

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

The Easter Message
Colossions 3:1 and Romans 6:9
We Have Been Raised With Him To Die No More

Editorial Note: This message is an example of how Sidney Cox attempted to use the tape recorder to help him reach groups with his sermons and Bible lessons. He had purchased a reel-to-reel tape recorder and used it extensively in this effort.

The origins of his interest in this technology and technique trace to the health and condition of his beloved wife, Violet. Violet was a victim of severe rheumatoid arthritis, and was an invalid for several years leading up to her death in 1967. During the latter years of her life, Sidney was her sole caregiver. She was never institutionalized.

As a result of his dedication to her, Sidney had to curtail his travels and preaching, although he remained in great demand by The Salvation Army and the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches to preach and teach. Unable to travel, he responded to invitations by recording his sermons and Bible lessons in the quietness of his apartment and mailed the audio tape to the various groups for their use.

On other occasions when he was able to appear in person, he would record his delivered sermons and lessons for future distribution to other groups who had an interest.

This message was recorded in his apartment and distributed to the congregation of the Grace Bible Church in Detroit. I am unsure of the exact date at which it was recorded, but he lived in Detroit from 1962 – 1972, and I would estimate that this recording was made in the late 1960s. Sidney Cox was 75 years of age in 1962.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. August 5, 2010

The message that I am to bring to you this morning is not in any sense a theological discourse. I have sought to avoid that deliberately and almost strenuously. The thought that's in my mind today is that we might share once more the peculiar, distinctive, unique joy of Easter Sunday morning. And, of course, when we turn to our Word of God we find such a beautiful expression of it in the words of Paul in the 3rd chapter of Colossians and the 1st verse, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Now, that statement is not in any sense a question. It is simply an affirmation. Since ye be risen with Christ, or because ye have been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above.

For a few minutes, let's center our hearts and our thoughts on the sheer joy of Easter morning. This is a joy that the world doesn't know anything about. It thinks it does. It thinks it does because it thinks in terms of good business or demonstration or something of the kind. It will parade itself. It will show off its imitation piety by its annual visit to some church or other. But only those who are in the family of God can appreciate or understand or enter into the real secret of Easter. And that's just the point. It is a

E:\Sidney Cox Library Project\Subject Folders\Various Sermons & Lessons - Other Congregations\The Easter Message. Circa 1960s. Grace Bible Church. Detroit, Mich\The Easter Message. We Have Been Raised With Him To Die No More..doc

family secret. Only those who know Christ from an inward experience of His lovely presence can ever understand the deep meaning and joy of Easter morning.

And while we're speaking of that, it's just as well to keep in mind that only those who are in the family of God were ever privileged to look upon Him while He was here on earth following the resurrection for those forty unforgettable days. No unregenerate eyes ever saw him. No unregenerate eyes have ever seen the risen Christ. They will see Him someday when He comes and in His official position as judge. They will see Him then, but not until then.

Again, let us avoid confusing or even comparing the resurrection with similar events that may have happened before. The scripture tells us, for instance, of nine instances of those who were raised from the dead. But this is an entirely different matter. They were raised only to die again. He was raised to die no more. And, our lovely text, "We have been raised with him to die no more."¹

In our meditation this morning we shall consider, first, the word itself, and second, what it means. And third, what it does. Resurrection is a word with a lift to it. It belongs in the highest realms. It has wings. When a bird seeks those things which are above, it uses its wings. Quite frequently, I watch the pigeons on the buildings adjoining the room where I stay. If there is something on the ground, they use their feet. But if there's something they desire that is up in the upper realms, they use their wings. It's the only road leading to those things which are above and resurrection gives us wings so that we may approach into the realms of the things which are above. Every other road, every other means leads only to the things that are below.

Resurrection is a word with a song in it. You can sing the word resurrection without any difficulty at all. As a matter of fact, in the little chorus that we were singing just a few moments ago, "There's an Easter morning in my soul, for my Savior ever lives, resurrection life He gives." And there was no difficulty in singing the word resurrection. It's euphonious. It can be sung to harmonies and melodies. And there's a song in the heart of it. God has set eternity in the heart of this word.

Resurrection. There is no mud or clay or dust or ashes on this word. It laughs at the dividing veil and marches straight through into the presence of God. What a word. But we're not merely considering a word. We're considering the foundation fact of our faith. It is one of the three R's making up what we call our faith: redemption, regeneration, resurrection.

Sometimes you can estimate the value of something such as a word or a thought or a conception by picturing its absence. What if resurrection was not here? What about the preacher who stands in his pulpit to preach? What about it? Well, our Word of God tells us that our preaching would be in vain without it, and our faith would be in vain without it, and our hope would be in vain without it. This is God's way of attesting the value of our preaching, the value of our faith, and the value of our hope.

This is God's signature on the bank note. It's the 24-carat on the gold. It's the sterling on the silver. It's the signed into law on the bill. Resurrection, it's God's signature converting the promise into a fact and attesting the deity of Christ, the truth of Christ, for five times our Lord said, 'I will rise again.' The life

¹ Romans 6:9

of Christ, for if there had been anything wrong with the life of Christ there would have been no resurrection at all. If Christ did not rise, something would have been wrong with this life that was now being offered as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

And so the word resurrection attests the value of Calvary. Without the resurrection, Calvary would have been an accident or a miscarriage of judgment or a tragedy or the end of a mistaken and misguided man. Resurrection declares sin's demands have been fully met, therefore no further claim upon him. His resurrection was inevitable. He must rise and He did. But we remember with great joy in our hearts that by simple faith all the value of His life and death and resurrection belong to us. He did not rise again for His own benefit, but that we might share all this with Him.

