposing you turn with me please to II Timothy, you've probably got it already and we'll read a little bit here and see what it says. "Of these things, put them in remembrance."<sup>5</sup> Now here is something that Timothy has to do for other people. You will find in just a second or two that there's something that Timothy has to do for himself as well. Of course, there's always the two sides of it. We've got to do things for other people, but we can't do that unless we've already done something or somebody has done something for us. He puts them in remembrance.

Here's this lovely word again, this word that keeps constantly recurring, not only here but all the way through the Word of God, the word that implies that we must hold that which has been given to us. The Holy Spirit's work is to bring back to our remembrance that which He has said, that's what Jesus said about it. Remembrance – you put the Word of God into your remembrance and He will bring it out. Now that's the formula. If you want to know the secret of scripture memorizing, that's it. It's just putting it in and trusting Him to bring it out, and He'll do it every time. He'll do it. He doesn't say He's going to bring to our remembrance that which has been \_\_\_\_ too lazy or indifferent or sinful to put into our remembrance because it's sin that keeps us from God's word, you know. If you're not a Bible reader, you'd better examine your life and find out what sin there is there because that's the thing that keeps us from God's word. When there isn't any condemnation within our hearts, we just love to come to it. We just run to it. But if there's condemnation in your heart, you'll avoid it. Sure you will. And if you touch it at all, it'll be some little dib dab here or another dib dab there, so that we know very little about it. The great stream of God's truth goes flying by and all we stop at is just some little eddy by the side of the stream.

That's the story of the average Christian, you know in his relationship to the Word of God. Pour it in my dear and the Holy Spirit will bring it out. Tell these folks. Timothy, you remind them. Keep it in mind. Remember, remember, remember – because the easiest thing we do is to forget.

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<sup>5</sup> II Timothy 2:14

I've never been able to understand why the writer of, *Tell Me The Old, Old Story* knew all about me, for there's a line there that's all about me. And it's the line, *For I forget so soon*. I wonder how they ever knew about me. Have you? *For I forget so soon*. Remember. Remember. Remember. What is he to remember? And then, in order that they might know the seriousness of this, He says, "I'm charging you before the Lord." God holds us responsible not only for hearing truth, but remembering it! Did you hear it? It's not enough to hear. God holds us responsible for remembering it! We've come to a Bible Conference and truth has been poured into us in buckets full, but God's going to hold you responsible next week for remembering it! Sure he will. Not only for hearing it. We love to hear it but we are charged before the Lord that they take care of it. Remember it and do the right thing with it. We, "Strive not about words to no profit."<sup>6</sup> Words that are unprofitable and words that are responsible and profitable. And we are held responsible for them. When the one profitable word goes, and there's more said about this than any other subject in this letter – the unprofitable word, the danger of it there. We are held responsible for it. When the unprofitable word flies off our lips, it's gone and we can't bring it back. Not at all.

You know the little couplet that we used to recite years ago and probably do still:

Boy flying kites haul in their white winged birds,  
But we can not do that when we are flying words.

The word is gone. The unprofitable word.

Now the only way to deal with the unprofitable word is to fill you heart with the profitable one. You pour it in and the unprofitable word is expelled. There isn't room for both in the heart. If the unprofitable word is there, tisn't any use trying to pluck it out. It had better be moved out by the coming in of the profitable word. That's what this old man in that Roman prison cell is telling young Timothy. This is what he's saying to them. And he's not only it to him, he says, "You've got to tell other people about this. This is your business. You tell them about it."

The next time you're tempted to talk about a subject that isn't of particular interest or value to anybody, just to fill in the time; and there's a lot of us that do that. But, you get down to business about these words, will you? Talk to them about words, words that are profitable. See what the Word of God says about them. It says, "We're to strive not about words to no profit, but they subvert the hearers."<sup>7</sup>

Do you know the meaning of that word, subvert? It's the same word that we speak of as catastrophe. It brings catastrophe to the hearers, and all we've got to do is to stop a moment and say, "My, isn't that true." I wonder how many marriages have been destroyed because somebody released an unprofitable word at some time or other. And as words always do, they increase. I wonder. I wonder how many homes have been

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<sup>6</sup> II Timothy 2:14

<sup>7</sup> II Timothy 2:14.

destroyed. I wonder how many churches have been destroyed because of unprofitable words. I wonder.

You know wherever you go, you can find around in the area where you happen to be, you can find, if you could only discover where they are, you'd find hundreds of people who used to go to church, but they don't go anymore. You know there are more folks who used to go to the Army that are outside than the folks who go. We've got a bigger congregation of Salvationists on the outside than we have on the inside by a long way. And if you go and ask them, you go and talk to one of them and try to get him to come back again. And you say, "Bill, why don't you come to the Army, or why don't you go to church?"

