

- I. True, valid testimony, thinking we know God but don't
- A. John 8:12-20 . . . Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." [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. [15] You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. [16] But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. [17] Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. [18] I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me." [19] So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." [20] These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.
- B. Prayer
- II. True, valid testimony
- A. John 8:13-14 . . .
1. In vs 12, Jesus begins by claiming to be the light of the world, and that if we follow Him we will not live our earthly lives in darkness, but rather in the light of life, that is, in the light that makes living in this world the best life possible – regardless of the circumstances.
 2. The Pharisees responded to this claim by reminding Jesus there are two reasons why His claim cannot be taken seriously.
 - a. First, He was testifying about Himself – and we know that when people talk about themselves they often exaggerate the good and leave out the bad, which is why in a court of law, the accused claims of innocence are not taken as the only testimony as to his innocence or guilt.
 - b. Now it is true that these Pharisees had evil motives for not accepting Jesus' claims as true, but they deserve some credit for using a universally common reason for not taking Him seriously.

- c. And the second reason the Pharisees gave for not taking Jesus seriously was because He had no independent witness – that is, a second witness – to support His claim.
- 3. Jesus begins His response by focusing on their first complaint, that is, that no court of law accepts self-testimony as sufficient testimony. Jesus counters their claim by saying that one proof of trustworthy testimony – including self-testimony – is knowledge of the truth.
 - a. In this situation, Jesus points out that His testimony is true because He knows where He came from and where He is going, but they don't. In other words, because He knows the full truth and they don't, His testimony is valid while their claim that His testimony is not to be taken seriously is invalid.
 - (1) And as readers of John's gospel, we know that Jesus knew where He came from and where He is going because He has been giving his audiences both hints and clear indications that He came from God and is returning to God.
 - (2) For example, one of His clearest statements is recorded in John 16:28, "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."
 - b. In contrast, the Pharisees lacked this knowledge, and we know they lacked this knowledge because of the questions they asked about His origin, and their claim that they knew His parents, and by the way they treated Him and were wanting to kill Him.
 - c. Now the point here is that it was their lack of knowledge in comparison to Jesus' knowledge that invalidated their claim that Jesus was not who He said He was.
- 4. However – and this is an important however – they could have known the truth for they had access to it just like everyone else. But they chose to reject the truth that Jesus spoke for a reality of their own making. And they treated their own version of reality as more real, more sensible, more advantageous, and more protective of their religious beliefs and practices than Jesus' truth.
 - a. Now my reason for pointing this out is because it is easy for us to find fault with the Pharisees for being so foolish. And yet, we face the same temptation.
 - b. For example, do you believe all that God has said about Himself and about how we are to live? Do you believe God is perfectly good, eternally faithful, always loving – even when it doesn't feel like it? Do you believe that He works all things out for good when we

- love Him and live according to His will? Do you believe that He has freed you from the power and practice of sin, that you no longer have to sin, and that you are totally safe in His hands?
- c. Or do you reject some – just some – of God’s truth for a reality of your own making, that is, for a way of thinking and a way of living that is different from God’s way?
5. It is true that for the most part the religious leaders of Jesus day were self-serving unbelievers with evil motives which than drove the ways they were dealing with Jesus.
 - a. And yet, they were just as human as you and me. They faced the same temptations we face to exalt self and to trust in self rather than exalting God and trusting in God.
 - b. So rather than feel superior to the Pharisees, I urge each of us to examine ourselves to see if we are like them, if only in a small way. And then, I urge you to remove whatever unbelief or selfish interests or evil motives is in you so that you do not continue to be like them. And finally, I urge us all to take all that God says as truth, and to live accordingly.
- B. Jesus continues His response to their complaint that self-testimony is not dependable testimony by saying, “You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone” (vs 15).
1. This time Jesus shows their conclusions about Him to be invalid because they are basing them on a perspective that is limited in scope to that which is earthly and temporal rather than including that which is spiritual and eternal.
 2. And the reason they were limiting their perspective to that which is earthly and temporal was because of their ulterior motives. They wanted to severely limit and eventually remove the threat Jesus posed to their position, power, prestige, and influence. In other words, to satisfy their desires, they had to judge Jesus according to the flesh.
 3. My point is that they were not interested in discovering if God had actually sent Jesus, or God was in Jesus, or God was Jesus. Their interests were so fleshly, earthly, and temporal that they could not afford to make room for that which is spiritual and eternal.
 - a. Now you may be thinking that they couldn’t help themselves, just as you may think there are times and situations where you can’t stop yourself from doing what is wrong. After all, we know that the god of this world is doing his best to blind people’s minds in

the hope that they will not see the light of the gospel and the glory of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4).

