

# My Testimony Is True

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[ 0 : 01 ] So we're picking things up where we left off. Jesus is teaching at the temple courts. And we can see that in verse 20, kind of the last verse of our section this morning.

It says, So Jesus is still there in Jerusalem, everything we're about to read today that Jesus said, and that was said to him, happened there at the temple courts while he was teaching.

Up until now, the Pharisees have been kind of lurking around in the background. If you remember back to chapter 7, they sent some temple guards to arrest Jesus.

But then the guards decided not to arrest him because they were amazed by Jesus' teaching. They didn't think they should arrest a man who teaches like Jesus did. So they came back empty-handed.

Well, now finally, the Pharisees are about to challenge Jesus openly. And just imagine yourself there in the temple courts, watching them, watching Jesus, waiting for the opportune moment to confront him.

[ 1 : 17 ] And finally, Jesus says something. Something big that they simply cannot just let go unchecked, at least in their minds.

Verse 12. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

What a claim to make. The Pharisees see this as their opportune moment, and they seize it.

Verse 13. The Pharisees challenged him. Here you are, appearing as your own witness. Your testimony is not valid.

Quite literally, they say to him, you are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not true.

[ 2 : 22 ] There's a bit of a translation issue here. About half of the translations have the Pharisees saying, your testimony is not true. The other half have it, your testimony is not valid. It's not the easiest thing to translate.

The word used here usually means true, but in this place, and in at least one other place in John, where Jesus has used this word, it could mean valid. It could mean dependable, or trustworthy.

So, either the Pharisees are accusing Jesus outright of speaking what is false. Your testimony is not true. Or, the Pharisees are trying to challenge whether what Jesus is saying can be trusted.

Your testimony is not valid. It's not trustworthy. The first possibility, a little more overt and direct.

The second, a little more subtle, which it is, I'm not sure, to be honest. But either way, the Pharisees are challenging Jesus. They are trying to cast doubt on him, and to get the people to doubt what he is saying about being the light of the world.

[ 3 : 32 ] And their charge comes with a reason. Here's how we know that what he's claiming is not true, is not valid. They say, here you are appearing as your own witness.

You're testifying about yourself. And we all know better than to just accept as true what a person says about themselves. Don't we?

We even think like that today, don't we? Maybe you go online, and you're looking for a specific product or service, and you go to the webpage of that company, and what does it say?

It says, we offer the best service or product around. We're the best in the business. Our product is better than all the competitors. By now, most of us probably know that almost every company claims that for themselves.

No, we want to hear the testimony of others about your product or your service. We want to read some reviews. We want to talk to somebody who's done business with you to confirm that you really are the best.

[ 4 : 39 ] Because anybody can claim for themselves to be the best or to have the best. So the Pharisees are trying to cause the people to question and doubt Jesus.

And personally, I don't think this is just the Pharisees talking here. I hear the insidious whisper of Satan himself in these words. Can you really trust what this man is saying, what he is claiming for himself?

Does that not sound familiar? Verse 14. Jesus answered, Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true.

For I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. Again, there are both possibilities possibilities with the word true or valid here. It's possible even that there's a play on that word going on here. Maybe the Pharisees are subtly calling into question whether Jesus' testimony is trustworthy, valid.

[ 5 : 52 ] But Jesus, as he responds, is claiming not just to have a valid testimony, but a true one. As Jesus responds, he uses an if statement.

He says, even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true. Now, he gives a reason.

And it's kind of a strange reason. For I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

I can testify about myself and my testimony is true because I know where I came from and where I am going. That's kind of a strange way to reason, isn't it?

Doesn't that sound weird to you? It kind of sounds weird to me. How does Jesus, knowing where he came from and where he is going, give validity and credibility to his testimony?

[ 7 : 03 ] Well, I think to get a hang on this, we kind of have to step back for a minute and think of the bigger conversation here. One of the big issues right now with Jesus is where he is from.

We've heard this again and again. You remember back to chapter 7? What did the crowd say there? Isn't this the man they're trying to kill?

Here he is, speaking publicly and they're not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? Oh, but we know where this man is from.

When the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from. We know where this man is from, they said. He can't be the Messiah.

Again, down in verse 40. On hearing his words, some of the people said, surely this man is the prophet.

[ 8 : 07 ] Others said, he is the Messiah. Still others asked, well, how can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?

Again, again, we see this whole discussion of where Jesus is from. He can't be the Messiah because he's not from the right place. And now finally, we come to Jesus' own words in verse 14. He says, I know where I came from, but you have no idea where I came from. So the big question is, where does Jesus come from?

Well, they're right in a sense. He does come from Galilee. That's where he's been traveling. That's where he's been doing his ministry. He does come from Nazareth. That's where, that's his hometown.

