

No More Fence!

“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, ‘Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!’ And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him.”
Exodus 32:26

Who is For the Lord?

Since COVID-19 we have seen churches targeted by governors and local authorities in ways we never thought were possible in the United States. Churches have been forced to close their doors, labeled “non-essential,” and banned from meeting in person—even from drive-in services in some instances. Pastors have been arrested and fined outrageous amounts of money for disobeying these unconstitutional orders. One church in Mississippi was even burned down because they were continuing to meet together in their own building. We have a Constitution and a Bill of Rights specifically forbidding anything like this from happening, but yet it is happening.

There are so many distractions, emotions, and misinformation every day that can blind us to what the message of the Lord is to the Church during these times. It’s so easy for the truth to be obscured by our own flesh reacting to the horror we see playing out in the news. People are suffering and dying. Jobs have been lost and businesses have closed. Now, in spite of the threats of the past two months from our local authorities that anyone not “social distancing” will be punished, Americans

have taken to the streets, some peacefully protesting, and others rioting, looting, and burning down the very businesses that have been struggling to survive the economic fallout of COVID-19—but not because of government lockdowns and the trampling of our constitutional rights. Racial tensions have erupted again over the death of George Floyd, a victim of police brutality, and our media has jumped at the chance to fan the flames of bitterness and hatred once more. Groups like ANTIFA have hijacked peaceful protests and are using this opportunity to attack police officers, deface historical monuments, and tear down anything representing law and order. Suddenly our media and government authorities are no longer concerned with face masks and stay-at-home orders. The hypocrisy is amazing!

Every believer in America should be asking themselves, “What is going on? What is God saying?” Believers should be fasting and praying, asking the Lord what He is saying to His people through all of this. We should not be looking to the media for our guidance. Our guidance should be coming from the Holy Spirit. We should not be looking to what the world is saying for the truth. Our truth should be grounded in the Word of God.

The Lord is allowing a separation among Christians. He is separating those who love His Word from those who would rather listen to the world. If you have been paying attention you already know that this separation began long before COVID-19. The truth and the Word of God have been under attack for the last few decades. The truth about marriage, gender, homosexuality, sin, judgment, grace, and even the sovereignty of God have been under attack in the Church. Believers have been lining up on either side of the fence, whether they’ve realized it or not.

As Christians who live in the Western World, we have had the luxury of being “pew sitter” Christians—really “fence sitter” Christians—for hundreds of years. Anyone who has grown up in a traditional Church environment knows the term

“pew sitter.” It’s used to describe a Christian who faithfully attends Church each Sunday, but wants nothing to do with serving or growth and maturity. The term “fence sitter” is supposed to refer to an unbeliever, but someone who is “close to the Kingdom” and just hasn’t made the choice yet. But a “pew sitter” Christian is really just a fence sitter. They haven’t made the choice to take up their cross and follow Christ. In Matthew 10:32-38, Jesus says this type of believer is not worthy of Him:

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

Jesus was speaking to the Jews when He said this. We tend to forget and think He was speaking to Gentile Christians like us. Why did He mention a sword? Because He knew it would bring to their mind the story in Exodus where Israel committed idolatry by worshiping the calf idol. Really it was adultery, since they had just been spiritually married to God at Mount Sinai. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw their idolatry, he said, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!” (Ex 32:26) All the sons of Levi ran to Moses. They made a choice to stand on the side of the Lord and His Law. Jesus was saying the same to His followers in Matthew 10. They were Jews and they knew the story. But do we, as Gentile

believers, know the story? The next verse may shock you, but its message is powerful!

He said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.’” (Ex 32:27)

Jesus’ words echo this story. He said He came to bring a sword, and He would set a man against his own family and friends. The message is clear: “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” (Mt 10:37-38) This is the first and greatest commandment—to love the Lord with all our hearts, above all else! It is the first of the Ten Commandments for a reason. “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20:3)

When did the message change from taking up our cross to taking up our pew? There has always been, and always will be, one choice! Whom do you serve? Do you serve the Lord, or do you serve someone else? Do you love the Lord, or something else? The Lord is saying again, as Moses said to the people of Israel, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!” The Lord is separating out those who are for Him and His Word, and those who are not. There is no more fence. You are either for Him or against Him.

