

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

Introduction – Comments on the History of Some of His Songs

II Timothy – Themes From Chapter One

Break – See Page 9: The Story of “By the Pathway of Duty”

Delivered at The Salvation Army Iowa Officers' Councils

September 23, 1969

Editorial Note: From 1962 – 1972, Sidney Cox lived in the retirement home of The Salvation Army in Detroit, Michigan known as “The Eventide.” His beloved wife, Violet was in failing health and ultimately died in 1967. During the last several years of her life, she suffered from severe rheumatoid arthritis which rendered her a virtual invalid. Sidney was her care giver and during this period he ceased his travels to preach and teach.

Following Violet’s death, he was able to resume his travels. He was still sought after by The Salvation Army to preach and teach. On this occasion in 1969, at the age of 82, he had been invited to lead services at the Iowa Officers’ Councils of The Salvation Army. This is a large regional gathering of Salvation Army officers during which they receive training and guidance to serve them in their local corps ministries.

All of these officers would have known about Sidney Cox, a former Salvation Army officer and his career and life. Many would have known him personally. He was an iconic figure in Army circles and almost universally known.

I want us to go on for just a little further and about half way through here. Let's get this old watch of mine out here so we know where we are. It's now a quarter of 8:00, approximately. And about a quarter past 8:00, that'll be half an hour from now if you can take it that long. About a half an hour from now, if I forget it, you remind me. I want to stop right there, about half an hour from now.

And I want to tell you the story of how the song, “By The Pathway of Duty” came to be written. And I thought we could break it right in there and then I could tell you that story, cause there is a story connected with that. A lot of my songs, there's no story connected with them at all. They just came, that's all. What happened afterwards, that makes the story, not what happened at the time. You take a song, for instance like, “I Am Amazed”, the one that Eric Leidzen made into that great cornet solo. By the way, at both ends of the cornet solos, you'll find one of my songs. The first of the sad cornet solos, or worth calling that in our Army, was, “I Love Him Better Every Day.” And a lot of our young cornetists still cut there musical eye teeth on that. And they sure do. I read in *The War Cry* just a day or two ago, somebody playing, “I Love Him Better Every Day.” That's the way they start out. That's one end. And then this tremendous thing that Eric Leidzen did with the song, “I Am Amazed.” That's the other end. And in between, you'll find some of my songs in almost all of the selections and what have you.

Now if you want one that's a fascinating little thing, you buy The Salvation Army record called, “An

Evening at the Citadel.” And it's a beautiful thing. It's a lovely variety thing. Just as if you were there at a Citadel with a high class Salvation Army musical program going on. And on that record, you will find the selection by Major Norman Bearcroft, who is now the music director of the Army in Canada, called, “Songs of Testimony.” And all three of those songs are mine. The first one was, “You Can Tell Out the Sweet Story,” which was my first song. And the next one is, “Oh, What a Hiding Place.” And the last one is, “By the Pathway of Duty.” And it makes a very interesting thing. It's an interesting thing, the way he has blended these three things together. I just suggest it to you in case you are not familiar with that particular record. I think that's one of the nicest the Army has ever produced. And it's called, “An Evening at the Citadel.” And you'll get your soul blessed out of that. You sure will. You'll get your soul blessed out of that. There's a marvelous rendering on one side of the beautiful song that came out of the heart of a friend of mine who was in Pittsburgh at the time, who wrote “I'm In His Hands”. And it's beautiful. It's just beautiful. And on the other side, you've got the setting there by Eric Ball of “How Great Thou Art”. And if you want to something that will lift you clear out of your shoes, my dear, you put that on and hear how the Salvation Army does when it sings, as only the Salvation Army can a song like “How Great Thou Art”. I want to tell you. It's just magnificent. And you'll forgive me for overflowing a little bit with this, because I won't get a chance to talk with you again tomorrow. Or not tomorrow night, at any rate.

I want us to go on a little further with this thought that's in our mind. I don't know whether you've detected, but there has been a central theme. I haven't mentioned it, but I'm wondering if you've detected it? The theme of this letter that Paul wrote to young Timothy, this last letter that's very important, the theme of it is, The Christian Life. Now every chapter has some aspect of it. Perhaps you'd like to make a note of it. This would make four good sermons for you.

Chapter One – The Responsibility of The Christian Life, or Responsibilities, if you like. You're to stir up the gift of God that's in you. That's your responsibility. God will give you the gift. He hold you responsible for keeping it stirred up.

The second one is – The Christian Life is Serious Business. Because there, you've got such illustrations as the good soldier, and the athlete, and the farmer. We'll probably mention some of them a bit tomorrow. But that's serious business. You don't play at soldiership. I wouldn't be at all surprised if there's somebody in this room whose thoughts are not very far away from Vietnam. I don't know. But nearly every room where I face a group like this, somebody's thinking about somebody there in Vietnam. And soldiership, my dear, is something you don't play at. That's serious business. And if we're to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that's serious business. It sure is. We don't play at that. You don't play at being an athlete, not a real one. You can play at fooling around with almost any kind of a game you want to. But there's a vast difference between that and being an athlete. But here is one who strives for the mastery. That's serious business.

