

# Is our testimony true?

**Reference: SHM-S10-011-Mw-R00-P2**

(Originally spoken on 21 June 2015, edited on 22 June 2015)

Web site: <http://www.ajourneyinlife.org> and <http://www.ajourneyinlife.com>

This message is protected by copyright © 2015 Lim Liong. Permission is given to reproduce part (where the meaning is retained and the part is not quoted out of context) or all, of it, for personal use or for distribution, on condition that **no changes are made** and the message is **distributed free** of charge. Please do so prayerfully and discreetly.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

The paragraphs above as well as this paragraph must be included when the message is reproduced so that others who reproduce it will be conscious of the conditions stated above.

Let us turn to **John 8: 13-14**

## **John 8: 13-14**

13 So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "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."

The way the Lord Jesus responded to various people in His life is often very interesting and it requires pondering to appreciate what He sought to communicate. As we do that, we can appreciate the wisdom of God expressed in the way the Lord Jesus conducted Himself and how He related with people.

So here, we see that the Pharisees, the religious leaders of their time, they were opposed to the Lord Jesus; they were persecuting Him, they wanted to destroy Him. They wanted to seize Him; they wanted to put Him to death. They accused Him of being a blasphemer. So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."

Why did they say "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true"? These two aspects are linked: "You are testifying about Yourself"; "Your testimony is not true." Of course, they can be looked at separately but they are put together here because they bear a relationship.

Why is it the Pharisees implied that because the Lord Jesus was testifying about Himself, so His testimony was not true? Is there some validity in this statement? Is it true that when people testify about themselves, very often the things they say may not be true?

In life, it is often that way. In many instances when people testify about themselves, it is very often either not true or not accurate. It is usually presented in a form that puts them in a more favourable light than what it might really be. This is something we can observe as we relate with people and even in our own lives, as we describe ourselves to other people, we may also find that tendency to describe in a more positive way than in reality it is.

Over the years, talking to many people in different situations and in particular, in times when there are conflicts between people, you will notice that different people describing the same event present very different stories.

If two persons have a conflict, something went wrong, they are upset with each other; if you were to listen to their account separately, you may find that the two accounts may not match. They can be very different and sometimes you wonder, "How is that possible?" And as you think about it, you will also realize that the person giving an account of that situation will often present it in such a way that it is to their favour: they were not in the wrong; the other party was in the wrong. So too the other person will present it their way. So it can be a very difficult situation to find out what actually happened.

So to say that you testify about yourself, your testimony is not true has some validity in many situations of life. However, the Lord Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true..."

So that is interesting. The Lord Jesus said, "Even if". This implies that He recognizes that often when people testify about themselves, their testimony may not be true, may not be accurate.

And if you listen to the same person describing his life on different occasions, you may also find different accounts because at different points of time he may want to exaggerate certain points and sometimes to the degree that they cannot be reconciled.

When the Lord Jesus said, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true..." it should cause us to ponder why is it He said that. How is it that His testimony is true when for the majority of people, it is not so.

In reality, whether your testimony is true or not true is not dependent on who testifies to it. You testify to it, others testify to it, God testifies to it; whether it is true or not true is not dependent just on who testifies. Whether it is true or not true is a reality. If it is true what you say is true, it is true. If someone else describes about you and it is true, it is true.

But the problem lies in the fact that we tend to be subjective. So when we testify about ourselves, we tend not to be accurate because we are subjective, we want to protect ourselves, we want to project a better image. That is one reason why it is so difficult to properly receive reproof and correction. We will tend to quickly justify ourselves rather than listen carefully and consider whether something is true or not true.

We react because we want to protect ourselves.

The Lord Jesus, He was perfectly accurate in all that He testified about Himself. That was reality. Even if He testified or the Father were to testify, it would be the same thing: what He spoke was reality, accurate. Why is that so? Why is it His testimony is true? And the reason He gives here again is quite interesting.

He says, "...for I know where I came from and where I am going..."

So, because of that, His testimony is true. How can that be? Do we also not know where we came from and where we are going or might go? Does that make our testimony true?

So in interpreting the Scriptures, we have to carefully consider the meaning, the intention of the words. Why did the Lord Jesus say that?

Here basically, the Lord Jesus is saying, "I know who I am accurately. I know where I came from: from eternity, from heaven. I know where I am going: I am going to the cross and beyond that, I am going to return to heaven. All these things are true and I know it." "...I know where I came from and where I am going..." He has an accurate knowledge of the reality.

Let us turn to **Hebrews 10: 4-10**.

#### **Hebrews 10: 4-10**

- 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
- 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;
- 6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.
- 7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"
- 8 After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law),
- 9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.
- 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

This passage tells us the Lord Jesus knew where He came from and where He was going. He came in fulfilment of prophecy. He came by choice; He decided to fulfil the perfect will of God. He says, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.' The Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself to fulfil the will of God. He knew what He was doing.

"BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. Sacrifices and burnt offerings were not what God wanted; they were just a shadow. The Lord Jesus was the live, living, sacrifice for sin. As a result of what He did – By this will (this will of God) – we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. "...the body of Jesus Christ" tells us about the incarnation: He, the *Logos*, came into this world, was made flesh; He came and He dwelt in this body that God had prepared for Him and so, as a result, we can now be sanctified.

So all these things were clear to the Lord Jesus and He testified of these things. They were accurate. So even if He were to testify about Himself, His testimony would always be true because the Lord Jesus was perfect in His moral goodness, in His integrity, in His honesty, in the way He lived His life. So therefore, He could say and do all things according to what was good and right.

For us then, can we learn from Him to be like that: even if we testify about ourselves, our testimony is true? Can that be? It is very difficult but it is possible, if we are prepared to give up our lives to God just like the Lord Jesus, to offer it up to Him to do His will, to fulfil what is meaningful to God. If our lives are truly offered to God then we will also become accurate in our understanding of ourselves, and our testimony can then become more and more accurate.

Why is that so? It is basically because our spirit, our concerns, our direction will become more and more in line with the heart of God.

What we are concerned about, what is important to us will be the things that are really important to God; and what God wants to accomplish would be what we want to bring about. So what we say will be in line with what God wants to accomplish. This spirit is very important if we want to be accurate in our testimony.

**John 5: 30**

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me..."

Here again we see the Lord Jesus explaining: He says, "...My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me..."

So then, we may think: "If a person were to seek not his own will but the will of somebody who sends him, then his judgment would be just." Is that the meaning? Of course not: A person can be sent by an evil king or an evil spirit, to do their will; that does not mean that the judgment would be just.

But here, the Lord Jesus is saying, "...I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me..." and the "Him who sent Me" is the critical issue. The "Him who sent Me" is the almighty, perfect God. So when the Lord Jesus was sent by the almighty, perfect God to fulfil His perfect will and He did nothing on His own initiative but in full submission to God, in that context we can understand why He says, "As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me..."

"As I hear, I judge": that tells us the Lord Jesus was very sensitive to what God was instructing Him, how He was guiding Him in His life. So as He understood the will of God, He exercised His judgment and He says, "My judgment is just". He was not seeking any personal selfish benefit; He was seeking the will of God to be fulfilled in His life.

So if we want to be reliable in our testimony, then we must learn to appreciate the will of God, to listen to Him, to identify with Him, that this is what we want, not our own objectives, plans, preferences, ideas.

Then the Lord Jesus said, "...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." This last part is to indicate why the Pharisees were not accurate. The Pharisees were not testifying about themselves; they were making a judgment about the Lord Jesus and they were very definite that they were right. They felt that He was blaspheming, that He deserved the death sentence.

Well, we can say from one angle of looking at it, it is quite understandable why they may say He is blaspheming. Can you imagine hearing someone say, "I came from heaven and I have come to save the world"? Who would believe such a person?

However, we notice that the apostle Peter testified: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." So, it is possible for people to recognize that. John testified: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." So, it is possible to recognize, but it is very difficult.

The Lord Jesus told Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father in heaven has revealed this to you." So if our hearts are open, we can receive from God.

If the Pharisees had a positive spirit, if their hearts were open to God, they could have recognized the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God and therefore follow Him, obey Him. But their hearts were not right. They were self-centred; they wanted glory and honour, they wanted praise from men, they were lovers of money. So because of such a state of heart, they did not receive help from the Lord Jesus as He sought to correct them, point out to them where they were wrong.

The Lord Jesus rebuked them: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees..." but they did not repent; they did not listen to what He had to say.

And this is something for us also to consider carefully: Do we really listen to what God has to say to us or are we just looking for something that we may prefer, that may support what we want to do? Can we honestly look to God to teach us the right path and to obey Him?

If we want our testimony to be true, to be reliable then these are some aspects that we need to pay attention to. If we want to protect ourselves, if we want to live according to our own preferences, if we have our own plans to fulfil, our testimony will not be true in the sense of truly honouring to God, fully accurate in terms of what ought to be. It is very easy for us to present something quite different from the reality. But if we learn from the Lord Jesus and do nothing from our own initiative but seek the Lord, respond to Him, hear what He has to say, then increasingly, what we say, what we do will be meaningful in the eyes of God, will be edifying in the lives of people.

So then let us come before the Lord and ask Him to help us to evaluate our lives: When we speak, what kind of heart do we have? Is it from the good heart that speaks what is good or a selfish heart that speaks what is selfish? It is something that we can do something about.

So let us ask the Lord to help us to consider carefully because this has eternal consequences. If we want to prepare for eternity, we must start now. We cannot wait. Every moment will contribute to the outcome in eternity.

So let us thank the Lord for what He has done for us on the cross, as well as His perfect example as He lived on earth, so that we may follow Him as we should.