"Oh well, I'm busy on Sunday morning, I've got to do this, that or the other. I'm so busy.

"Yes, I know Bill, but listen, let's be honest about it. You used to go? Why you used to take part."

And the moment you say that, he says, "Sure I did. I used to take up the collection sometime. Sure."

"Well Bill, why don't you go now? Why not go back and go now?"

"Oh," he says, "I'm not going back." And then he'll nearly always tell you something like this. He'll say, "When I was there old so and so said so and so, and if that's religion, I don't want it."

Of course, he's dead wrong you know, but it's pitiful isn't it. But there they are, thousands of them. Their name is legion, all the way around. And that's why they're there and not here – is because a word was released that had the poison of asps upon it and a life was blurred and blunted and destroyed almost, or diverted at any rate. And here it is, they, "subvert the hearers."

Now, if the profitable word is to dwell within your heart, my dear that is not an accident. That's the result of something, and young Timothy must now do something else. It isn't enough to tell the people what they must do, he must do it too. He's got a responsibility and the word here of course is, that he must, "Study to show himself approved unto God."

Now most of us know that studying is hard work. It surely is. That isn't any accident. We don't find the Word of God flowing richly into our hearts as we sit watching TV in a nice comfortable chair. There isn't anything wrong about watching TV from a comfortable chair, of course not. But, you don't find the Word of God flowing into your heart when that's happening. Not at all. The Word of God flows into your heart when you get down to business with your Bible and you're alone and you do some real, genuine hard work about it! When you've been born again, that isn't any problem. If you fell in love with

Jesus, we want to find out all we can about Him, why sure. It's the most delightful thing in the world.

I was out in Oregon a little while ago and I was in the home of a man who for 40 years had been a forest ranger, out there in the forests of Oregon, one of the government representatives out there. And now he had retired. And we went to his little home and we talked to him. And I said to him, "What are you going to do now that you've retired? How're you going to fill up your time? What are you going to do with your time?" And you know his face just lit up and he said, "Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to do thing I've always wanted to do all my life and never had time or an opportunity. I'm going to take one Bible correspondence after another and I'm going to live in the Word of God!" You see. That's what he was going to do in his retirement. What are you going to do? That's his idea of retirement. What a strange old guy he must have been, wasn't he? You wouldn't have thought so if you could have seen him. If you could have seen that unearthly glow upon his face, you wouldn't have thought so. But that was what he was going to do. He was going to study to show himself approved unto God.

That's the thing God loves to see, one of his children with his face down in the Word of God and his heart beating 16 to the dozen while God reveals truth to him! Why sure. Even God smiles at that. For it says here that He will give His approval to that.

Have you ever noticed what a wonderful word, "approved" is in the scripture? It doesn't occur very often. It's not one of the constant words, not at all. You'll find it fourteen times in the word of God, twice in the Old Testament and twelve times in the New. I've always thought that was a little significant. But you don't find the word, "approved" just applying to God. Only just once or twice in the Old Testament. And I've wondered, could that be that God didn't see very much that he could approve? If the Old Testament is very largely the history of the Jewish people in their relation to God and to others, and it is, there wasn't much that God could approve, would He? And if He did approve it, it was soon gone again, wasn't it? This crowd that was right one day and was wrong ten days, and that's the story all the way along. And when you come into the New Testament, you only meet the word occasionally. You meet it here, "Study to show thyself approved unto God."<sup>8</sup>

You will find the word applies sometimes to a church that God approves. And the mark of the church that God approves is that it is more faithful in the absence of the preacher than it was in his presence. Did you hear it? Do you know a church like that? Do you call your Salvation Army corps a church? It's all right if you do. I don't mind, that's your business. That's your business. I went to a lovely new citadel just a little while ago and there on the front door, "The Church Offices." It's all right. And there it is. But do you know a place like that, where the faith is more beautiful in the absence of the one who has control of it under God than when he's present. A church, "Approved in Christ."

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<sup>8</sup> II Timothy 2:15.

You'll find a man in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans and the 10<sup>th</sup> verse and it says of him, "Apelles, approved in Christ." Did you hear it? Isn't that a lovely phrase, "Approved in Christ." Just three words.

May I make this suggestion my dear, that that would look good on the little white stone that will mark the place someday where you are resting. Wouldn't it look nice: your name, a date at the beginning, a date at the end and underneath, "Approved In Christ." Wouldn't it be wonderful? It sure would if it was true. You know everybody that would look at it would stop. They sure would. And when you're "Approved In Christ," everybody looks at you and stops, even now. "Approved In Christ." Sometimes it's a word that's applied to an action, a decision. The church in Philippi, "approved" things that were excellent, you see. That was the mark of their spiritual maturity. A man's spiritual maturity is seen in the choices he makes. If he chooses the second class thing, rather than the first class, that reveals something, doesn't it? Here was this church in Philippi, and they "approved" things that are excellent.