Chapter Three – The Dangers to the Christian Life. Because that's the chapter that starts off with the words, “In the last days, perilous times are coming.”¹ And folks are not going to receive the doctrine at all. Not at all. They're going to turn it away. And we are living right in those days, right now. Old Peter, you know, Paul, writing that third chapter, was writing headlines for our newspapers. He didn't know it at the time, but he is just the same. You can find the headlines of your newspapers right there.

1 II Timothy 3:1

And the last one is – The Rewards of the Christian Life. “There's laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”² Now, you've got four chapters, and each one of them has a theme to it. And it will be worth your while, I'm sure it would. Just take them for four Sunday mornings in your corps and work them out that way. I'm sure you would find it worthwhile, there. The responsibilities, the seriousness, the dangers, and the rewards of the Christian life.

Now, I want us to go right back to the moment, to the place where we stopped this morning. Because we were considering God's great three-fold equipment for living the Christian life, and doing the work a Christian ought to do. And you'll remember, that the three-fold equipment is: Power, Love and a Sound Mind. “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of love, of power, and of love and of a sound mind.”³ And here is the three fold-equipment. Now that's where we stopped.

And I want you to pick up that last word that's at the end there, the last of the three – the sound mind. And I want to remind you that that word “sound” occurs three times as you would expect it to, expect to find it, in this rather interesting epistle that we are studying together. Sound mind. Now here's an outline for a sermon, again. Now you just make a note of this. And note the three times and the three ways in which that word “sound” occurs. In the first one there, it is the sound mind. Now, at the end of chapter one, you will find these words “the form of sound words.”⁴

And then, if you will go to chapter three, this chapter that we're talking about, you will find again these words - sound doctrine. “They will not endure sound doctrine.”⁵ Now, you notice and see the connection, because one of the things that we said before was that the order of scripture words is as much inspired as the words themselves. Now you notice the order here. See the connecting link with each one of them. The sound mind. When the sound mind expresses itself, it does so in sound words.

Sound words, my dear, is simply the sound mind expressing itself - Putting it's thought into words. And when you arrange sound words into proper order, as the Word of God tells us to do there, the order of sound words, then they become sound doctrine. Sound doctrine, my dear, is simply sound words arranged in proper order. That's all. If you want a definition of what doctrine is, there it is. It's the sound word that comes out of a sound mind and it's arranged in proper order. And so it becomes sound doctrine. And I wanted to add that little thought there, without going on to something else for the moment.

By the way, you will find an expression of what is meant by the sound mind when you look at another word that means exactly the same, and is repeated over and over again. And you will find it in connection with the mind, and that's the word “the sober mind”. Now the sober mind , my dear, and the sound mind both come from the same root source - they both mean exactly the same thing. And in case you're wondering, the sober, sober means the opposite of drunken. Did you hear that? Now you stop a minute. And you look at that drunken man. He can't walk straight. He can't think straight. He can't decide straight. But you look at the sober man, he can walk straight. He can think straight. He can

² II Timothy 4:8

³ II Timothy 1:7

⁴ II Timothy 1:13

⁵ II Timothy 4:3

decide straight. Now, that kind of thinking, my dear, comes only when the Holy Spirit possesses your mind.

And don't forget that the most difficult thing you'll ever have to dedicate, and I was so glad that that word came out here. Because the only thing we do is dedicate. We don't consecrate anything. We dedicate. And God consecrates that which we dedicate. That's our word. We dedicate. God consecrates. And that word came out. And this word dedicate was there. And, here is the most difficult thing you will ever have to dedicate to God is your mind. Your right to think for yourself. Did you hear it? Now, you can have little arguments with your own too bright for a mind about that, if you want to. But the most difficult we ever have to do is to hand our thinking over, and let the mind of Christ possess us so that he does the thinking. When you do the thinking, you get off the track. But if your mind is handed over so that He does the thinking, you see, then you're right every time.

Now, we sing about that, don't we? We sing about it and, as usual, we sing about it very thoughtlessly. And we don't really think of what we are singing at all. That's one of our difficulties, these days. We sing so many things, without ever thinking about them. And that's tragic. What we sing sometimes:

Take my warmest, best affections
Take my memory, mind and will
And with all thy loving spirit
All my emptied nature fill

Do you see, dear? Now that's the sound mind. And the mind is never sound until God, the Holy Spirit, possesses it. So that he can do what he wants to do through that mind of yours in the great process of making you into the image of God's Son. Now that's not done by a set of rules. It's by the Holy Spirit possessing your mind.

And here is this thought. An old man from a Roman prison cell is writing to a young man, a young man in the bloom of his youth, in the magnificence of his early manhood. And he's saying, "Timothy, one of your great dangers will be that you'll want to make your own decisions. You'll want to do your own thinking. And you'll claim you're right to do your own thinking. But you'd better remember, that you're wrong when you do that. You'd better hand that thinking process of yours over to the Holy Spirit." And it's amazing what He does when we do. It's just amazing what the Holy Spirit will do with a common place mind like yours and mine. (inaudible sentence) But when he gets possession of it, there's nothing he couldn't do when he has possession of our minds. A sound mind. And then the old man goes on, and you'll find it there are we go along.

