

# Is our testimony true? (2)

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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 Lord Jesus made it clear that even if He were to testify about Himself, His testimony was true. However, let us look at another passage that may seem quite different from this.

## **John 5: 31-37**

- 31 "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.  
32 "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.  
33 "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.  
34 "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.  
35 "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.  
36 "But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish--the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.  
37 "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form."

These two passages seem very different. In one passage, the Lord Jesus made it clear: "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true", but in this passage, He says, "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true". So which statement is correct: "true" or "not true"?

It is important that in seeking to understand what God is saying to us, we must know His intention. We cannot depend just on the words by themselves: "true"; "not true". The context is different; the intention is different; the application is different.

In **John 8**, when the Lord Jesus said, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true", He was saying, "There is an objective reality. I know that objective reality. Even if I testify of it, it is true." So that testimony is an objective reality: whoever may testify of it, it remains the objective reality. You say that the earth is round; another person who is ignorant, he also says the earth is round – both are right. No matter who says it, it remains true because that is the objective reality.

But in **John 5: 31-37**, the Lord Jesus is not referring to objective reality when He said, "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true". What He means here is: "If I alone testify about Myself, you may think My testimony is not true." That is because to many people, when you testify about yourself, it is not very reliable: "How can we know whether what you say is true or not? "

So, we notice the Pharisees had made a statement in **John 8**: "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." To them, the Lord Jesus' testimony was not true. In that context, the Lord Jesus said, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true". That is because the Lord Jesus was accurate in His understanding of Himself and what He said was always true. But here, He says, "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true" in the sense that many people may not quite so readily accept that; they may think it is not true.

Why do I say that? We look at the context and we see here the Lord Jesus referred to the testimony of John the Baptist. He said, "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved." So here, the Lord Jesus was saying that ultimately, He has a testimony that will always be accurate, that is not from Himself, and that is from God.

The testimony from God will always be true, but He says there is a testimony of John the Baptist. Why did He refer to John the Baptist?

He says, "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light." So, the Jews accepted the testimony of John the Baptist. If they accepted that testimony and John the Baptist testified about the Lord Jesus, then they should recognize that what John the Baptist said about the Lord Jesus was true.

So, does it mean that the Lord Jesus depended on the testimony of John the Baptist for His testimony to be true?

No. He said, "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved." The meaning here is: "If I just tell you about God, if I just tell you that I know who I am, you may not believe. You may think what I say is not true. So, I refer you to John the Baptist. You believe in him; you recognize he is a prophet of God. John the Baptist testified about Me. Will you give credit to that?"

So, why did He tell them about John the Baptist?

He said, "I say these things so that you may be saved."

So, the difference between these two passages is that in the first passage, the Lord Jesus was referring to Himself: objective testimony about Himself, regarding Himself; and that will always be true – whether other people testified of Him or not, it remained true.

But here, He was talking about a testimony to affect other people so that they may be saved.

So for these people, they need extra help in a way they could recognize, they could appreciate.

So He referred to John the Baptist in the hope that if they were receptive to that, they may then be drawn to God and be able to recognize who the Lord Jesus truly was.

So here, the testimony has to do not with the Lord Jesus in Himself, for Himself; it has to do with His testimony for the sake of other people.

The difference between the two is very important.

In our lives, we must first be clear about ourselves.

If we want to have a testimony to help other people, we must first make sure our testimony is true. So, that is something that each of one us must ensure in our lives.

But very often, that testimony is not very true because we are not prepared to fully obey God: we have our own plans, we have our own preferences and desires, we want recognition by people. So, what we say may very often be tailored to attract their attention, to get the approval of other people. That kind of testimony is not true.

The testimony that is true is objective reality that concentrates on what is right and good regardless of how it may affect other people.

There is no compromise, there is no shifting from that position; you live by that, you stay in it. If we live our lives that way, in submission to God, His will, His ways, our testimony will be true.

We will be able to recognize who we are and if we go wrong, God will have the freedom to correct us quite readily because we want to do what is right and good.

But if that is not our attitude, then there is no way that God can really help us to become truly good and faithful in our testimony.

So for the Lord Jesus, His life was totally given to God: in everything He did, He honoured God; there was no self-seeking, it was to fulfil the will of God. In that state, God had the full freedom to speak to Him and to speak through Him. There was always that reality and meaning.

But for the sake of other people, in seeking to help others to recognize who He was, the testimony of others can contribute in that direction, whether it be John the Baptist or other prophets, and the Lord Jesus also referred to Moses and the Scriptures that testified of Him.

