

Going “All In”

- *Matthew 26:36-58*

- **It is apparent in scripture that if we have been saved, if we are truly born again, then each of us should have a desire to follow after Christ.**
 - During Jesus earthly ministry, he too had a group of followers that walked with Him, ate with Him, traveled with Him, and were a witness to many of the great miracles & teaching of Jesus during His ministry.
 - But as you look at the lives of the disciples, you see a varied commitment & purpose in each of their lives.
 - As a matter of fact, if we could tonight, I believe we could divide the disciples into 3 different groups tonight & these same three groups exist in every local church throughout the world tonight. The question is, which group are you in?
 - **Group #1 (The Quitters)** – Judas quit on Jesus, although some would argue that he never really got on the team in the first place.
 -) Though he was a part of the twelve, he identified himself with the twelve, ultimately he wound up quitting.
 -) Unfortunately, we see the person far too often in the church, even in our own church.
 -) This is the person that starts out serving God & ministering through the church, but they soon find themselves giving up on the church & more importantly giving up on God.
 - **Group #2 (Group of 8)** – These men went with Jesus to the very edge of the Garden, but no further.
 -) The vast majority of Christians typically fall into this group & this is always the largest group.
 -) They want to be a part of the church; they just don’t want to get involved in the church.
 -) They enjoy the church, the singing, they may even give to the ministry financially, but there is no desire to serve God or to raise their level of commitment.
 - **Group #3 (Group of 3)** – This group went with Jesus all the way into the garden.
 -) They were weak, they made mistakes, they were far from perfect, but they stayed.
 -) Again, among any group, even in church, there are always a few that are willing to carry the bulk of the load.
 -) They are present Sunday morning, night, Wednesday night. They tithe faithfully every week. They will do anything possible to help the ministry & increase our effectiveness in spreading the Gospel.
 -) Unfortunately, this is all too often too small of a group.
 - I have two questions for you tonight.
 - Which group are you a part of right now?
 - Which group do you desire to be a part of this year?
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **In this passage of scripture, we have recorded for us the final moments before Jesus was to be betrayed, arrested, and sent to trial.**

➤ **Though we have heard this story many times, there is a choice that we all need to make tonight & I trust that the choice is to be “All In” when it comes to following Jesus.**

➤ **Lets look at several lessons that we find in this passage:**

1. We Can't Follow From A Distance (v.58)

- In II Kings 2, Elijah is going to be translated into Heaven, and Elisha had been following Elijah everywhere he went.
- He followed him to Bethel & then to Jericho. Even when Elijah instructed Elisha to say behind, Elisha was determined to be “All In” & follow Elijah until the end.
- But then we come to v.7 and as the rest of the crowd that followed came to Jordan, the Bible says that they stood to view from afar off.
- Why would they do this? Why after following this man so long would they stop now?
 - They were curious, but not committed.
 -) These men were no different than the multitudes that followed after Jesus during His ministry.
 -) They were intrigued, they wanted to see the show, they just didn't want to have to put anything in.
 - They were fearful. (v.5)
 -) You all remember the story of Peter. After making his undying commitment to never turn from Jesus, Jesus is arrested, led out with Roman soldiers, and Peter following “from afar” found himself denying Jesus 3 different times b/c of fear of his life.
 -) I told our group Wednesday night, fear can keep you from doing a lot of things.
 - Witnessing
 - Serving God
 - Placing your faith in Him
 -) Fear kept the crowd in II Kings 2 and it kept Peter from doing what they knew they should do.
- Traveling from a distance will never work for long. So instead, commit today to go “All IN” with Jesus.

2. Just Because You Are Walking With Jesus Today, Doesn't Mean That You Always Will

- Once again, Peter was a part of the inner circle. He was a close follower of Jesus & I don't believe at any point I would ever doubt his love for Jesus.
 - It was Peter who was with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration and was arguably one of the closest if not the closest to Jesus during His ministry.
 - But even Peter fell, and we need to take heed lest we also fall.
- There are times in my life & no doubt times in your life where the presence of God is so close it is if He is sitting right beside you, right?
- Yet there are those who once followed closely to God, that b/c of various reasons are no longer walking with Him today.
 - I think about Saul. Saul once walked with God closely. He trusted in God, followed after God, and sought to please God with his life.
 - But Saul began to drift from God (not God from Saul) and we read later on that “the Lord answered him not”.

3. The Closer To Jesus, The Smaller The Crowd

- Let me say this. Don't ever be afraid of the small crowds. Be very cautious of the large crowds.

- There are those that just want to seem religious, “but deny the power thereof”.
- There are those that want to be saved, but they also want to continue in their sin.
- Jesus reminds us in Matthew 7:13 – “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:”
- Young people you have heard this all your life. Adults we have heard this & preached this all our life, “Don’t follow the crowd!”
- Though we want many to follow after Jesus, the truth is the closer you get to Jesus, the smaller the crowd.

4. God Can Use Even The Insignificant

- In Exodus 3:2, God used a rod to convince Moses that he was to be the man to lead Israel out of Egypt.
- In Judges 15:15, God enabled Samson to use a jawbone to kill 1,000 Philistines.
- In I Samuel 17, David used 5 smooth stones to defeat Goliath.
- In John 6, Jesus used 5 barley loaves & 2 fish to feed 5,000 men.
- And in v. 74, God used a rooster to remind Peter of his sin.
- So don’t tell me that God can’t use you! You may not have a great deal of talent, you may not be widely known, but God expects you to use what you have for Him!

5. Though Some Failed, They Came Back (v.75)

- I believe one of the profound verses of scripture in this chapter tonight is found in v.75.
 - After hearing the rooster crow, Peter was convicted of his sin. And when he confessed his sin, he came back as a tremendous force for God.
 - The greatest sermon Peter preached was on the Day of Pentecost which was after his denial.
- Church, I am glad tonight that God is a God of second chances. Just b/c you have fallen or failed Him doesn’t mean He has given up on you.
- If you give me any number of great men in the Bible, I will show you many of them that failed God miserably throughout their lives, but God gave them another chance.
 - Abraham
 - Moses
 - David
 - Jonah
 - These men all failed God, but thank God they all came back!

➤ **So as we close tonight, I will remind you that you are a part of 1 of these 3 groups here tonight. I want us all to be in Group #3, but ultimately the choice is yours.**

- Will you commit to be “All In” tonight? Will you commit to leave your past failures & fears behind & commit tonight to give God all that you have.
 - Young people, what an opportunity tonight to say, “God, I’m not sure where you are leading me, but I want to follow you all the way.”
 - Adults, maybe you are here tonight as well & you have gotten distracted in your journey & maybe even have realized tonight that there is much more that you have to offer God, why don’t you offer yourself to Him tonight?