Idolatry in the Church

The coronavirus pandemic has been a unique test in this way. It seems to have been perfectly formulated to reveal the idolatry (spiritual harlotry) of the Church to “science.” For years anyone who has disagreed with the theory of evolution and

man-made climate change has been mocked by the world as ignorant and “unscientific.” Should this bother or shame Christians? Of course not! True Christians know it’s impossible to mix evolution and man-made climate change with the Bible. Believers who stand on the Word of God ignore these insults, but some have tried for many years to play both sides. They are sitting on the fence. On one side is the Word of God and the truth, and on the other is the wisdom of this world and “science.”

But the “science” of today is no longer science. It has become the new world religion, and it is based in humanism, which elevates the created above the Creator. True science is based on observable facts, and there are no observable facts to prove that the theory of evolution or man-made climate change are true. Instead, facts are being suppressed or distorted in order to support a predetermined consensus about the origin of life, the reason for changes in the climate, and now the facts of coronavirus.

All of the scientific guidance we have been given over the last two months by our trusted government health officials has proven to be unreliable, contradictory, and hostile toward any new data provided by those who are unsanctioned by the global elite. Yet there are still believers who cling to the “science” that we must all “stay home, save lives.” The hold of “science” on believers is so powerful that even after churches have been deemed “essential” by the government and allowed to meet in person, some have continued to stay home and stream their services online. They vow they won’t meet again until they are told it’s “safe” by the “medical experts.”

On April 30, 2020, an article came out in the local Houston news with a list of churches who had decided not to open their doors, in spite of Governor Abbot’s new guidelines which allowed for churches to reopen. “While some congregations spent Wednesday evaluating safety plans with the intent of resuming service, others

said their doors won't reopen so soon. They said the timing doesn't seem right, and preferred to wait until healthcare professionals no longer advise congregants be spaced six feet apart from one another.”¹ One of the pastors is quoted in the article as saying, “We've made a decision not to gather the congregation for live worship until the medical professionals tell us that we no longer have to maintain the six-foot social distancing rule.”²

Where is God mentioned in this? He isn't. Only the gods of science and medical professionals are mentioned. This is alarming! What has caused this? These pastors have decided to go against the Word of God which clearly teaches us to not neglect meeting together (Heb 10:25), especially as we see the Day of the Lord approaching—and as Christians it should be obvious to us that it is approaching quickly. They are bowing down to the wisdom of the world. They want a state-sanctioned church. Sadly, they are laying the groundwork for one to exist.

Worldly Voices

It should be obvious to everyone by now that there has been an agenda from the beginning of this pandemic. For those who actually are interested in observing the real facts, it's plain to see that we have been fed a bunch of lies and propaganda by our own media. The death rate of coronavirus has now dropped to .4% according to the CDC, and yet the stay-at-home orders, social distancing guidelines, and humanistic, one-world hashtags have continued long past any logical timeframe. So is it really about saving lives? Or is it about pushing a global

¹ <https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2020/04/30/list-churches-place-of-worship-in-houston-layout-plans-for-first-weekend-after-texas-reopens-friday/>

² Dr. Tom Pace, senior pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in River Oaks, <https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2020/04/30/list-churches-place-of-worship-in-houston-layout-plans-for-first-weekend-after-texas-reopens-friday/>

agenda? Wal-mart, Target, Lowes, and other stores have been deemed “essential” and allowed to remain open during this crisis, yet houses of worship and prayer have remained closed. This screams that there is an agenda, no matter what the “scientific” data is.

