

“Who’s Mission are We on?”

ALL IN – Part 1

August 18-19th, 2018

- This weekend we are launching a Brand New series called, “All In!”
 - The Tagline is: **“You are 1 Decision away from a whole new life!”**
 - We believe that!

- I’m not much of a card player & I’m certainly not a gambler!!!
 - But in a Poker Game there’s a moment where people go “All In” & they push all their chips to the center of the table... I guess!!! Haha

- Let me use a more relatable illustration for us bunch of “Church Foke!”
 - **JUMPING IN A SWIMMING POOL! Or**
 - **GETTING MARRIED! OR**
 - **TAKING A JOB / BUYING A HOUSE / ETC.**

- Life is filled with “All In” Moments!

- God wants us to Go “All In” With HIM!!!
 - And it starts today!!!
 - B/c God wants all of us to live, “All In!”

- I want us to look at a story in the Bible where Jesus challenges His disciples to go “All In” at a whole new level...

Mark 8:27 “Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

v. 28 “They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

v.29-30 “Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.”

v. 31 “He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this...”

v. 32 “and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.”

*** Peter was getting caught up in the “soft” benefits of following Jesus!**

- Daily Healings.
- Large Crowds.
- Going to Cool places.
- Great Teaching every day...
- Free Coffee & Donuts, I mean food.
- Great worship times together!

- This traveling with Jesus stuff was pretty awesome!!!

- Peter started thinking, *“Hey, I could get used to this...”*

- So... when Jesus starts talking about suffering, rejection & then... about being put to death!

- Peter is like, *“Um! No way! Jesus, you need to be quiet!!! That is not what we’re doing!?!”*

- I mean... *“Sure, back in the day when we first started following you, it was, “Wherever you go, whatever it takes, we just want to be Fishers of Men! But Jesus, if you start making this hard & keep talking like that, you’re gonna run off the people!!!”*

- So Jesus wants to teach Peter & all the disciples a very important lesson right here!!!

v. 32-33 “But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

- So, watch this, in 1 moment: Peter gets it right!!! (You are the Christ, the son of the living God!)

- But then, in the next moment: He gets it wrong!!! He misses the point!!!

* MIP: My goodness, how easy that is to do, isn't it?!?

- It's so easy in our world today to slip into “Easy Christianity!”

- It's so easy for us to slip into “Consumer Christianity” isn't it?

- Wii-FM???

* If there's one thing God showed me on our Sabbatical, it is that God has not done all this, over these first 16 years so that you and I can just rock back on our heels, coast & have an easy life!!!

- WHEELIES SHOES AT THE ZOO IN AUSTRALIA ILL.

- You walk for a while & then these kids were coasting while we were walking!!!

- Too many of us have ever so subtly adopted that as our approach to our Faith Life!!!

- But I'm here this weekend to tell you that Jesus wants us to live “All In!!!”

* God is looking for a White Hot, On Fire Church that is willing to deny themselves & charge their cities, neighborhoods & workplaces everyday with the Love of Jesus!!!

- But I'm getting ahead of myself...
- *"Back to the text..."*
 - The next 5 verses are predicated on the ones we've just read...
 - Peter gets it right, Peter gets it wrong, Jesus rebukes him...

Mark 8:34 "Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

v. 35 "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

v. 36-37 "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

v. 38 "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

* Jesus makes it real clear in these verses that Following Him is not a Cake Walk at a school carnival!!!

- It costs us something... in fact, he makes it clear that it will cost us our life!!!
- As I read this, I felt like this was a Word from God for our Church!!!

3 Thoughts on this Passage:

1. There is a Mission!

A. BOB M. IN INDIANA ILL – "Good Cheer!"

- I knew a guy in Indiana that used to refer to Jesus & the Gospel as, “the Good Cheer.”
- He knew I was really involved in my church & he would say, “I think it’s great that you are spreading the “Good Cheer!”

B. Hey! Guess What!!! It’s not “Good Cheer!”

- What we’re doing ain’t just about well wishes and making people feel good!

C. Heaven is a real place & so is Hell!

- And we believe everyone spends Eternity somewhere!
- And we also believe that the Local Church is God’s Plan A for the redemption of the World & there is no Plan B!!!

D. So church, listen, I hope you got some rest while Sarah and I were gone, b/c we’re back and ready to run into the Harvest Fields big time!!!

- We ain’t playing around!
- Let me tell you why... B/c I don’t know if you’ve noticed or not, but our world is Jacked Up!!!
- And no program or political agenda, is going to change it!!!

*** The only thing that is going to change our world is the Message of Jesus Christ & God’s Love for Mankind!!!**

- We ain’t spreading the Good Cheer!!!
- We are spreading the Good News of the Love of God through Jesus!