That's where he's been living with his parents for the last while. He also comes from Bethlehem, the town of David. We talked about this a couple weeks ago.

[ 9 : 14 ] He was born there. But none of these things are what Jesus has in mind. No, Jesus has something else in mind. And we've heard him say it back in Galilee. Where is Jesus from?

What did he say after the feeding of the 5,000? John 6, verse 38. For I have come down from heaven. For I have come down from heaven.

Let those words sink in. What does that mean? As we've seen right from the beginning of John's gospel, it means that Jesus is no ordinary man.

It means that before Jesus took on human flesh, he was in heaven. Do you remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus?

John 3, verse 31. He said to Nicodemus, I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe. How then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?

[ 10 : 26 ] And we can imagine Nicodemus wondering, well, what do you mean? Speak of heavenly things. How can you tell us about heavenly things? Jesus answers that question. He says, no one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven.

The son of man. Essentially, he tells Nicodemus, yes, I can tell you about heavenly things because unlike every other human being on the planet, I've been there.

I'm from there. I came down from heaven. We can't miss the significance of this. This isn't just trivia, like where is so-and-so born?

Where are they from? No, this is, this means, this has huge implications. And John, the gospel writer, spells it out for us a little bit in chapter 3, verse 31.

He says, the one who comes from above is above all. The one who's from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one from the earth.

[ 11 : 38 ] But the one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard. From where?

Seen from heaven, heard from heaven, from God, from his Father in heaven. But no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God. this is what the Pharisees do not know about where Jesus is from.

And probably more precisely, this is what the Pharisees refuse to acknowledge or believe about Jesus. No, you are just a man and being a man like the rest of us, you need someone else to confirm your testimony.

You need someone else to validate your grandiose claims about yourself. But Jesus is saying, actually, I don't.

[ 12 : 49 ] I know who I am. And you guys have no idea who I am. Because Jesus comes from heaven, he doesn't need a second human witness.

He doesn't need any man here on earth to validate the truthfulness of his testimony, of what he's saying. And actually, I think it's maybe implied a little bit in these words.

I think Jesus is saying, you Pharisees are not in a position to judge me. You don't even know where I came from or where I'm going.

How could you possibly judge me rightly, accurately? Now, we're not going to talk too much this morning about where Jesus is going. We'll get to that after Easter.

But we've already heard that Jesus tell the people that he's going away. And where he's going, they can't come. They can't follow him. And the people are confused.

[ 13 : 52 ] Where is that? But as we'll see later in John's gospel, the place he is going is to the Father. It's back to heaven. And if Jesus can go where no man has gone, it's proof that his testimony is indeed true.

Verse 15. Jesus says, you judge by human standards. I pass judgment on no one.

But if I do judge, my decisions are true because I am not alone. I stand with the Father who sent me.

So Jesus makes it somewhat plain. He tells them, you guys are judging by human standards.

Literally, it's according to the flesh. According to that part of me that you can see and touch.

But Jesus is more than just flesh and blood like we are. The problem with the Pharisees is that they're trying to judge Jesus as if he were any other man.

[ 15 : 03 ] They're trying to apply the law to him as if he were just any other Jewish guy. But Jesus is more than just a man. He is the divine Son of God who has come down from heaven to live among us.

Jesus says, I'm not here to judge. but even if I were to judge, my judgment is true. But listen to this. He says, my judgment is true because I am not alone. I stand with the Father who sent me. What is Jesus saying here?

I think what he's saying is simply that he is not here now to judge in this moment in the temple courts. I don't think he means that he will never judge anyone.

In fact, the last time he was here in Jerusalem, he told them that God, his Father, has entrusted all judgment, the final judgment to him, the Son. But I think he means that right now, right here, he is not here now to judge anyone.

[ 16 : 13 ] But even if he was to judge right now, his judgment would be true. His verdicts would be just.

His decisions would be right. Why? Because he would not judge alone. He says, I stand with the Father who sent me.

If we recall back to John chapter 5, when he was last in Jerusalem, Jesus said this. He said, do not be amazed at this. For a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out.

Those who have done what is good will rise to live. And those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. And then Jesus says this. He says, by myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear. And my judgment is just. For I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me.

[ 17 : 13 ] Jesus will judge perfectly when he does. Justly. Rightly. Because his judgment will be based on what he hears from God, the Father.

The one who knows and sees everything about everyone. At this point, Jesus comes back to the charge that the Pharisees have made against him.

I don't need a human testimony. I don't need a human stamp of approval on my testimony. But let's come back to that law, which says that there should be two witnesses.