I'm now at verse 8 if you've got your Bible's open. We're through with verse 7, you can turn to verse 8, and you will find these words there "thou therefore"⁶ Now, my dear, let's stop right there. Because once more, as you would expect, those words "thou therefore" are repeated three times. You will find them once here in that eighth verse. You will find them in the first verse of chapter one. And you'll find them in the third verse of chapter one. "Thou therefore." And remember, please, in your own personal reading of the scripture, and your studying of it, in your effort to make it clear to somebody else, don't you ever pass by that word "therefore". Because it's there for a purpose. It's sure is. It's

6 II Timothy 1:8

“therefore.” No, therefore, is a word that is like a bridge. Whenever you find the word “therefore” you ought to look in two directions - back, to see what has gone before, because something of importance has gone before. And then you ought to look in the other direction, because something of importance is going to follow it. And the word “therefore” is like the bridge that links that which has gone before with that which follows. “Thou therefore.”

What has gone before? Here we've been talking about the glory of God's relationship with this young man. This young man who's to carry the burden of the churches. We've been talking about the beauty of this invocation. We've been talking about the beauty of the three things that Paul always did. Now we've been talking about the loveliness of the home. We've been talking about Timothy's responsibility. We've been thinking about God's provision for us. What tremendous things have been occupying our minds in this room, while we've been together for these hours. What tremendous things. And Paul is aware of that. And he's saying to this young man, “Now you stop right there and go back over the ground that we've been covering – “Thou therefore” because something of equal importance is going to follow it.” Thou therefore.

I attended the English Keswick Convention⁷ there in north of England in the lake country in 1960. And I heard one of the teachers there make this statement, with a smile in it, and I hope you'll see it there. But he said this, “Whenever you find the word “therefore”, stop long enough to find out what it's there for.” Now, that's good advice. That's good advice. It sure is. That's wasn't a smart Alec talking at all. That was a very wise man talking. When you find the word “therefore”, stop long enough to find out

⁷ Sidney Cox indeed returned to England, the place of his birth, in the summer of 1960. He left England in 1907 as a 19 year-old young man to immigrate to Canada and this was the only time in his life that he returned to England. He and his wife, Violet (born in London) visited scenes from their childhood – Violet's home in London, Sidney's hometown of Northampton and his two sisters; and apparently attended this Keswick Convention. Keswick is located in County Cumbria, in the area of England known as “The Lake District.”

As for the Keswicks and this convention - The Keswick movement is distinctly evangelical in character, and is supported chiefly by the evangelical branch of the Church of England. Keswick stands for no new school of theological thought. The Keswick speakers and teachers, some fifty in number, are conservative in spirit, clinging to old truths and avoiding new and strange doctrines. Without exception they hold to the absolute plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures in every part. To them the Bible is the final court of appeal in matters both of faith and duty. This convention is a summer religious reunion, lasting one week, which has been held annually at Keswick since 1875, chiefly "for the promotion of practical holiness" by means of prayer, discussion, and personal intercourse. It is held the last week in July, and year by year it has grown in numbers and influence. The meetings are held in a large tent and are attended by several thousand people, including representatives from foreign countries. The services are notable for their spiritual character, for the prominence given to silent prayer, and for their apostolic simplicity, music and all else being subordinated to the one object--the glory of God through the promotion of truth and holiness.

It is not known exactly the connection between Sidney Cox and The Keswicks. The Keswick theology was and is very consistent with the theology of The Salvation Army and The Christian and Missionary Alliance, another organization with whom Sidney became involved during the latter part of his life. The Keswick movement came to America in the 1950s and 1960s. It is very likely that he became attracted to it through their meetings and radio broadcasts during that period of time. J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. January, 2009.

what it's there for. What is it there for? Because, here is Paul going to point out that in the life of this young man, Timothy, there is going to follow difficult and dangerous pathways. And difficult and dangerous situations that he has to face, and he's going to face them in the strength of that which has gone before. Why, of course. Thou therefore.

Now, he says a very strange thing to young Timothy. He says, "Timothy, I don't want you to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."⁸ And you know, I'm wondering if the old man hasn't come in, we haven't seen him of course, but I'm wondering if he hasn't come in, and if he isn't pointing his finger at some 'Timothy' in this room, and saying to them "Timothy, whoever you may be, I don't want you to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Because don't forget, we've already indicated that one of the things that comes very easily and very dangerously, and we ought to be thoroughly ashamed of ourselves because of it, is to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Did you hear it? "Be not ashamed." Now, again, as you would expect, you will find that word "ashamed" three times in the scripture, in this section that we're studying. "Timothy, you must not be ashamed." And when Paul sings his glory song a verse or two later on, he says, "I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."⁹ And you can almost see him going up, couldn't you, while he was singing it there? Why, of course. And then, when you turn to the end of chapter one, you will find one of the strange characters that you will not find anywhere else except in II Timothy - one of the twelve names that you do not find anywhere else. His name is Onesiphorus. And I want you to notice what Paul says about him, because he puts immortality on him. He was a very ordinary common place person. He was kind to Paul when he was in Ephesus, and was so disturbed about the thought of him being in prison. But he went all the way to Rome and then searched diligently until he found him. Beautiful words, you know. They remind you of somebody else, doesn't it? About a good shepherd that goes out and searches diligently for a lost sheep, until he finds it. Did you see it? Now here is this man, this man Onesiphorus. We don't know anything about him, except that. But "he was not ashamed of my bonds"¹⁰, says Paul. When he found me in here, found me shackled like a common prisoner there in the inner dungeons of the Roman prison situation there. "When he found me there, he was not ashamed of my bonds." And Paul puts immortality on him. Sure he does. Wherever the Word of God goes, this word will go too. Of course, he will. This man, Onesiphorus.