2. It ain’t gonna be Easy!

2. It ain't gonna be Easy!

Mark 8:34 “Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

v. 35 “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

A. He is setting Peter, the disciples, the crowd there that day & all of us 2000 years later, straight once and for all!!!

- Following Jesus isn't about the Easy Life & the Perks!!!

B. MIP: ? What about us? Have we allowed ourselves to slip into “Comfort Mode” in our Relationship with God???

- How do we know?

- Answer: We are focused on ourselves & our comfort & we've forgotten about the fact that the world around us is Lost!!!

C. Things we think subconsciously... but don't say...

- “It doesn't matter that my neighbors are lost, as long as the sermon isn't too long.”

- “It doesn't matter that my co-workers don't know Jesus, as long as the auditorium is not too crowded & I don't have to sit in overflow.”

- “It doesn't matter that my family members' lives are a wreck, as long as I'm comfortable.”

- “It doesn't matter that there is a suicide epidemic among teens, as long as we are out of church on time to get a good table at the restaurant.”

- *“It doesn’t matter that people are being shot within blocks of our Dream Center & children are growing up thinking drugs, poverty & violence are normal, as long as the service doesn’t run over 75 minutes!!!”*

- If it feels like I’m getting in your business, it’s because God got in my business over my sabbatical church!!!
 - We are God’s plan A!!!
 - People are hurting and broken & WE HAVE THE ANSWER!!!

3. It comes down to a choice.

v. 36-37 “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”

A. Jesus lands on a Question that all of us must answer:

“What are we going to CHOOSE to “Gain”?!?”

3 Choices:

1. The World’s Vision for what we are to “Gain.”

- Wealth, Power, Fame, Fortune, Prestige, Privileges, etc.

2. The Devil’s Vision for what we are to “Gain.”

- Easy Christianity!
- Don’t get messy! Don’t get Dirty! Just be comfortable!
- Stay Lukewarm!!!

3. God the Father’s Vision for what we are to “Gain!”

- LOST PEOPLE FOUND!
- FOUND PEOPLE FREE!!!

- FREE PEOPLE FOCUSED!!!
- This path comes with incredible Heavenly Rewards, btw!

- God told me Satan's strategy for our church:

“To keep 3,000 people Lukewarm & Complacent & Comfortable for the Gospel's sake!”

- Satan will gladly trade a couple hundred of us who are on fire, as long as the other 3,000 people who call NLC their home, stay comfortable, complacent and lukewarm!!!
- Self-Absorbed & Comfortable just isn't going to work anymore!

- So I'm just telling you church: *We are going to be a Church that is on the Father's Mission from NOW ON!!!*

Challenge: ? Are you ALL IN???

- Everyone of us have got to get in the Game!
 - Why? B/c people are dying and going to Hell!

3 Action Steps:

1. Get Found!

- Salvation Call.

2. Get Free!

- Next week we are going to Open up our registration for our Freedom Groups this fall & it's going to be Life. Changing!!!

3. Get Focused... on the Father's Mission!

- It's not okay for us to just “attend” anymore!

- God wants all of us to be Fully Engaged Followers of Jesus!!!

- What Next Step do you need to take???

1. Empowerment Track.

2. Mission Trip – you heard us mention them last week in the video.

- Get on one!

- Some of us need to “Jump Start” our Rel. w/ God again!!!

3. Serving. – Last week, someone said, “I’ve been attending here for 2 years & I said, “Awesome, where are you serving?”

- I just want you to know that if you greet one of our staff with the badges on, or any of our serve team members with the lanyards on, we are going to ask you 2 questions:

1) Have you been to Empowerment Track yet?

2) Where are you serving?

Why? B/c WE ARE ON A MISSION!!!

All In – Part 2
“The Harvest is in the Soil...”
August 25-26th, 2018

Intro:

- This weekend we are continuing our series called, “All In!”
 - The Tagline is: “You are 1 Decision away from a whole new life!”
 - Say it with me!!!
 - We believe that!

- ? Have you ever put in a ton of effort on something & then it didn’t produce the result you wanted or thought it would?
 - HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – It never worked right or fit right
 - JOB APPLICATION – The never even called back...
 - HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT
 - DIET / EXERCISE REGIMEN

- You worked & worked, labored, sowed & sowed & the harvest never came!

- This weekend I want us to look at a parable or story Jesus told of a farmer who felt the same way...

Mark 4:2-9

v. 2 “He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said:
³“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.”

v. 5 “Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

v. 7 “Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

v. 9 “Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

- Jesus teaches this publicly & then the disciples are like, “Uh... we think we have ears to hear, but why don't You explain to us & we'll just confirm that we have ears to hear!!!”

