

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Message: The “In Whoms” of Ephesians
Part I

Editorial Note: This message was delivered by Sidney Cox to an undoubtedly small church congregation as one of a series. I do not know the exact date or the congregation to whom the message was delivered; however, from some references in these sermons, it was likely delivered sometime between 1962 – 1972 when Sidney and Violet Cox lived in retirement in the Eventide Residence in Detroit, Michigan.

In the introductions, he occasionally refers to ‘we’ in describing his original thoughts in preparing this series. This was a habit of his that indicated the degree to which he considered his beloved wife, Violet to be a partner with him in his ministry. This would further date the delivery of this series to prior to Violet’s death in 1967. Further, in Part III, he refers to Hendersonville, North Carolina, “Where Mrs. Cox and I used to live” – implying that she is alive.

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

I want to remind you first of all that this series of messages on the two-word phrase ‘In Whom’ is something that came to us – I was going to say almost by inspiration – I’m not sure that that’s the word, but it came to us with an element of surprise. We had one thought in mind that perhaps it would make one message, but when we began we found that we had hold of the end of a line of thought that stretched all the way through the Epistle to the Ephesians – this lovely phrase ‘In Whom’; and we found it first of all in Ephesians 1:7 and spent some time on that where we rejoiced in the words, ‘In whom we have redemption through His blood; the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.’”

And we found that these lovely words in the center of that verse, ‘forgiveness’ and ‘redemption’ were enclosed as it were in a framework with two words at the beginning and two words at the end and two words above and two words below. ‘In Whom’ at the beginning; ‘His grace’ at the end; ‘We have’ at the top; ‘His blood’ underneath – and in between this framework we found those two great words, ‘redemption’ and ‘forgiveness.’ Redemption: God’s way of dealing with our deepest need – and remember dear, that your deepest need is not the sin you have committed, it’s the sinner who committed them. He’s the big problem. You’re the big problem. I’m the big problem. Not just what we do. Redemption is God’s way of dealing with us; and forgiveness is God’s way of dealing with the sin that we have committed.

And we found this lovely thing. And then as we followed through we found that we were on a pathway of great words all the way through. Let me remind you of some of them. Now we have faced these words – think of them there. The word ‘chosen’ for instance. The word ‘redemption’, ‘forgiveness’, ‘His blood’, ‘His grace’, ‘According to’, ‘wisdom’, ‘prudence’, ‘inheritance’, ‘His will’, ‘His purpose’, ‘His counsel’ – and we have found all these words along the pathway that we have been traveling.¹

¹ These words are found in the 1st Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

And the wonder of it is that these words are all words that apply to us now. They're not merely something that applies to something that God has done or that God will do, but God is doing it right now. "We are chosen in Him" – right now. "We have been redeemed" – right now. "We have been forgiven" – right now. "And His blood avails for us" – now. "And His grace is sufficient for us" – now. "And His wisdom is available for us" – now. And we can go on down the line and every last one of these lovely and beautiful things are not only promises and words that apply to something that God has done in the past or will do in the future – but something that God is doing right now. And whatever we need is available for us right now; whatever we need in the way of redemption and forgiveness and wisdom and prudence and all the rest of these things. Not just something that God will provide for us if we ask Him, it is something God has already provided for us; and He is waiting in the mystery of His love and graciousness for us to ask to avail ourselves – how much wisdom do you need? How much prudence do you need? How much redemption do we need? How much forgiveness do we need?

All these things have been provided and the wonder of it is that all that God is offering these things to us and all we have to do is to put out our hand and accept the gracious gift that God in His mercy is offering to us. The thought of it almost overwhelms you. These things are ours now – not something in the future; the purpose of God, the counsel of God – of course these things are in the future, of course they're in the past, of course they are; but the wonder of it is that they're ours right now if we just put out our hands and take them. And here is the marvel of this pathway of great words that we see as we begin to move along the matchless highway of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

And when we read over these words we say to ourselves, "Is there anything more? Anything that can be added to this? Is there something else that we haven't mentioned?" And the answer is yes, for the greatest of them all we haven't mentioned at all, not yet, but it is mentioned now as we come to this lovely word 'In Whom' as we find it in the 13th verse of that 1st chapter – "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." Watch this word now, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."² And the greatest thing we have heard yet along that line and along this pathway of the great words and the great thoughts is this thought that the believer has received the seal of God in his life in the person of the Holy Spirit indwelling us. That's God's final gift to us. This is the great thing that God has done and when you begin to think about this word, 'Sealed by the spirit. In whom ye have been sealed by the spirit,' because of what He did; because we have entered into it; because of God's grace; because of His blood – we have been made the children of God and placed upon us is this marvelous thing that we call 'the seal of the spirit.'

