



## JOHN 7:45-52

***Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”***

***“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.***

***“You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. “Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No!”***  
(verses 45-49)

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The crowds had been so intrigued with Jesus’ words and deeds that they talked among themselves about the possibility of him being the Christ. Distressed by this underground whispering, the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him (John 7:31-32).

But now they return, empty-handed, enthusiastically giving their own testimony: *“No one every spoke like this man”* (verse 46). In their own way they are voicing the same opinion as Peter had in the previous chapter when he looked at the competing options and said to Jesus, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”* (John 6:68). So, too, these guards speak their unbridled affirmation of Jesus. From their point of view, he is without equal.

That affirmation, at the same time, is actually a pointed critique of the Pharisees themselves, for it is a bald statement that they don’t measure up to Jesus’ standard. Although this evaluation seems obvious to us, understanding the sheer majesty of his full identity, it would have been a slap in the face to these unbelieving Pharisees, who were so proud of their own status and accomplishments, and so utterly convinced of Jesus’ falsehood and blasphemy.

Once again we’re meant to see the deepening blindness of the religious leaders and the growing sight that is dawning for so many others. For those with eyes to see, Jesus’ identity is becoming more and more clear.

How about us? Do we have eyes to see? Reading through John’s Gospel, is Jesus’ majesty coming clear? If so, do we go the further step and open our ears to hear? In other words, do we actually embrace the guards’ point of view – *“No one ever spoke the way this man does”*? Do we truly accept Peter’s affirmation – *“Lord ... you have the words of eternal life”*?

If so, we won’t hesitate to immerse ourselves in Jesus’ teaching – again and again. We’ll allow our minds to be filled to the full, taking time each day to reflect on his word, both in the Gospels and in the full extent of the Scriptures. We’ll read it and reflect on it and stew on its meaning, memorizing portions so that we might reflect further. If no one ever spoke like this, how could we do anything less?

But more than simply hearing Jesus’ words, we’ll *“abide”* in them. His words invite us – indeed command us – to make our home in their truths. They require us to so live in them that we choose to live them out. Jesus says this is what it means to truly be his disciples (John 8:31), embracing his truth so fully that it shapes us, setting us free.

The testimony of the guards draws me afresh to this commitment. Does it you?

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*Lord Jesus, with these words I affirm that no one else has ever spoken like you. With Peter I affirm that you have the words of eternal life. I choose to renew my commitment to hearing your words, embracing it, and living it. Help me by your Spirit. Amen.*

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Memorize:

John 8:31-32 captures this theme of holding fast to Jesus' words. Memorize these verses – recommit yourself to their teaching as you do.