Chapter 8, verse 17, Jesus says, in your own law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am one who testifies for myself.

My other witness is the Father who sent me. If you've read through the first couple books of the Bible, you'll know that God said back in the law for Israel that people weren't to be condemned in court unless there was two witnesses of the crime that had been committed.

[ 18 : 35 ] This was partly to give extra protection to those who might be falsely accused by someone. Even though Jesus has no need of another witness to verify the truthfulness of his claims, he comes back to this law that they're trying to use against him and he says, actually in my case, there are two witnesses.

I'm one of them and my Father who sent me is the other witness. God, my Father, does not expect you to just take my word for it.

He himself is testifying about me. And we're not going to go into a full look at how the Father testifies about Jesus this morning. We did that back on September 20th.

You can look it up online in the message Why Should We Believe You? But basically we looked at three ways that the Father testifies about Jesus. Jesus. The Father testifies about Jesus through the miraculous works that he does, through the words that God gave the prophets to speak about Jesus long before Jesus came, and through the audible voice from heaven that came at Jesus' baptism.

And we can add a fourth way to that that we've seen as we've been going along here. Since Jesus in his own words only ever speaks what he hears from the Father and what the Father commands him to say, we might say that the Father himself is actually testifying about Jesus every time that Jesus opens his mouth to speak.

[ 20 : 11 ] It's kind of a hard thing to wrap our minds around, but when Jesus speaks, both he and his Father are speaking at the same time. According to Jesus, that's how they work together.

But it's here that it would have been interesting to listen, to watch the reaction of the people as Jesus says this. As he says, I call my father as my other witness.

The Pharisees, they don't miss a beat. They say, where is your father? Where is your father? father? Of course, they already know that Jesus is referring to God.

This has already come up before with them. They didn't like him. They were going after him back in chapter 5 because he was calling God his own father. But even though they know he's talking about God, they still ask the question, oh, you have a second witness, do you?

Great. Let's bring him in to testify. where is your father? Now, Jesus could have simply said, my father's in heaven.

[ 21 : 27 ] But instead, Jesus says to them, you do not know me or my father. You do not know me or my father.

And the crowd, I don't know if they realized it or not, but Jesus just told the Pharisees to their faces, you do not know God. You do not know my father, God.

And then he throws in this little statement that probably struck a nerve in them, but I think is also a gracious opportunity to them. He says, if you knew me, you would know my father also.

if you knew me, you would know my father also. What a statement. Notice that he didn't say, if you knew my father, then you would recognize that I'm his son.

That's maybe what we expected him to say. No, he doesn't say that. He says, if you knew me, you would know my father also. do you want to know God?

[ 22 : 48 ] Then get to know me, says Jesus, and you will. Wow. Jesus has been sent by God from heaven into our world so that you and I can know God.

God. God. He is the messenger. He is the prophet. He is the one who speaks for God. He is the son who has come on behalf of his father. And as we'll find out in a few more chapters, next chapter, he himself is one with the father.

And mysteriously is himself God in human flesh. church. So it all started with that amazing declaration by Jesus, I am the light of the world.

And we will talk about that more another day. But what John wants us to see here is how that day when he said it, the religious leaders challenged him to his face.

What John wants us to see is how Jesus responded to their challenge that day in front of everyone. in the temple courts. Not only did he claim to be the light of the world, but he claimed to be from heaven.

[ 24 : 08 ] He claimed to be sent from God. He claimed to be one who, unlike every other human being, needs no secondary human witness to his truthfulness.

And yet, he claimed to be one who has the greatest witness of all, God himself. He claimed to be the one who could judge justly, today, had it been the day for judgment.

Do you hear what Jesus is saying? Do you believe him? Do you believe that God speaks through him?

God speaks to be the Lord? I want to encourage you to put yourself in the crowd that day as you're listening to this back and forth. What's going on in your mind? As I was thinking that, I couldn't help but think it all comes back to this question.

Do I know God? Do you know God? God? And I don't mean know about him. The religious leaders, they knew about God, but they didn't know God, as in personally, as in relationship.

[ 25 : 27 ] Do you know God? Do you want to know God more, better, deeper?

Jesus says, then get to know me, and you will. One amazing invitation.

I pray that we all respond to it. Lord Jesus, thank you for your words. We admit, we confess that you don't always say what we expect or what we maybe think you should say or want to say, but these are your words.

we do want to know God. Would you reveal more and more to our hearts who the Father is?

We don't want to be like the Pharisees, Lord. We don't want to be people who just put on a masquerade of religiosity for others to see. This is real or it's not real, and I pray, Lord, that in all of our hearts, it would be real.

[ 26 : 38 ] Make it real. In our hearts, we pray. We ask this in your name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.