Globalism has been on the rise for many years and nationalism has been declining. It’s no longer a secret that there is an elite group of people pulling strings behind the scenes to bring about a one world government. Christians should not be skeptical about this or surprised, since it is prophesied in the Bible that there will be a one world government and religion in the last days. It’s even happened before in human history at the tower of Babel. But Christians are choosing to listen to worldly voices like the media above the Word of God and they are being deceived. They are ending up on the wrong side of the fence. Now there is a new wave of propaganda from the media, attempting to shape the opinions of our country, and the world, about the death of George Floyd and the riots that have followed it. What is the real truth? The media can no longer be trusted to give it to us. Naive Christians are putting their trust in worldly people instead of in God Himself and His Word. It’s long past time for believers to stop trusting in those who are opposed to God above their own Bibles. Let’s call it what it is: idolatry and spiritual harlotry. Wake up, Church! You are being prepped for the one-world government and religion of the last days. Turn off CNN and read your Bible!

The Twisting of the Word of God

There is another disturbing trend among believers, and that is the twisting of the Word of God to match the message of the world. I guess this shouldn’t be surprising, since it’s been going on from the pulpit for years. We’ve watched for the last decade as ministry after ministry and pastor after pastor has declared that

homosexuality is not a sin. Once again, COVID-19 has revealed those who stand on the Word of God and those who don't.

In the previously mentioned news article one pastor was quoted as saying, "We're going to continue our streaming and our production of our broadcasts and keeping our people safe. As a pastor, I'm a shepherd. I've got a shepherd's heart. I cannot stand the risk of having someone bring the disease here, neither catching that disease here."³ In another article a pastor said he appreciated his governor's stance on the freedom of religion, but, "The second greatest command is to love our neighbors as ourselves. For me, at this moment, the way I love my neighbor is by giving them physical distance."⁴

Yes, loving our neighbor is the second greatest commandment, but what about the first and greatest commandment?

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets. (Matt 22:36-40)

The Church does not exist to serve itself, it exists to serve, worship, and honor God. The same people who twist these verses are the same ones who turn Christ's message of repentance and faith into a humanistic social gospel.

³ Bishop James Dixon, pastor of The Community of Faith Church in northwest Houston, <https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2020/04/30/list-churches-place-of-worship-in-houston-layout-plans-for-first-weekend-after-texas-reopens-friday/>

⁴ David Duncan, pastor of Houston's Memorial Church of Christ, <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Churches-can-open-again-but-many-say-they-15170070.php>

Testing Reveals the Heart

Testing always reveals what's in the heart. The Lord has allowed this pandemic to sift His people and reveal what's really there. The agenda of the world and the idolatry in the Church were there long before the shaking from COVID-19 began.

Besides idolatry to science and worldly voices, complacency has also been exposed in the Church. When governors and mayors across the country banned in-person meetings, there was a deafening silence. Where is the value for meeting together that we are supposed to have as the body of Christ? Slowly, as stay-at-home orders dragged into May, many began to stand up and say they would begin meeting together again. But a large portion of the Church hasn't seemed to care very much that they were banned from meeting in person. They seemed perfectly okay with it. They were happy to move completely online and provide "services" and live-streaming worship shows from their empty buildings. It didn't matter that all of their messages were now online, streamed through worldly, God-hating social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube. In fact, the only people it did matter to were churches who preach the entire Word of God, without any watering down of the message.

The churches who were happy to comply with the shut down of their in-person services are the same ones who have been preaching watered-down, health-wealth, social gospels for years. These are the churches who have grown their massive congregations by offending absolutely no one. As long as there is a button for online giving, there's no problem! Ouch. But isn't it interesting that it was seemingly painless and effortless for these mega churches to stop meeting together and go online? It's because it was already a show to begin with. The consumerism of the American church has been exposed as well. Church has become even more

lazy. Don't feel like getting up early on Sunday? No problem, just stay in bed and we will stream you the entire service! After all, it's about saving lives!