By the way, most of us are familiar with Chicago. And I'm going to make a suggestion. Years ago, when I lived in Chicago,¹¹ there was a little place that was in the Chicago telephone book and it was called "The House of Onesiphorus". And you could find it in the Chicago telephone book. And there it was. I don't know what kind of a place it was, but it was some place out of which rivers of living water had been flowing. Some gracious thing that had been carried on there in this place for those who needed to be found - The House of Onesiphorus. Now I'm going to Chicago, I'll be right close to it tomorrow night at this time. And I'm going to check again and see if it's still there. I think it is. The House of Onesiphorus. Now, of course, Chicago, don't know anything about that. It wouldn't be interested in that at all. But God would. God knows where The House of Onesiphorus is in Chicago.

⁸ II Timothy 1:8.

⁹ II Timothy 1:12

¹⁰ II Timothy 1:16

¹¹ Sidney and Violet Cox and their two young sons, John and Phil lived in Chicago from 1922 – 1927 at which time, Sidney was serving on the staff of The Moody Bible Institute and related Moody Bible Church.

He sure does. He surely does. He knows. Chicago doesn't know anything about it. Not one bit interested. But my heavenly Father knows where it is. He sure does.

This man. This man upon whose brow the crown of immortality was placed. And all he did was to show kindness there, and he was “not ashamed of my bonds.” You won't mind a repeating again. It's mighty easy to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. That's a very intriguing phrase. Because, here Paul tells young Timothy, “Don't you be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.” I wonder why he would say that? Wasn't that a rather strange thing to say to young Timothy? Don't be ashamed. There had been no evidence up till now that Timothy even for one fragment of a moment, had ever been ashamed, any more than Paul. And yet here's an old man warning him, and saying, don't you be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. I wonder why? Why would he say that to Timothy?

Well, now, my dear, as you would expect, there are three reasons for that. And you'll find this number three is constantly recurring. In the first place, Timothy was not strong physically. Now you'll remember that Doctor Luke had given prescriptions for him, a good many times. I don't know whether he had stomach ulcers. Instead of giving him a little wine for his stomach's sake, if he lived in these days, I feel quite sure that what he would have done was to give him milk and maalox. But at any rate, in those days, it was a little wine for your stomach's sake. He had a physical problem. And then don't forget, my dear, that there were others connected with that early church group that were just as fine as Timothy. And they had become ashamed. And the old man is saying, “What happened to one can happen to another. You'd better watch your step, Timothy. Because there was a time when Demas was just as fine as you.” And you go to the end of the book and you'll find one of the saddest words in the all of the scripture, and it's this. “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.”¹²

And then, don't forget, my dear, for the third thing, that Timothy knew what the end of the line was in following Jesus, and not being ashamed of his testimony. He knew what had happened to Paul. He knew that a Roman executioner was waiting just around the corner from him. And by the time that letter came into his hands, damp with the dampness of a Roman prison cell, it's more than likely that by that time, Paul's head had been severed from his body. And he knew that was the end of it. And the old man was saying, it may be the end you're in too.

You know, in those days, you didn't follow Jesus for what you got out of it. Not at all. There was only one thing that was ever offered, and that was blood, and sweat, and tears. That was all. That was all. I'm wondering if we're not making a mistake in these days, in trying to bride young people, almost, to become followers of the Lord Jesus and making it this, and that, and the other, and providing this, and doing that, and doing the other, and all the rest of it. And in our preaching, we say you come to Jesus and you'll find joy, joy, joy, joy, joy, joy, joy. As if that's the thing we came to find. We do find joy, of course. But that's not the real reason why we came. We found joy because we did come, of course. But it's so easy, isn't it? I'm wondering what kind of folks we get? I know how many we'd get if you offered them blood and sweat and tears. And said to them, “If you love father and mother more than me, you're not worthy of me. And unless you are willing to take up your cross daily and follow me, you're not worthy of me”. I wonder how many we'd get? We wouldn't get many. But what we did get would be worth something, wouldn't they? They sure would. They sure would. Anyhow, it may be

12 II Timothy 4:10

worth wondering sometimes. When you wake up in the middle of the night sometimes, you can't sleep, think that one through. And see if you can come to some conclusion about that.

At any rate, young Timothy knew that this was the end of it. You be faithful to the testimony of our Lord and that's going to be the end of it. It was the end for everybody. No, no disciple of our Lord in those days expected anything else. This was the inevitable end. They knew that.

“The testimony of our Lord”, what does he mean by that? A magnificent phrase. A regal phrase. As if Paul had dipped his pen in pearls at that moment, not just ink. When he writes a phrase like that, “The testimony of our Lord,” he's dipped his pen in stardust. Why, of course. What do you mean by that? Three things again, as you would expect. And here again, is a sermon outline, if you're wise enough to take it, and work it out. It'll take a little work, that's true. But if you're wise enough, you can get it again. The testimony of our Lord consisted of three things: One – What the scripture said about him. And remember, when you talk about the scripture in those days, you're talking about the Old Testament. There wasn't any New Testament, or not much of it, that would have had to be written by the time this letter was written. A few little scraps of it, but the New Testament was not completed at all. What he's talking about there, when he talks about the testimony of our Lord, is what the Old Testament said about him. It was the Old Testament said, “He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: and the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”¹³ It comes glowing like a fire out of the heart of the Old Testament. And old Paul is saying, “Timothy, I don't want you to be ashamed of what the Word of God said about your Lord. You fasten it to your heart with hooks of steel. You put it there in the center of things.”

