

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

Message: The “In Whoms” of Ephesians
Part IV

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

....some of this based on the lovely phrase that has interested us and intrigued us and I think challenged us. We started out for a one-message affair but it has developed into much more than that and we have been following for several weeks these lovely words that you find particularly in the Epistle to the Ephesians. We reminded ourselves that the words ‘In whom’ are found in the Epistle to the Ephesians seven times. Now of course, we have not attempted to take and to make a message out of each one of those seven occurrences, not at all, because some of them are linked together. You can’t do that, but there are four times when you find the words in Chapter 1 and twice in Chapter 2 and once in Chapter 3. And we have come now to the last of them, the reference that you find in Chapter 3, Verse 12.

Now, let me remind you of some of the things that we have already said following through this. Let me remind you of this. We have thought together that the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians present to us three different thoughts. One: in Chapter 1, the believer is in view. In Chapter 2, it’s the body in view. In Chapter 3, the building of God is in view. Chapter 1 is devoted to the believer. Chapter 2, to the Body of Christ – the total group of believers who are now brought together; welded together, if you want to use that word. That’s not a good word for this occasion because you don’t weld a body, but it’ll do for the moment. And then, at the end of Chapter 2, you find that the body functions and when the body functions, it functions in a building; and the building is the temple of God. So we’ve got the believer in Chapter 1 and the body in Chapter 2 and the building in Chapter 3.

And you will remember that we reminded each other that in Chapter 3 you find building terms from beginning to end, particularly at the end of it where we find such words as length and breadth and height and depth and so on.¹ You’re talking about a building. Now that was one thing that we reminded ourselves again about.

¹ Ephesians 3:18.

And one of the things of course that we have had in mind all the way through is that from this great center that we speak of as ‘In whom’ – and it’s usually followed by the words, ‘We have’ – ‘In whom’ there flows endless streams of blessing, and I just want us to look at them again tonight and remind ourselves of them.

Now, here are some of the things that would come to you by way of reminder. Here’s a little bit of review.

From the great center that we found in Ephesians 1:7 to start, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” The great center ‘In whom’ and out of it flows streams of blessing.

Now, let me remind you dear about some of these streams of blessing that we have noted flowing out of that great center. Here are some of them. You can check them if you want to either in your memory or in your notes or anything you care to do. Redemption. Forgiveness. Wisdom. Prudence. Purpose. Inheritance. Trust. Sealed. The answer in Chapter 2 for four things that are basic needs in every life: our death, our distance, our disobedience and our darkness.

Now, let me repeat that. If you’re wondering about something for which we could give thanks, how about this, that out of that great center of ‘In whom’ flows these things: redemption, forgiveness, wisdom. We noted the great words, ‘The counsel of God.’ Prudence, purpose, inheritance, trust, sealed. And the answer to death and distance and disobedience and darkness.

Now, if you want to check the references for the places where we have found these words ‘In whom’ and where we have already paused, here are your references from Chapter 1 and Chapter 2: Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 1:11, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 2:21, Ephesians 2:22.

Now, from that point, I want us to turn again and go one step further. We went through to the end of Chapter 2 and noted the two times that the words ‘In whom’ appear, having the connection with the building of God – “We are builded together,”² fashioned together into a temple of which the Lord, Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone; the foundation has been laid and no other foundation will ever need to be laid but that; and the wonder of it is that we are all lively stones in the building of God.

Now, this is where we ended our study the last time we were talking together about it. Now I want us to go on and look at the next time and the final time in which this word appears, ‘In whom.’ Look at Verse 12 please in Chapter 3, “In whom.” Now let us remember that as we find it here, and as we have found it so many times before, the words ‘In whom’ are usually followed by two other words, ‘In whom we have.’ Now remember my dear, that these words, ‘We have’ are positive words now. We’re not asking God for something, we are just recognizing something that God has already provided. When we say, ‘We have’ we mean that it’s already here. All we have to do is to reach out our hands and take it. We don’t have to ask God for any of these things, all we need to do is to ask God for sense enough to reach out our empty hands and take them. ‘In whom we have’ – here is something that’s already provided. It’s not a matter here of us praying that God will provide us with redemption and with forgiveness and with wisdom and prudence and the other things, He has already provided. All He wants is our empty hands

² Ephesians 2:22.

and our willing hearts into which He can place these gifts that are already ours; already marked with your name and mine upon them.