It's a teachers' word, you know. You turn in a test paper to a teacher and the only thing that will ever satisfy you is his mark of approval. Excellent. Excellent. Excellent. My, when God can put that mark on it and he does when he sees you with your face buried in the Word of God and the glow of it upon your face and the joy of it in your heart and the impulse of it in your feet, because you can't keep it to yourself! You are bound to go and tell it to somebody else. Sure. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

We ought to know what to do with the Word of God. There are certain distinctive divisions and definitions in it. We ought to know something about it. You don't have to be a \_\_\_\_\_ to do that. Not at all. We ought to know the difference between law and grace, for instance. We ought to know the difference between Israel and the church. We ought to know these great, fundamental, basic differences in the Word of God and you never know them until you go to it with your heart just longing to know about it. And an old man in that Roman prison cell is saying to young Timothy, "You study to show yourself approved unto God because if you don't, you're going to be ashamed." It's either approved or ashamed, and the difference is, what do we do with the Word of God and what does the Word of God do with us.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God." And then it seems there as if the old man's blood pressure rises there because he's thinking about these words and the power in them for good or evil. Looks like the old man's blood pressure's rising there. I don't know whether Dr. Luke noticed it or not, but here he was. You listen to what he says. He says, "But shun profane and vain babblings."<sup>9</sup> My. And He's talking to Christians, Christians whose conversation can be described as, "profane and vain babblings." And profane is the opposite of holy, and vain is empty – empty and unholy chattering. Cheap chattering.

I tremble sometimes when I listen to conversation and you hear the echo of the vain and profane babblings, and you can hear it. These Christians who come so near that every

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<sup>9</sup> II Timothy 2:16.

once in a while, you can hear borderline cussing. Did you hear it? And if you haven't heard it, you probably will before you get much older. Vain babblings. Here it is. And, you see the word is like a seed, it increases as a matter of fact. That's exactly what it's called, isn't it? Old Peter writing there in his first book and his first chapter, tells us at the end we are, "Born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible – by the Word of God."<sup>10</sup> The Word is a seed that has life in it and it reproduces after its kind. The unprofitable word produces other unprofitable words and the profitable word in like manner increases. The darkness there, "Increases unto ungodliness and their word will eat as doth a canker."<sup>11</sup>

Do you know what that word means? That's the word that we speak of, our word for canker is, gangrene. Did you ever see gangrene? I hope you never will. Did you ever see a foot turning black with gangrene? Have you? Have you ever looked into the face of a doctor that walked into a room and saw this, and said, "That's something that can't be cured and the only answer is amputation." Have you ever looked into the face of a doctor who had to say that? Have you ever looked into the face of the patient who heard him say it? Have you? I hope you never will. I have. I hope you never will.<sup>12</sup>

These words that produce an incurable situation like that. And the tragedy of it is, it is seen at such an important point, for the words are not just flippant things that are going by and it doesn't matter. It's not the cheap and semi-nasty story, he isn't talking about that at all. They've gone wrong with their words on the very heart of the Christian doctrine! They were wrong about the resurrection and said unprofitable words and untrue words about the resurrection, and we haven't got any Gospel without it! "Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our faith vain!"<sup>13</sup> Of course. They were wrong about that. Right then. These words led them to the fundamental error of denying the resurrection.

Words. Words. Profitable and unprofitable.

And you've been so nice to listen as you have. Tomorrow morning we shall be bringing our final message and it will have to do with a household in which there are vessels unto honor and to dishonor. And we'll talk together a little bit about that.

In the mean time, let's hold some of these things in our heart, shall we? Let's hold them in our heart. Don't forget them.

Our father we pray, that Thou mayest help us to remember. It is so easy for us to forget. We pray that Thou wilt save us from the sin of unnecessary forgetfulness. Take us, we pray Thee and through the Word abiding in our hearts, give us some of that unearthly

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<sup>10</sup> I Peter 1:23.

<sup>11</sup> II Timothy 2:16 & 17.

<sup>12</sup> He is referring here to the circumstances surrounding the final stages of the life of his beloved wife, Violet Cox, who suffered from severe rheumatoid arthritis and was a near invalid during the latter part of her life.

<sup>13</sup> I Corinthians 15:14.

glow so that as we walk the pathways of this world, men may know to whom we belong.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Take care of your chorus sheet, now.