And the second thing is, in the testimony of our Lord is what the Lord said about himself. And he said plenty, didn't he? When he was down here in this time where he was down here in his ministry on earth, he said a lot of things about himself. And Timothy is to remember them and not be ashamed of them. Those things in which our Lord said, I am this, and I am the other. “I am the bread of life.”¹⁴ “I am the living water.”¹⁵ “I am the light of the world.”¹⁶ “I am the resurrection and the life.”¹⁷ Timothy, don't be ashamed of that. He's that, and a thousand times more. Do you see what the old boy is saying to this young man? Do you see?

And then the third part of the testimony of our Lord, is what we're to go out and say about him, for we're to go out and preach the gospel. And we're to preach, because this is our business. This is our commission. We are ordained for this purpose. John 15:16: “Ye hath not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.” This is our business. And we go out and tell folks. And Paul, the one writing this, is the only one who's defined what the gospel is that we are to preach. There are a lot of folks who are preaching the gospel, or supposed to be, that haven't the foggiest idea of what the gospel is. Like gospel songs that we call them, they don't come anywhere near the gospel. The gospel, my dear, was defined. And you don't anything, really, until you get a definition of it. You can't teach anything, really, until you can define it

13 Isaiah 53:5

14 John 6:48

15 John 4:10

16 John 9:5

17 John 11:25

for your own heart. And Paul gave us a definition of what the gospel is in that 15th chapter of I Corinthians, and the 4th verse, where he says, "This is the gospel that I preach unto you, that Christ died according to the scripture and was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures."¹⁸ That's the gospel. And that's the message. And an old man is saying, "Timothy, you go out and clothe that in fire. You go out and let your heart declare it in words that will live and abide." Why, of course. Of course. The testimony of our Lord.

Now, my dear, you thought I'd forgotten, but I didn't. For my watch says a quarter past eight. And so if you don't, I want you to stand for a minute, and take a good yawn there. Some of you've been doing it anyhow. And I don't blame you. Not at all. You'll just stand there and we'll sing together "By the Pathway of Duty Flows the River of God's Grace". And I'll tell you how it came to be written. Now, I suppose this one, at least was at one time, the best known song that I've ever written. It was at that time. It isn't now. But it was at that time. "By the Pathway of Duty Flows the River of God's Grace." Key of G please. One sharp. Alright, hit the chords hard, will you? Alright, let's sing it together.

(Singing)

By the pathway of duty
Flows the river of God's grace.
By the pathway of duty
Flows the river of God's grace.
By the pathway of duty
Flows the river of God's grace.
By the pathway of duty
Flows the river of God's grace.

Do you know the verse of it? Do you know the verse? What's that? (Inaudible answer.) Good for you. Do you know the verse of it there? You come along with me. He don't know the verse of it either, but I do, and you do to. So we'll do the best we can. This is the way the verses goes. If you know it, sing it along with me.

(Singing)

There's a path that's sometimes thorny,
There's a narrow way, and straight;
It is called the path of duty,
And it leads to Heaven's gate.

While we tread this path of duty,
We shall find our needs supplied,
From the river of God's mercy
That is flowing close beside.

By the pathway of duty
Flows the river of God's grace.
By the pathway of duty

18 I Corinthians 15:1-4

Flows the river of God's grace.

If some of our deacons had been on the job, they would have opened a window or two there for a moment, wouldn't they? So that we can get a little fresh air in here. Do that. And close it up again; we don't want to freeze to death. Oh, no, no, no, no, no. May not be able to open it, at all. Never mind. Never mind.

Alright, now sit down, and I'll tell you how the song came to be written. What are you doing? There you are, I knew it. Will somebody please get the collection plates and pay for that flute? (Laughter) There it is, now. Charge it up to Captain Gouch. We can do that. He's big enough to know better, isn't he? (Laughter)

I sat in an officer's counsel in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1918. And it was a very important occasion, because our guest at that time was the second Chief of the Staff of the Army. He was on his farewell tour around the world. And he stopped at Winnipeg. And he was the man who coined the phrase, "By the pathway of duty flows the river of God's grace." He was a very wonderful looking man. Looked like a Commissioner Bringle¹⁹ and that deeply spiritual face, and soft, but powerful voice. And I remember him saying those words and I sat in that audience. And you know, it just started my heart beating. "By the pathway of duty flows of river of grace." I could hardly wait to home to get at a piano, and that night I wrote the song. And we sang it the next morning. But the interesting thing about it was, that I'll never forget the words that he added to it. And you'd better remember these. He leaned over the pulpit and said to us, when he repeated that phrase, "By the pathway of duty there ever flows the river of God's grace." And he leaned over the pulpit and said to us, "And remember, my comrades, the river is as real as the duty."

Now, I'm going to give you a bit of homework. You spend the rest of the month of September and half the month of October thinking that one through. Because that duty seems quite real sometimes, doesn't it? It sure does. But you know, the river is as real as the duty. And if you want to take the burden out of the duty, let me give you this suggestion, my dear. You take that burden that weighs so heavily, take it in your spiritual hands and dip it in the river of God's grace. And you'll find the burden will disappear. That's the reason the river is there. It's in order that we might take our burdens and immerse them in the river of God's grace. He was a very wonderful man.