Now let's look and see what else He has provided because here my dear, we're going to find some new things or things that we haven't mentioned before at all. 'In whom we have' – now remember that in this particular case for the next two or three verses where he is describing, or where we are watching what is flowing out of this particular 'In whom' center; let's remember that it is the believer himself in view, and what God is providing now is for us as believers and not just for something that we do. Sometimes in our prayers we are so absorbed with asking God for something that will enable us to do something, but you'll notice here that what God is providing for us, what is provided for us in the 'In whom' that we are now considering is for our benefit, it's for our development, it's the person that's in view rather than the task that the person was to do.

And that reminds us of something that's worth thinking about too, and that is, that the person in the eyes of God is more important than the work we do. You my dear, are much more important to God than anything you can do for him. Now, we want to do things for Him, of course; and He wants us to do things for Him, naturally; but what we do is a secondary thing. What we are, that's the primary thing - we as individual believers and members of the family and church of God. Remember if you please that we are more important to God than anything that we can do for Him. He would rather have us than anything that we can do for Him. Now that's something that we've said in this room a good many times and all I'm doing is just repeating it.

Now, notice what He has provided for us here. What do we have in this particular section – 'In whom we have' – we have what? Now, there are five things that are provided for us. Notice them if you please and remember, these are provisions for the believer rather than any task that the believer may be engaged in. These things my dear, are for you and for me.

One: "In whom we have," what? The first thing that we have is boldness. Now remember, that when he talks about boldness, that's a word that can go in two directions, as most of these words can. Boldness is not merely a matter of our attitude toward those who are around us - our boldness for instance in declaring the word; our boldness in doing something; our boldness here or there as relates to other people. But what he's talking about here is our boldness when we stand in the presence of God; and let's remember if you please, that if there's to be any boldness in the presence of God, there must be something within that has already taken place, otherwise there would be fear in the presence of God. The average Christian doesn't come into the presence of God boldly. He comes into the presence of God, if he comes at all, with fear and trembling. Why? It's because there is something inside that has not been dealt with that causes fear in the heart and here is the provision for that fear to be obliterated, that fear to be taken out of the way and instead of that, we stand boldly in the presence of God. It's our attitude in the presence of God that he's talking about here, not merely our attitude in the presence of other people all the way around us.

We sometimes pray for boldness in our witnessing, boldness in this, or boldness in something else; and that's right, we should pray for it. But what he's talking about here is our boldness as we stand in the presence of God. Do we feel bold in the presence of God? It isn't a natural thing at all, is it? It's a supernatural gift if we should dare to stand in the presence of God with anything that approaches boldness. It's an amazing thing what redemption and forgiveness can do for us. It can obliterate and take

out of the picture altogether the things that would cause us to stand in the presence of God with fear and trembling, and He's reminding us as believers that it is God's wish for us and God's provision for us, is that we should not come into His presence with fear and trembling, but that we should come into His presence with the word that is expressed here – with boldness.

Now let's look again, what else does He provide for us here? What is flowing out of this 'In whom' center? We have boldness and what? We have boldness and access. The way into the presence of God has been provided for us. Grace not only for our life and grace not only for a task, but the pathway of grace that leads into the presence of God Himself; and we have been provided with a pathway of grace that is stated here as, 'access to God.'

I think one of the things that grieves God, and I'm quite sure He is grieved with us sometimes, we don't have to wonder whether the Holy Spirit is grieved with us, do we? I think one of the things that grieves the spirit of God is the fact that a pathway has been provided, a pathway of access into the presence of God and we avail ourselves of it to such a limited degree; and scores of folks who call themselves Christians, and we don't question that at all, they seldom if ever avail themselves of the pathway of access into the presence of God. If we could know how many prayerless Christians there are, we would be appalled. We would be stricken to the ground in horror if we could find out if there was any way of ascertaining how many prayerless Christians there are - scores of folks who go year after year after year and never once take a step along the pathway of access into the presence of God, a pathway that was purchased with the precious blood of the son of God, Himself. Access – it's there. We don't have to pray for it. All we have to do is to use it. Walk in it. It's there.

Now let's look again, how do we walk this pathway of access into the presence of God? Is it His will that we come hesitatingly, intermittently, once in a while? How does He want us to walk this? Notice the next thing that's there, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence."³ Confidence, my dear. Certainty. Come into His presence with assurance. Walk the path of access with the confidence that is His due and our right. He gives to us the holy right of coming into the presence of God with confidence.

Now let's look again, and I want us to notice the next thing, "Wherefore," and here's Paul expressing his desire for these folks, "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."⁴ Now he has said that kind of thing over and over again. He says it to the Philippians in Philippians 1:12 and he tells it over and over again. "I don't want you to be disturbed," he says, "when tribulation comes your way."