Notice, if you please, the constant recurrence of the word 'together' from this point of the resurrection. "We are quickened together" – Ephesians 2:5. "We are raised together" – Ephesians 2:6. "We are seated together" – Ephesians 2:6. "We live together" – I Thessalonians 5:10. "We are glorified together" – Romans 8:17. No wonder our hearts are singing in the joy of this Easter morning. "I rise to walk in heaven's own light above the world and sin with heart made pure and garments white and Christ enthroned within."² We are sharing together a little bit of the indescribable joy of an Easter morning. "If we then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."³

(Track 3 of the audio contains 21 seconds of blank audio at this point)

Those of you who know me best will not be surprised at this postscript to the message that I have just given to you, an addition to it, I trust. But quite frequently I find myself pondering in such a way that it could almost be described as dreaming. I ponder about this church. I dream about the Grace Gospel Church. I ponder about you, and the thing that is in the center of my pondering or dreaming, if you wish, is what God could do with this church if only He possessed all of it. What God could do with your life if only He possessed all of it.

But I've been pondering and dreaming, if you wish, about Easter - particularly about the Easter Sunday morning. We've been singing about it and I've been thinking about it and so have you. And I've been dreaming about it. Now, the thing that I'm about to say may appear to be a strange notion. But I have sometimes wondered if, in some way, God has made preparation to record some of the great events that took place on earth so that they might be seen again. I have wondered if, in the marvelous mechanisms of heaven, there has been an arrangement, perhaps all together unknown to us, whereby God has recorded the great things that took place upon the earth. We can only contemplate them and visualize them through the limited avenue of words. But would it be surprising if the greatness of God and the love of God had made preparation so that those of us who had no opportunity to ever see or even comprehend the event as it took place, might in some way see the thing take place before our very eyes.

I have wondered, perhaps dreamed, of what would happen in heaven if sometime there came echoing through it's corridors this announcement: On the canvas of the skies you are about to see exactly what

² Taken from the words to the hymn, *The Cleansing Wave*, by Phoebe Palmer Knapp. Knapp was a 20th century Wesleyan hymn writer from Great Britain.

³ Colossians 3:1

happened on the first Easter Sunday morning. What would we see if we were in the company of those gazing into a darkened sky, for the events began in the darkness, not in the light. But if we were gazing upon the scroll of the sky into a darkness on which would shortly appear before our very eyes Easter Sunday morning as it actually took place. I wonder, my dear, what would we see?

What would take place? Have you ever tried to picture it? Have you ever tried to visualize the fingers of an awakening dawn pushing on one side the darkness that seemed to be all around us? Have you ever wondered about that sky that became gradually illuminated, very gradually, very softly? Have you ever wondered what would have been in the minds of those who might be looking at such an event? - if the outlines of a tomb suddenly became a little clearer to us. I wonder what would happen if in a moment like that, we were listening as well as looking and we might hear a strange grinding sound as if a stone was being rolled aside somewhere.

And as the light goes clearer and the opalescent glow of the first Easter Sunday morning takes over. I wonder what would be our thought if we found ourselves gazing at a tomb from which the stone had been rolled away? If we looked at the rapturous expression upon the faces of the heavenly visitors who were guarding that scene, I wonder what would be our thought if we looked into the midst of it and discovered, not its fullness, but its glorious emptiness. Would it ever occur to us that here was one moment when God was flashing before our very eyes, perhaps the only incident, the only time, or the first time, at any rate, where God had unveiled to us his utmost glory on a canvas of emptiness? Not a canvas of fullness, for remember, my dear, the glory of our Easter Sunday morning consists in the wonderful, indescribable fact of an empty tomb.

I wonder what we would think if, in the gathering light, we saw the form of a woman approaching this tomb and wondering who would roll the stone away, only to discover it had already been rolled away. This woman who was looking down in the depths of her sorrow, and out of her heart comes the question, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him."⁴ I wonder what we would think if we could actually see the approaching form of a man coming nearer and nearer and nearer, and then suddenly breaking upon us, the wonder of a voice, His voice. The risen Christ and He's speaking now.

What would we think if we actually heard the sound of His voice? Well, I do not know, but I know what that woman thought and what she did, here in the indescribable loveliness of the first Easter morning, a woman hears the sound of this voice of the risen Christ. What will He say? Will He have some long discourse to give to her about the meaning of Easter or some lack of comprehension on her part? Oh no, not at all. Just one word falls from His lips. It was a transforming word for her, for it was the sound of her name. The one word that fell from His lips was the word, Mary. I wonder what we would think if we could actually see the expression of indescribable joy and thanksgiving that came into that face of hers, so recently turned down, now glorified? I wonder what we would think? No great musician could ever interpret the sound of that voice. No Rembrandt or anybody else could ever picture for us the indescribable joy and loveliness that came into the face of a woman on that first Easter Sunday morning.

⁴ John 20:13

Now, we may have been indulging a little fantasy, but would it surprise you when you get to the land that is fairer than day to find that God had already anticipated and arranged for the very thing we're talking about? Wouldn't it be wonderful, wouldn't it be marvelous? What indescribable joy would fill our hearts and in that moment we would know something about the majesty of the resurrection.

But we can hear His voice, and we can see His face, and we can see the wound prints in His hands, and we do not have to wait for the great beyond for that, for this Christ of the resurrection is right in the midst of us, right where we are at this very moment.

Prayer:

Our Father, we pray that by the Holy Spirit these hearts of ours, that for just a moment have taken wings, may discover someday the reality of the....

(audio ends)