Smaller churches, those who have been preaching the Word, shepherding their flock, and calling out sin haven't had it so easy. Now all of their messages are under the microscope of Facebook and YouTube—companies well-known for their censorship of anything that does not fit their liberal agenda.

In a study released by LifeWay Research on April 2, 2020, Scott McConnell, the executive director, said “the rapid adoption of providing video content has been just as abrupt as ceasing in-person meetings. Churches who never would have considered offering a streaming or video option, have quickly done so. Their pastors were compelled to stay connected and to continue to provide spiritual guidance during this trying time.”⁵ In the same article LifeWay Research found that “fewer than 1 in 10 Protestant pastors (8%) say they did not provide any video sermons or worship services” in the month of March.

The entire global Church is now completely exposed via the internet to reveal those who stand on the Word of God and those who do not. It's almost like it was planned! Planned by man or not, the Lord has allowed it to sift His people. The fence is gone.

A Deluding Influence

The Lord is forcing a choice, just as He did with Israel at Mount Sinai. COVID-19 has revealed those Christians who stand on the truth of God's Word and those who stand on the wisdom of the world. Brothers and sisters in Christ, if you aren't getting your guidance and wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and His Word, you're allowing something else to sit in that place in your life as an idol and you will be deceived! It is not optional. It seems as though American Christians have gotten

⁵ <https://lifewayresearch.com/2020/04/02/most-churches-have-stopped-gathering-few-plan-to-meet-on-easter/>

the idea that the Bible is optional, or that parts of it are optional, and they can alter it to fit their opinion. But that is not Christianity! The Church in America is getting a rude awakening. There is no fence in true Christianity. A true follower of Christ does not play both sides. The Lord is taking away the buffer. Christians are now forced to either stand on the side of God and His Word, or the side of the world. Many Christians will choose to play the harlot with the world. They don't want to lose their friends or their influence. Mega churches aren't going to want to be persecuted by the media and local authorities. They won't want to lose money. They will justify their betrayal by telling themselves it's so they won't lose their platform. After all, it was the Lord that gave them their fame and popularity! Why would He want them to throw that all away when their influence is needed now more than ever? They will decide to just go along "for now, for the greater good."

Friends, the harlot church is being revealed. But the Bride of Christ is also being revealed. The Bride loves the truth and the Word of God and has kept herself pure from the love of the world and idolatry. She is faithful to her Bridegroom. She is alert and awake to the schemes of the enemy and isn't fooled by his lies. Paul warned believers that in the last days a deluding influence would be released on those who do not hold to and love the truth.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved [or "delivered"]. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not

believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (1 Thess 2:7-12 Emphasis and additions are mine)

Those who have chosen to elevate the wisdom of this world above the Bible have already been prepped for deception. Worldly Christians with worldly mindsets who have lived on the fence for their entire lives and have never made a stand on the Word of God are being swept away by the messages of the world. Others who have never realized they need to have a biblical worldview are also being deceived. It is not a safe time to be ignorant! Only those who are standing on the Word of God and standing up to the world and its antichrist agenda will end up on the right side of the fence. They are also the ones who will be targeted and persecuted by the world. These are the last days and Jesus warned us this would happen.

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.” (John 15:18-21 Emphasis is mine)

Will you stand on the Word of God and truth? Will you honor the Lord above all else? Or will you bow to the wisdom of the world and a twisted form of the Word of God? Many Christians have already made their choice, without even realizing it. They still think they can appeal to the world while also following Christ. They don’t see the stark contrast between the message of the world and the message of the Bible. They may think they are still sitting on the fence, but they aren’t. James speaks very plainly to believers:

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us'? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.' Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. (James 4:4-10)

Make your choice to submit to God and His Word today! Fall in love with the truth. Make sure your worldview is a biblical worldview. Repent of idolatry to science and the voices of the world. Don't wait! Sadly many will wake up one day when it is too late and realize they are on the wrong side of the fence, because they did not receive a love of the truth.