One of the things that God provides for us from this great center of 'In whom' is enlightenment of our minds so that we can see God's purpose in tribulation. Now, notice what he says there, "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulation," not at the blessings that are falling around, but at the tribulations. It doesn't take much sense either spiritual or any other kind does it for us to see God's hand in what we call 'blessings.' But it's another thing altogether for us to see God's hand in tribulation. How do you get along with that, my dear? It's so easy isn't it for us to be able to see the hand of God in some thing or some happening or some circumstance that we speak of as a blessing - "God has blessed me with this and blessed me with that," and so on. But are we equally intelligent, and is our eyesight as keen so that we can see what God's purpose is in tribulation? It's because folks can't see God's purpose in

³ Ephesians 3:12.

⁴ Ephesians 3:13.

tribulation that so many of them stumble over it like a stumbling block. How many Christians have gone down into defeat because they failed to see God's hand in some dark circumstance that we speak of as tribulation.

One of the greatest blessings that flows from the great center of 'In whom we have' is spiritual enlightenment that will enable us to see God's hand in tribulation; God's hand in a darkness; God's hand when He takes something away from us, as well as when God gives something to us. Without saying things we shouldn't say or doing things we shouldn't do, I don't think it will hurt if we just ask ourselves the question, "How many Christians do you know who can see as much purpose when God sends tribulation as when he sends what we call 'blessing?'" How many Christians do you know that can see as distinctly the hand of God in a loss as in a gain?

'In whom we have' - and one of the great blessings that can come to us and that God has provided for us is that spiritual faculty of eyesight that will help us to see God's light in a circumstance that's filled with darkness. Tribulation. Do you remember what Paul said to his friends in Philippi, "I don't want you to be disturbed about these bonds of mine? Don't you go worrying because I'm in prison? That's a dark, that's tribulation, because out of it, God's going to work something. He's going to do something with me in prison that he couldn't do if I was outside." And some how or other God is wanting to break through in our spiritual intelligences to enable us to see that when darkness and tribulation and loss comes that there's as much of God's hand in it as when something comes that we speak of as a 'blessing.' Did you hear it? 'In whom we have' - that kind of insight. That's one of God's choicest gifts to the believer is the gift to see God's hand in what we call tribulation.

Now, let's look once more, for this is the next thing that we find here 'In whom we have'; here is one other thing. "I bow my knee."⁵ Here's a man in an attitude of total surrender. 'In whom we have' grace enough to bow the knee to God - the divine faculty, because it isn't human at all; it must be more than human, the faculty to totally surrender to God's will and to bow my knee.

Now my dear, let's remember this: that the most graceful thing grace ever enables you to do is not to stand upright, it's to bow your knee. Did you hear it? He's describing the most graceful attitude in a child of grace is not to only stand upright, it's when we bow the knee. You are more beautiful my dear on your knees before God than anywhere else in earth or heaven, and He want us to know that. He wants us to know what an unearthly beauty there is about a child of God who kneels in total surrender to the will of God; who bows the knee to the God and father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now, when you go over that again, here are five things. See if you've got them there. One is boldness - the absence of fear. Here is access - the middle wall of partition has been removed; and remember, that when he speaks of the middle wall of partition, while he may be primarily speaking about the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, there is a wall of partition between us and God unless it is removed. But here is access where the middle wall of partition has been removed; nothing that hinders our coming to the presence of God; the confidence with which we come. The certainty, the assurance, the vision that can come to our hearts that will enable us to see God's loving kindness and ultimate grace in tribulation as well as in these things that we call 'blessings.' The surrender to the will of God that leads us into the most beautiful attitude that anyone can take - the bowing of the knee in the presence of God.

⁵ Ephesians 3:14.

Now my dear, 'In whom we have' - boldness, access, confidence, vision, surrender.

Now, I want to remind you of just one other thing and then we'll continue this next Wednesday night for a while. I want to remind you of this so that you can be thinking about it. We have now looked at the last 'In whom' in the Epistle to the Ephesians – the last time those actual words appear. But as we look, we find words that look strangely like them. For instance, in Verse 15, we find these words, 'Of whom.' And when you turn to Chapter 4, Verse 16, you find these words, 'From whom.' Now, they sound strangely alike, don't they? 'In whom,' 'Of whom,' 'From whom.' And I want you to check those two references that I've just given you: 3:15 and 4:16 and you will notice something that's rather strange there; you will notice that one is a reference to the family of God and the other is a reference to the church of God - the family of God and the church of God.

Now, I just want you to keep that in mind because there's the point where we'll start next Wednesday night and go on a little further and talk about 'In whom' and at the same time, we'll spend a little time looking at 'Of whom' and 'From whom' as well; and I think maybe we can finish up next Wednesday night with the *Hallelujah Chorus* somewhere not far away from us.