



The Glass Fence

by Tricia Berg

We've all heard of people who are "sitting on the fence" with God—not quite believing and yet not sure enough to completely not believe either. They think they can hop into the kingdom of God at the last moment when they see with their eyes that it's real, without having had to give up anything in this life for it. They're dead wrong—everyone will confess Jesus as Lord and bow to Him one day, but faith is the assurance of what is unseen.

However, what I would like to consider today is the people who think they are on the fence or on the "right side" of the fence, but they are actually on the "wrong side" of the fence. In the above picture, the fence is glass and so the people on the "wrong side" of it are receiving the benefit of the light that filters through from the "right side" of it. They have no idea that the dimmer view that they have is not all there is and is not what the people on the "right side" of the fence are experiencing. They think it seems pretty good where they are, but they don't realize that once the light on the other side of that fence is gone, they will find out what it is really like where they are—but it will be too late.

I have to apologize at this point for all Christians (myself included), because if we were living as we should then there would be a very obvious difference between the two sides of the fence. That difference was meant to draw unbelievers over to the "right side," the side where God blesses those who love Him. He is good and trustworthy. When those who are His blend in with the "wrong side" (those who don't know God) with their behavior—discontented, fearful, covetous, gossipy, etc.—we are not living out our faith. We are not making disciples as we were told to do.

People these days live in fear of many things. They are willing to give up their freedom in an attempt to trade it in for safety. They are willing to pay top dollar for assurance that they are safe and insurance that things will be made right if anything goes wrong. My message today is that the only safety is in God. Instead of being afraid and trying through our own means to protect ourselves from every possible scenario, we should rely on Him. Instead of protecting ourselves FROM the truth, we should protect ourselves WITH the truth.

We have security systems or at least locks on our doors to keep out intruders, but we've banned God from our schools and workplaces as though He is an intruder instead of the only One who can truly keep anyone safe. Christians have been asked to keep their "narrow-minded" views to themselves. We have filters on our email, phones and social media to keep out unwanted intrusions—views that disagree with ours and offend us. Many times those protections are necessary, but have you ever thought that possibly some of those views are being shared by people who have the good of our souls in mind? We might think we are sheltering ourselves from a "hateful" message, but actually the ones doing the "hating" are those who refuse to tolerate truth over their own opinions and preferences.

Jesus' message was never about tolerating sin or lies. He had very harsh words on those topics. His message was on repentance and truth, with love. Love and lies do not go together—neither do truth and hate. The message is to share the truth in gentleness (not name calling, holier than thou attitude of wanting to correct others but ignore our own sin, or despising others) so that everyone can receive salvation. To accept sin is deceitful because after we choose to follow Christ, we must walk as He walked, in purity, faithfulness and righteousness. He has purchased and redeemed us with His precious blood and we are His.

When darkness sets in after God has returns in the clouds to gather to Himself those who love Him, many people will wonder how a loving God could leave them behind in that utter evil that encroaches upon the world from that point on. Why didn't He warn them? I'm here to say that He speaks all day, every day to anyone who will listen. He speaks through the wonders of all He created, through His amazing word in the Holy Bible, and through those who have already heard Him. We are without excuse if we have protected ourselves from the truth in favor of our own fake version of it. The truth is free, but many people will pay good money for lies instead of receiving it.

This is your wake-up call if this applies to you. Take a closer look at that fence you think you're on the right side of. Be sure that you know where you stand. Those who are saved will be spared from the coming wrath of God, and are

walking in the fullness of the light of the truth. They are not just associated with someone else who is or merely benefitting from the proximity of believers. You have to own this for yourself. Be sure that you do. Do it now if you haven't already.

Being saved means you have put all of your hope in Jesus and He is the Lord of your life now and forever—not that you were baptized as a child or you belong to a church. We must be born again to enter the kingdom of God. Baptism and joining a church congregation (a church is not a building—believers are God's house) do not save—we do them because we are already saved—to obey God and grow in our faith. To pretend that God doesn't know the difference between a true and fake believer is pretty insulting, don't you think? That's not what someone who truly understands how great He is would try to get away with.

God sees everything and knows your very heart and mind. He can hear you when you cry out to Him. If you do that, then listen to Him—read the Bible, which was inspired by God, and do what He says. Put all of your trust in Him. He's worthy and able to save. All sins are forgivable, but they must be given up. You won't be disappointed even if things don't always go your way—this life is short and then comes eternity!

Bible Verses:

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:9-10

For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Romans 14:10-12

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:29

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old were commended. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. Hebrews 11:1-3 (The passage continues with many excellent examples of true faith put into action.)

Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.** And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**" And they said, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.**" And **they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and **he was baptized at once, he and all his family.** Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And **he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.** Acts 16:27-34

And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "**Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.** Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said, "**With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**" Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And **everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.** But many who are first will be last, and the last first. Matthew 19:16-30

But when [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.** And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. **Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.**" Matthew 3:7-12

For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.** For **what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but **they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools...** Romans 1:18-22

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "**Where is the promise of his coming?** For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word **the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.** But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that **with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly**

bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, **be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.** 2 Peter 3:1-14

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and **hears my words and does them**, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one **who hears and does not do them** is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6:46-49

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' "Everyone then **who hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a **wise** man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone **who hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a **foolish** man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:21-27

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may **be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,**

holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2:14-16

Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: **God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. If we say, "We have fellowship with Him," yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, "We don't have any sin," we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.** 1 John 1:5-10

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. **For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:43-48

"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because **he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.**" Luke 6:35

And we know that **in all things God works for the good of those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

But **godliness with contentment is great gain**, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But **if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.** 1 Timothy 6:6-8

"Therefore **do not be anxious**, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But **seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.** Therefore **do not be anxious** about tomorrow, for tomorrow

will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Matthew 6:31-34

*“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And **if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself**, that where I am you may be also. John 14:1-3*

*For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be **caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord**. Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

*Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all **children of light, children of the day**. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For **God has not destined us for wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11*

*For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now **restrains** it will do so until he is **out of the way**. 2 Thessalonians 2:7*

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks

*of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and **hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"** Revelation 6:12-17*

*Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for **the time is near.** Revelation 1:3*

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house,** to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5*

*Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a Son. And **we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.** Hebrews 3:5-6*

"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me." Luke 10:16

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Revelation 22:17

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