By the way, who was the second Chief of the Staff of the Army? Now General Bramwell Booth was the first one. Now who was the second one? Who was the second? No, no, no. Who was he? Now, you don't need to feel bad about it, because I've asked that question in scores of places. And I haven't been able to get the answer yet. Because I have discovered, I discovered that our modern Salvationists don't know their Salvation Army history half as much as well as they ought to. Who was the second Chief of the Staff? He was accompanied on that tour by Major Edward Joy, and by Lieutenant Owen Culshaw. Now, there are two names to conjure with if you know anything about your Army history too. You sure do.

Now, who was the second Chief of the Staff? What was his name? His name, my dear, was Commissioner T. Henry Howard. Did you hear it? Now, you can feel ashamed of yourself, but you

¹⁹ Commissioner Samuel Logan Bringle, and icon in the history of The Salvation Army in America.

don't tell anybody, of course. But you can feel ashamed of yourself that you didn't know that. But that's a little bit of Salvation Army history that's worth remembering for this reason - Commissioner Howard wrote a book and I'm wondering if you've ever discovered this. Because it points one perhaps of the hidden treasures of the Army. He wrote a book called, "Fuel for Sacred Fires". And in some Army libraries of the training college, for instance, you will find that book. I'm quite sure that Commissioner Hepburn has a half a dozen copies of it somewhere, stacked around in his office. You can't get into his office for books, you know. You can hardly get anywhere near him for it. But there's a book, if you ever find it, you get it down into your heart, "Fuel for Sacred Fires." And it was written by the second Chief of Staff, Commissioner T. Henry Howard. One of the two most Christ-like men I ever saw in my life. The other was Commissioner Bringle, of course. And Commissioner Howard. They were among the most beautiful, Christ-like men I ever saw in my life.

And that's where "The Pathway of Duty" came from. And it was amazing there. It was wonderful what God did with that, for I gave the manuscript to them as they went of their journey. And they carried it all around the world. And one of the things they did with it was to take up into the northern part of India, an the borders of Tibet. And the Army had work up there on the borders of Tibet among tribes that had no written language at all. And we had a very clever man up there, a doctor. His name was Staff Captain Mortimer, and he was our missionary up there. And so clever was he, that he reduced their spoken language there to a written language. And his manuscripts were so beautiful, so correct, that the British and Foreign Bible Society photographed them. And that was the only Bible that those folks had up there for a long, long time. It was something that came from the skillful fingers of a devoted Salvation Army officer, Staff Captain Mortimer. They published his - by the way, he translated that little song, "The Pathway of Duty" into that language. And it appeared on the front page of one our our publications. And I have the copy of it in my files. It was the first song that had ever been translated into that language - "By The Pathway of Duty Flows the River of God's Grace." And I have it in my files. I don't whether anybody will be interested in it when I'm gone. But it's there, just the same. And I'm so grateful to it - for it.

Now, if you can stand it for just a few minutes more, so that we can keep to our schedule. I want to proceed just a little further. Here is Paul saying to Timothy, "I don't want you to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." And then he tells him why. He says, as you will notice there from your Bibles, and I deliberately kept away from it, so that you could be following it for yourself. He says, of this testimony of our Lord, he said "It has saved us."²⁰ Now can you imagine the heart throb in that? "This was the thing that saved us. We were dead and now we're alive. We were a far off; now we've been made nigh. We were blind; now we can see. And it was the gospel that did it. It was Jesus that did it. Oh, why, of course. Of course, he has saved us."

And out of the midst of it, God's purpose emerges. Though God didn't save you, my dear, just in order to have one more nice person in the family of God. He got that, for sure. But that wasn't the main purpose. He saved you in order that he might do something with you, and we have been called with a heavenly calling. This is all part of that which is said in the scripture about our precious and wonderful Lord. He not only saved us, he does something with us. He calls us with a holy calling - not according to our deserves; not according to our works; but according to his grace. He hath called us. If you're here as a called one of God this night, my brother and my sister, you are here by the sovereign grace of

20 II Timothy 1:9

God. It wasn't because there was anything about you that was worth saving. It was all because God could see something that made it worthwhile for the grace of God to be made manifest toward you. We have nothing to commend us to him. God loves us without any commendation on our part. "He commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."²¹ Why, of course. Of course. Here is this wonderful thing.

And then he says, and he almost goes into ecstasies. You can almost see the old man's blood pressure rising, as he's writing there. He says that we are not only saved and called with a heavenly calling, but out of the midst of it all, God has done something. What has he done? Timothy, remember, this is what God has done! He has taken the sting out of death. And he has given us twin angels, life and immortality - to walk with us when we go down the dark valleys. And you may be going down it before very long, my dear. Let's not be so foolish as to say it can happen to somebody else, but it doesn't happen to me. And when we go down the dark valley, here are the twin angels; one of either side of us - life and immortality. He hath taken the sting out of death. What a message for the world, isn't it? What a message for our own hearts. He's taken the sting of our death. There's something other that we call death that comes there and wraps its icy fingers round some precious one. And I know what I'm talking about. I sure do. But the sting is gone. The sting is gone out of it. Glory be to God. What a word to carry out, isn't it? Isn't it? When he died, we died. When he was raised, we were raised. Glory be to God. And he's saying to him, "Young Timothy, go out and tell everybody. Get excited about it. Go out and tell them. Make it the major business of your life. Don't get so cluttered up with secondary things that you haven't got any time to tell folks who are dying in their sins that the Lord Jesus came to extract the sting of death out of it." Why, of course. And that's what his message is.