- b. However, though it is true that the devil is hard at work tempting us and trying to blind us to the truth, it is also true that, like the Pharisees, we blind ourselves with our own selfishness, false beliefs, irrational fears, misconceptions, unbelief, and wanting our way over God's truth and God's ways.
 4. Therefore, it isn't that the Pharisees had to judge according to the flesh, its that they wanted to judge according to the flesh because that is what got them what they wanted.
- C. John 8:16-18 . . . But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. [17] Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. [18] I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."
1. This time, Jesus confirms the validity of His testimony by affirming that He is not speaking alone, but He has one greater than Himself whose testimony supports His testimony. In other words, Jesus is fulfilling the Mosaic Law by having a second witness – who happens to be God – testify as to the truth of His claims.
 2. Interestingly, in this discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus did not use the label "GOD," but rather He used the label "FATHER." And the Pharisees did not make the connection that the Father who sent Jesus was none other than God.
 3. This raises the question, "Could the Pharisees have known where Jesus was from and where He would be going after leaving this earth?" YES!! Others knew, which means they could have known too.
 - a. Besides, Paul makes it clear in Romans 1 that since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen and are capable of being understood through what has been made (Romans 1:20). And of course, the Pharisees had the voice of creation just like us all.
 - b. And again, Paul makes it clear that God has placed within everyone – including the Pharisees – sufficient knowledge of Himself so that everyone has the ability and opportunity to come to believe in Him (Romans 1:19).
 - c. When we put these two facts together with the fact the Jesus' life, teachings, and miracles were sufficient to prove He had come from God and was returning to God, we can reasonably conclude these

Pharisees had the opportunity to come to the truth of who Jesus was. Their rejection of Jesus was not for lack of knowledge, but for lack of humility, integrity, faith, and submission to God.

4. And so it is in our world today. God has and continues to reveal Himself in creation and speak into the hearts of everyone, everywhere. Therefore, though few respond, it isn't for lack of sufficient knowledge.
 - a. When we add evangelism on top of what God has already done, those who hear the message or see believers behaving godly have even less excuse for not responding in humility, faith, repentance, and submission.
 - b. My point here is that it wasn't for lack of knowledge that the religious leaders did not know where Jesus came from and where He was going. It was for lack of desire to know.
5. And it is the same way with those we evangelize. Their unbelief is not because they cannot believe, but because they will not believe. And so it is with us. Wherever we distrust God, our distrust is not because we can't trust Him, but because we will not trust Him.

III. Thinking we know God but don't

- A. John 8:19 . . . So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" (*In other words, if your father is your second witness, where is he? Produce him!*) Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."
 1. Here in vs 19, Jesus gives us three pieces of information that stand true no matter what anyone says about them.
 - a. The first truth is the most obvious – if you know about Jesus and do not see Him to be the son of God, and the savior of the world, and God with us, then you do not know God, even if you think you do.
 - b. The second truth is the implied reverse of the first. If you do not know God, you will not recognize Jesus to be God in human flesh and the savior of the world.
 - c. The third truth you have to think harder about because it is not as obvious. And the third truth is this: if you know God and recognize Jesus as God with us, then you will know who Jesus' Father is and where He is.
 2. So how do these three truths apply to the Pharisees?
 - a. They asked where Jesus' father was because to them He was nowhere to be seen. And because they couldn't see Him, they concluded He wasn't there.

- b. They did believe Jesus' Father was there because they did not believe Jesus was sent by God which means they did not believe Jesus' father was God.
 - c. They did not believe Jesus was sent by God and that His father was God because they did not know God – even though they thought they knew Him really well.
 3. The point I want to make is that faith in God opens our eyes to see what unbelievers do not see – not because they cannot see it but because they will not see it. And in the same way, complete faith in God opens our eyes to see what partial faith cannot see. And here again, it is not because partial faith cannot see it, but because it will not see it.
- B. Now before moving on, I want to draw your attention to six scripture verses that address the necessity of believing in both God and Jesus Christ – and especially if you have heard about or in some way have some knowledge of His existence and purpose.
 1. 1 John 2:23 . . . Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.
 2. 1 John 4:15 . . . Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
 3. 1 John 5:1 . . . Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.
 4. 2 John 1:9 . . . Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ (*implies knowing at least some of the teachings of Jesus*), does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.
 5. John 17:3 . . . This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
 6. And finally, Jesus clearly addresses the union between God and Himself in John 14:8-9 . . . Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." [9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
- C. John 8:20 . . . These words [Jesus] spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.
 1. The treasury area of the temple was where people gave their financial gifts. This was an area where women could enter, which made it the

most public place in the temple. And though this is speculation, it is possible John included this statement here in vs 20 to lend credibility to the story at the beginning of this chapter.

2. This verse also reminds us that God is directly involved in at least some of what is going on in our world – for though it was the religious leader’s intention to seize Jesus in order to take Him out of the temple, God prevented that from happening.
3. This fact should encourage you that you are not going through life alone, but God is with you, and at least on some occasions and in some way He is making things happen or preventing them from happening. In other words, He is present and He is involved.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Like the Pharisees, we can gain a great deal of Bible knowledge. We can read the Bible from cover to cover many times. We can memorize lengthy portions of scripture and be a serious student of theology. We can know end times prophecies and the best projections of how the end times will work out. But is this enough?
- B. It was not enough for the Pharisees, for Jesus said that unless our righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20).
- C. So what is enough?
 1. Faith that works!
 2. Living according to the knowledge we have.
 3. In the most practical, day-to-day ways applying what we know to how we live.
- D. In other words, knowledge is not enough. It must be accompanied by living up to what you know in a whole-hearted, whole-life way. We may never do this perfectly in this life, but it ought to be our goal to do it as fully as possible.
- E. Therefore, may we be counted among those who continue to learn AND apply what they are learning to how they are living each and every day in every area of life.