Let's remind ourselves of this that this word 'seal' is like a diamond with many facets – you look at it and every time you look at the word it seems as if you find some point of light that flashes out here and there, and by the time you get looking at it with the eyes of your heart you're almost overwhelmed by the word of it there. What does it mean? – 'sealed.' What do you think about when you hear it? What do you think about when you put your eyes upon this diamond-like word that God gives to us with its flashing points? What do you think about? Well you think about ownership? – this is God's sign of His ownership. We think about His control. We think about assurance. We think about safety. We think about protection. We think about security. We think about privacy. We think about fitness for service and all of these things are flashing out from this center of this word 'sealed by the spirit.'

² Ephesians 1:13.

Now, let me remind you that in this Verse 13 we find exactly the same pattern that we found in Verse 7. You'll recall we have just reminded ourselves that the great words 'redemption' and 'forgiveness' are in Verse 7 in a sort of a pattern made up of two-word phrases – one at the beginning, one at the end, one at the top, one at the bottom and in between, like a framework, we find the two great words. You look at it and you'll find you are looking at exactly the same thing tonight in this one, only there are four majestic words that lead up to this word 'sealed,' and I want you to notice them if you please and you can go back and read them. Remember if you please, that this word begins in Verse 12 and at the beginning of 13 with one of the great words, and it's the word 'trusted.'

Now let's follow the word of it there and see, "In whom also ye trusted, after that ye heard the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed."³

Now, notice this, here's the pathway that leads from darkness to light. How were you saved in the first place, my dear? What was the pathway that led you from darkness to light? (Audio skips).....the word of truth. The truth gripped your heart and the Holy Spirit did that for you because it didn't grip your mind only, it gripped your heart as well. You believed the truth that you heard and you trusted in the truth of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, satisfying God and saving the sinner – and that's the path that leads from darkness to light. We heard, we heard the truth, we believed, and we trusted, and because of it, God seals the one who has heard the truth and believed it and trusted.

Let's stop a minute and consider that last word 'trust' because the reason for that is that if you go back to Verse 12 you will find that God Himself is trusting and then asking us to trust. God trusts something, or someone and then asks us to do exactly the same thing. Where is God putting His trust? He's putting His trust in the finished work of Christ- "In whom God first trusted,"⁴ and now He's asking us to do exactly the same thing. You put your trust where God puts His trust and that's the way and ground of salvation.

Trust is a great word. I sometimes wonder if it isn't the biggest word in the New Testament. I'm not going to say positively about that, but I often think about it. "I will trust and not be afraid." You can love a lot of folks, but you don't trust some of them in spite of the fact you love them. If you had something of very great value that you were going to put into the hands or heart or mind of somebody, what would you do? You'd line up the folks you love and then out of the folks you love you'd select somebody that you trust.

We're told to love our enemies; we're not told to trust them. Trust is one of God's great words - it's the climax of it all. You can love without trusting, but you can't trust without loving. Did you hear it? And here's this great word, and not only does it apply to us, it applies to God. He trusts – trusts in the work of His only begotten son. Rest in that.

Now, one of the things that we had mentioned just briefly before, and I'm sure that you won't mind if I remind you of it again, is that out of this word 'sealed' there comes three thoughts connected with it.

One is: it is the sign of a finished transaction. And again, it is a mark of ownership. And third, it is the guarantee of safe delivery.

³ Ephesians 1:13.

⁴ Ephesians 1:12, paraphrased.

Now, let's go back over those and illustrate them and put them into the realm of our own lives.

A finished transaction: if you have ever purchased a property, you will know that the property finally became yours, and it didn't become yours regardless of what had gone before until a document had been signed and sealed and notarized; and in that moment when that document came into your hands, the property came into your hands too and you possessed it and the former owner had no further claim upon it at all. But it wasn't yours until the document sealed came into your hands. The seal of the Holy Spirit is the document certifying that we belong to God and God has paid the price for us and it marks us, "Paid In Full."

Now, you can apply it in a thousand ways. For instance, I've told you before that I was not born in the United States. One of the proudest moments of my life was when I stood before a Federal judge and became a citizen of the United States. I went through all the performance before; answered all the questions; paid all the bills; went through all the waiting period; was questioned here, there and everywhere; and did everything. Even stood before a judge and said, "I will!" But I wasn't a citizen of the United States until a document that I would value with my life was placed in my hands and on it was the seal of the United States of America – and I became a citizen of the United States because a document was placed in my hands with the seal of the United States on it, and when I go to the borders of Canada or anywhere else, I've got the copy of it in my hands. The thing that makes it valuable is not just the words of it, it's the seal of the United States on it. You see what I mean?⁵

Long years ago, I was married – stood before a preacher with the nicest girl I'd ever seen and we went through all the preliminaries, and the preacher said the words and all the rest of it. But you know, the thing that certified it was a document was placed in our hands and it was made out by somebody who had authority, and it was filed where it belonged. And that was the final seal of it all.