When Paul Rader²², the great Paul Rader, some of us may have remembered in the years gone by. The uncle of Colonel Lyle Rader. But when Paul Rader lay dying, some of his men, some of his friends who had worked with him, went to visit him in the hospital. He was big man, weighing about 240 pounds. A great, big fellow like all the Raders are, or most of them. But cancer had got him. And his great frame had been reduced down to about 75 pounds. And the end was just around the corner. And they knew it. And a bunch of the men that had worked with him, Lance Latham, and Dick Oliver, and Horrell Dortell, and few others. And I knew them all. They went to visit him in the hospital. And after they had talked with him for a little while, Paul Rader looked at them and said "I know why you've come. You've come because you think I'm dying." He said, "Oh no, I'm not dying. I died 35 years ago." Don't you see? When the Lord Jesus saved Paul Rader 35 years ago, that was the time when Paul Rader died in the person of his substitute. And when the sting was extracted out of death, you can't hide a message like that anywhere else. Mrs. Mary Baker Patterson²³, (inaudible), doesn't know anything about it. Not a thing. Not a thing. She doesn't know anything about that. Not a thing. You

²¹ Romans 5:8

²² In the 1920s, Paul Rader (1879 – 1938) of the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle in Chicago was one of the most dynamic evangelists in North America. He was a pioneer in many ways of using new media (such as radio) to spread an evangelistic message about the hope and salvation available through Jesus Christ. And the Tabernacle was one of the most active churches in the city, with an outreach to all parts of Chicago. The Sidney Cox family lived in Chicago during the 1920s. Rader's ministry had an impact on a multitude of lives, many of whom became evangelists or pastors or missionaries themselves. I believe others in the Rader family went on to be prominent Salvationists. Another Paul Rader served as General in the last 1990s. J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. January, 2009.

²³ Mary Baker Patterson (1821 – 1910) was the discoverer of "Christian Science" and founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist – which called into questions America's most venerable institutions, religion and medicine.

won't find that anywhere else. Not at all. The sting's been taken out of it, taken the sting out of death.

One of the great expositors of the scripture of the recent years, and some of us may know him, is Dr. Harry Rumor, now gone into the glory. But he too was lying, dying of cancer in Duluth, Minnesota. And his wonderful, young son, Brandon Rumor, went to visit his father. And when he walked into the hospital room, he looked around and there was something there that disturbed him. The position of the bed where Harry Rumor was lying faced what looked like a blank wall. There was the window over here, and the door there, but ahead of him, the wall. And young Brandon Rumor said "I don't like this Dad. I think I'm going to bring a picture and put it on the wall. I don't like you looking at a blank wall." And Harry Rumor said "I'm not looking at any blank wall. I can see straight through to glory." Don't you see, my dear? Can't you see what had happened? Something had come into the life of Paul Rader that had taken the sting out of death. Something had come into the life of Harry Rumor that had taken the sting out of death.

And you can multiply it millions and millions and millions of times, but the sting will be taken out of it when the last moment comes for you. And the mystery of the something that we call death wraps itself around you as it surely will, one of these days. And somebody will look into your face, and there won't be any response. And somebody will lift your hand and it will drop. But the sting will be gone. The sting's gone. And again, I know what I'm talking about. I've lifted a hand like that. The most beautiful hand I ever saw in my life²⁴. And I lifted it one day and it dropped. It sure did. But the sting is gone, don't you see? The sting is gone. Why, of course.

And here is this man saying to young Timothy, "I want you to go out everywhere and tell folks. Tell folks, this wonderful, wonderful, wonderful thing, that in the power of the gospel that came with the risen Christ in the center of it, the sting has been taken out of death." Here is this man talking to him in this way. And you know, you can almost see again, this evidence of Paul's blood pressure rising. And he's getting excited and I wonder if Doctor Luke noticed it there and got concerned about it. You can just see his eyes flashing as he's writing. He says "I know something about it too. And I'm not only telling you not to be ashamed, but I'm not ashamed either." And he breaks out into his glory song. And seeing that he did, it wouldn't hurt us if we sang it along with him, would it? We don't need any piano for this. Let's sing his glory song along with him. We'll start and everybody sing it. And it'll take the moment of weariness out of your eyes and put a glow in your heart, if you sing it as it ought to be sung. Let's do it together.

(Singing)

For I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that he is able,
To keep that which I've committed,
Unto him against that day.²⁵

Why, certainly. And then you'll go on there for the rest of that first chapter, and you will find one or two things that will startle you. And I'm only mentioning it to you in order that in your own thinking you may see the sequence of the teaching of the things that happen there. For one of the things that

²⁴ He is referring to his beloved wife, Violet who had died two years prior in 1967.