The Lord Jesus told the Jews, "You believe in Moses; Moses wrote about Me. If you really appreciate Moses, you will listen to him and you will recognize who I am. But if you do not really appreciate Moses, you also will not recognize who I am."

So, the testimony of Moses, the testimony of John the Baptist, the testimony of other people who are reliable can contribute in that direction.

But then the Lord Jesus says, "Ultimately, My testimony is not from men: *But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish--the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.*" So He says, "The Father testifies about Me." They believe in God. So, if they truly believe in God, then they should believe the testimony that God is giving of the Lord Jesus.

So in this instance, He says, "the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish--the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me."

This tells us that the life that we live can testify to the reality of what God wants to tell us. God can speak to us through the way we live. So in the case of the Lord Jesus, how He lived His life was a testimony of God at work: "the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me."

How is that possible? How is it the life that He lived could testify in that way?

Is it because He performed many miracles?

We know that the powers of darkness can also perform what we may consider as 'miracles'; there are false wonders and signs that can take place.

But the miracles that the Lord Jesus performed were not just acts of power. The miracles that the Lord Jesus performed always had a moral and spiritual content; the direction, the meaning, came from the heart of God in order to help us to know Him, to appreciate Him, to respond to Him.

So, the works that He did, whether it be in the feeding of the five thousand because of compassion for them, or the healing of the woman who was bent double because He wanted to help her to be in good health again, or in many other ways, there was a meaning behind the very things that He did.

But more than that is the total life of the Lord Jesus in being fully obedient to God at every point in time, conscious of what was meaningful to God and fulfilling His will faithfully.

"And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form."

The Father has testified. Can we receive the testimony of God even though we do not see Him, we do not hear Him audibly?

The answer is Yes. God can speak to our spirits if our spirits are receptive to Him. If we are humble, if we want to know what is good and right, we want to live a life that is pleasing to God, we are prepared for the cost of it, God can speak to anyone in any situation: Whether you are educated or not educated, whether you are of the highest status in society or the lowest; God can speak to anyone.

So then, when we look at the life of the Lord Jesus, these two aspects come through very clearly. What should that mean for us?

The Lord Jesus was very clear about His testimony because He knew who He was objectively, accurately, and His life was fully given to God.

So if we want to leave behind or to impart a testimony, then we must make sure that our lives are lived in a similar way to that of the Lord Jesus; then that testimony will be present whether people recognize it or not. Bear in mind that a good testimony can be present and yet people may not recognize it. The Lord Jesus was perfect but many rejected Him, but that testimony remained.

The second aspect has to do with our testimony as it affects other people. How can we seek to have a good testimony that can affect others? Yes, the example of Joseph is a good example: the way he lived his life, the way he treated his brothers, the way he responded in the context of difficulties and sufferings; it is a good testimony in terms of his faith in God, his right attitude, his responses in various situations; so, others looking at his life could say, yes, his life is a positive testimony.

But beyond that, the most important aspect is not what people say.

The most important aspect of our testimony is what God says.

Can we have the confidence that if God were to testify about us, He would say, "Yes, he is a faithful servant of Mine"?

God said of the Lord Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The meaning of that can be applied to all of us if we truly love Him; not in exactly the same meaning but in the same direction that we can be truly His children who love Him, and God is pleased with us.

When that is true, then our influence in the lives of others can become very significant because when we live our lives that way, God will then testify about us. God can speak to the people that we seek to influence; they can recognize the presence of God, the life of God, the message of God. That can come through if God is pleased with us.

So while there can be value in people testifying, recognizing how we have lived and they appreciate it - there is value in that - but let us be careful that ultimately, our concentration is: Is God really pleased with us?

If the answer is No, then we must quickly do something about it and correct it.

If the answer is Yes, we can be encouraged to pursue and deepen further and not to be troubled if there are others who think otherwise. Yet we will always be willing to consider whatever others may say and bring before God to consider, so that the objective reality can be properly recognized.

So then, is our testimony true?



That will depend on whether we live like the Lord Jesus: a life fully given to God, there is an objective reality in us that is good.

Is our testimony true in its impact on other people?

That will depend on how we have lived our lives and whether others can see and be influenced positively.

And ultimately, what does God have to say about our lives?

Will God speak to let others know that what we are saying is good and right and they will respond, or will God say, "No, this is not My true prophet"?

What would it be? How will God speak through us?

So then, let us come before the Lord and ask Him to help us appreciate who the Lord Jesus is and that we learn to be like Him and develop a life that will be truly a good testimony that can affect other people positively.