You can apply that in a dozen ways – God has given to us His final seal upon the documents declaring, "You are a child of God!" And it's a finished transaction; and God puts His seal upon us. "You are now mine," that seal says and the former owner has no further claim upon you at all. You don't belong to him anymore, you belong to the one who has put that seal upon it – the mark of ownership. It's the guarantee of genuineness.

When you buy silver, and I don't mean imitation silver, but if you buy the genuine article, you look for the stamp upon it – Sterling Silver. And the seal is there, and you can look for that sort of thing in any number of ways. Out in the regular realms of the world, that which belongs to somebody or other is marked with his mark of ownership – cattle are branded. The nicest illustration that there is in the scripture is in the 10th Chapter of the Gospel of John where the good shepherd knows his own sheep by name. When you become a sheep in the family of the good shepherd, the name is put on it, and it isn't your name either, it's his name.

⁵ In relating this story, keep in mind that Sidney Cox and his future wife, Violet Henderson were born in England before the turn of the century. Both separately immigrated to Canada after the turn of the century. After becoming Salvation Army officers and marrying, they came to the United States with their two young sons in 1922 to live in Chicago. Ultimately, while residing in Atlanta in 1938, all four became naturalized citizens of the United States.

Supposing he branded, or marked all of his sheep there by their own name – Tom, Dick and Harry and all the rest of it, well you could find them a thousand times; but you put his own name upon it. He puts his own name upon you. He knows you by name, and it isn't your name, it's His name that counts. No matter where you go, there's the mark of His ownership, the mark of His name upon you. This is the wonder of the thing that is there – sterling is stamped, pottery sometimes bears a signature.

I don't have many precious thing and in fact I don't have scarcely any of them, but one of the things that I do possess, and it's in my room there at the Eventide Residence is a little black bowl of pottery that was made by a tribe of Indians living in Oklahoma, and I got it from there, and they had in their families the secret of the black Indian pottery; and every piece of it bears the signature of those who made it. And on the bottom of a little bowl there that doesn't look much, there are two names – the name of the man and the name of the woman, and out of that little family that held the secret of the black pottery of the Indians in Oklahoma. It's the genuine article. If anybody wants to know if it's the real thing, all you have to do, and there's the mark on it.

An artist autographs, puts his name upon the painting that he does. God has put his signature of possession upon us – it's the mark of ownership. And it's a wonderful thing that ought to thrill our hearts, is that the presence of the Holy Spirit within us is the mark of our ownership – of His ownership.

Now, in addition to that, we mentioned it's the guarantee of safe delivery. Now, you take a package to the post office and you say, "I want to register this," and when you do, the seal of the United States Postal Department is placed on that package or that letter and it's the guarantee of safe delivery. The United States Post Office Department guarantees its safety and its safe delivery. Now, in exactly the same way God has placed upon us His own personal, private mark in the person of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us as His guarantee that in His own time and way, the destination that He has planned and prepared for us, we shall reach that destination. We're not going to be lost on the way. Not at all. There may be accidents in other realms; there'll be no accident at all that will ever take place in the old Ship of Zion, or name it in any way you please, that God sends to take you home. There wasn't any question in Paul's mind when he said in those last hours, maybe an hour or two before his execution, "The time of my departure is at hand," - the ship was waiting. Of course, and this is the guarantee of safe delivery.

Now, when you turn to this 3rd again, we shall be following further appearances of this word, or these phrases, "In whom." But before we do that, if you care to do so when you turn the page of your New Testament, you will find yourself in an atmosphere that's almost breath-taking in its beauty as you go on down the rest of this chapter, because when you turn to it again you shall be in Chapter 2. But when you go on down there, you will find yourself in the midst of blessing and promises that are almost unbelievable in their majesty and wonder.

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought [in Christ], when He raised Him from the dead....Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named....and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."⁶

⁶ Ephesians 1:18-23.

And we have been daring to go along a pathway like that – a pathway of beauty and majesty and power that is almost breathtaking. But remember, that the great central fact of it all is somebody from whom, in whom all these things are, and from whom all these things flow.

“In whom we have redemption. In whom we have wisdom. In whom we have prudence. In whom God hath trusted. In whom in like manner, we trust having heard the word of truth and believed it. In whom God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise.”⁷

⁷ Ephesians 1:7-13, paraphrased.