²⁵ II Timothy 1:12

Paul is saying there is, not only that Timothy must remember the words, but that they must be arranged in proper order. The order of sound words. And then he says something that is just shocking. It's just absolutely shocking, the thing that he says, and this is what he says. He says, "All that be in Asia have turned away from me."²⁶ Now, he's talking about the churches. And he's talking about such churches as the church in Ephesus. In this great section that they call Asia, the churches that are mentioned in the second and third chapters of the book of the Revelation. And they were his pride and joy. Into this work there and into these churches, Paul had poured his heart blood. And now, they had forsaken him.

Or course, there was a reason for that, but we don't know anything about. Because this was the time when persecution broke like a Niagara over the Christian church because of what Nero had done there, in setting fire to Rome and then blaming the little innocent group of Christians for that terrible deed. And persecution like a wave came over them. We don't know anything about it. "The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places."²⁷ We don't know anything about it. And what's more, we don't want to know anything about it, either. We'll avoid anything like that like as we would the plague, anything that appears like hardship. But they didn't. And they knew all about it. And around him was coming this wave of persecution. And a lot of these folks, like Demas couldn't take it anymore and had gone off. And they had all forsaken him. And you know, the reason why I mention that in these final moments here in this evening session, is just this - because there comes sometimes in your life, and in your work, a great moment of discouragement. When somebody that you had just banked on; somebody into whose life you had poured the best you had, and they look so fine. And then suddenly something happens. And the next thing you know, they've gone. And it has almost broken your heart.

Now, my dear, your Lord knows about that, of course. But I'll tell you somebody else who knows about it, The Apostle Paul knows about that too. He sure does. He surely does. For this had happened to him. Those that looked so fine, so magnificent. Something had happened. It wasn't always a dreadful thing. It wasn't always the dreadful thing that happened to the church at Ephesus, was it? You read the beginning of the second chapter of the Revelation and you'll find that the church in Ephesus is magnificent. But something has happened. What's happened? What did happen there? They have left their first love. Did you hear it? And that happens to you, my dear. You put your heart and life into some young life, maybe, or some older life. And you got a family there, and then suddenly something happens. And you look at the wreckage of it and in your heart you say "I wonder if anybody understands this? The hours that we've spent there. The time that we've spent." The agonies that comes to your heart as you see somebody who looked like one of your spiritual children going back into the dregs and mud and mire from whence they came. "The sow that was washed goes back to the wallowing in the mire."²⁸ And it almost breaks your heart. And I want you to remember, my dear, that this old man writing from a Roman prison cell, was more than likely thinking about you, as well as young Timothy. For it's marvelous how the thought and the Word of God comes traveling on down the years, until it finally reaches you. And you find somebody does now. Somebody does.

Now, from that point on, I want you to just for a moment, let me give you just a word or two about what we should be talking about tomorrow morning. When we get into the second chapter, you have seven illustrations of what the Christian life is like. The seriousness of it. There's the good soldier of Jesus

²⁶ II Timothy 1:15

²⁷ Psalm 16:6

²⁸ II Peter 2:22

Christ. There's the athlete, who's strives for the mastery. There's the fine farmer that is so skillful that he's proud to put the product of his farm on his own table. He first becomes partakers of the fruit. There's the man who works with words instead wood - the carpenter who fits words where they belong, instead of wood. He "rightly divides" the word of truth. There's the picture of a great house in which there are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. Gold and silver on the one side, and wood and earthenware on the other. And there's finally a picture of a slave in a household. And remember, that in those days, nine Christians out of ten were slaves. They didn't own even themselves at all. And there were only a few that were free men who belonged to the Christian church. The Christian church was made up very largely, almost entirely, of those who were in the household of somebody in the capacity of the slave.

And I don't know whether you noticed, I don't whether you caught, but I said there were seven of them, and all I've given you is six, isn't it? Did you notice that? Now the first one is the most important. And it's the one that's in the first verse of Chapter 2, and it's the picture of the son, because all Paul is saying to young Timothy, "You are my son in the gospel." And, that means, he was not only the spiritual son of Paul, but he had received the holy right to become the sons of God, when the Lord Jesus entered savingly into his heart. And that's the important one of all.

Let me say something to you that will keep you thinking for a while. You can't be a soldier in God's army unless you're, first, a son. Now we can make folks into soldiers who are not sons. But God doesn't. The only kind of person he ever enrolls in his army is a son. You can't be a good soldier. The only kind of person that ever runs in the race is a son of grace. The only one. The only kind of person that ever goes working in God's fields is a son. The word is "son" – "go work today in my vineyard."²⁹ The only kind of person that God trusts with his Word, is sons. The only kind of person he ever expects to rightly divide the Word – sons. The great household, and so on. And so, we've got this lying before us tomorrow. And with the Colonel's permission, because I'm looking into your faces and I know a little bit, that you are getting a little tired. But with his permission, it's now ten minutes of nine. And I think we'll call the benediction right now, and leave the rest of it until tomorrow morning. And you will know where we are to start tomorrow. And if you will, my dear, will you please read the second chapter of II Timothy before you come to meeting in the morning? Thank you very much indeed.

Praying:

Our Father, let thy blessing be upon our Word, thy Word, as it has been going out tonight, and upon these dear children of thine. Oh, God, our Father, wrap them around, we pray thee, with thine everlasting arms. And may the love of God be manifest in every one of their lives, and the beauty of it seen in their lives. May the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (audio ends)

²⁹ Matthew 21:28