- So Jesus breaks it down in vv. 13-20...

v. 13 “Then Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

1. Hard Soil.

A. Some of us can relate to this...

- This is how we feel!!!

B. Every time we try to get close to God, grow in our relationship with Him, it's like it just gets snatched away immediately!!!

- Like, to the point, that it actually baffles us!!!

C. LIGHTING A CANDLE & SOMEONE BLOWING IT OUT IMMEDIATELY ILL.

¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

2. Rocky Soil.

A. Maybe you can relate to this one, b/c it feels like your life...

- You love what God is doing here, or in your life & you're actually excited about it, but then...

B. At the 1st sign of trouble and hardship, it's like, your faith just goes out, or more accurately, you run out on your faith!!!

C. ? Ever know anybody like that???

- Ever felt like that described you???

- It happens doesn't it?

D. MWK ILL – NOT SEEING THE TOLL BOOTH VIOLATION NOTICE ILL

- I suddenly realize that this happened back in February & I was now "In contempt of court, & am going to be fined & have my license revoked & have to ride a moped to work for the next 3 years!!!"

- I'm like, "God, where are you? I'm trying to serve you but snail mail piles up & we love you but we hate snail mail & God why would you make batteries run out, especially in transponders?!?"

¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

3. Thorny Soil.

A. Maybe you relate to this one...

- The Worries of this life, & the pursuit of money & security & wealth or a desire for that guy / girl, or that promotion or to have what you see all your peers have, or the other moms have, gets in the way of your relationship with God!!!

B. The thorns come in & snatch the Word of God from your heart!!!

²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

4. Good Soil.

A. Then there's this group!!!

- Those who hear the word, accept it & THE SOIL produces a Harvest in their life!!!

B. Here's the thing: The Seed (the Word of God) is Equal... it's not partial!!!

- Jesus didn't say that the farmer sowed some better seed to one person & to another, he gave nasty seed!!!
- No, the Seed is the same for all of us!

C. ? So why then do we look around our church, our serve team, or our life & see the Word of God “Working” for some people & it's producing an incredible harvest, but for others, or for us, it's not producing anything at all!?!?!?!

...thankfully, Jesus tells us...

- v. 26-30, Jesus gives even more clarity to them...

v. 26 “He also said, ‘This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

v. 28 “All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

- IOW, Jesus is saying, “The soil of our life WILL produce a harvest!”
- Either good or bad!

- The Quality of the Harvest of our Life is NOT dependent on the SEED, it's dependent on the SOIL!!!

- & the soil we have comes from everything that has happened in our life up to now!!!

- TELL THE FREEDOM STORY – 2 YEARS AGO, GOD BEGAN TO TAKE US ON A JOURNEY OF GETTING OUR SOIL “HEALED AND WHOLE!”

- Sarah, then ME, then our Staff, last spring 150 leaders!!!
- It's been hard & awesome & a struggle & amazing!
- & most of all, it's been life-changing!!!

- The Point: **The Healthier our Soil, the Better the Harvest in our Lives!!!**

- & in the Lives of those we influence everyday!!!

- God has a Harvest that He wants to Multiply, like the seed, in our lives this fall!!!

- We are launching dozens of Freedom Groups at all of our Locations!

- All over SWFL!
 - Including w/ our Cape Coral Launch Community!!!
- We have 500 spots!!!
- They are 12 weeks long, it's a commitment & it's supposed to be!!!
 - B/c from now on we are going to begin calling our church up into greater commitment, b/c God has showed me that there is SO MUCH at stake!!!
 - We ain't messin' around anymore!!!

- GRAB THE FLYER ON YOUR CHAIR, GO TO THE WEBSITE, RIGHT NOW!!!
 - Our Theme for this series is: "You are 1 Decision away from a whole new life!"
 - Going through Freedom this fall is that decision!!!

“Own your Tribe...”
All In – Part 4
September 8-9th, 2018

- Final week of “All In.”
 - Freedom Groups are starting This Week!
 - I’m so proud of so many of you who are taking this huge step!
 - Get ready, God is going to do a deep work in you this fall!
- God told me to “Read the Gospel, Keep it Simple & Teach my People.”
 - Felt like I was supposed to start in Mark.
 - Mark doesn’t get as much play... Matthew is obviously the favorite!
 - John’s just a beast! - Luke is the Doctor & wrote Acts!
- This weekend I want us to talk about a concept I’m calling, “Own your Tribe!”
 - Turn to the person next to you & say, “Own your tribe!!!
 - Look at the other person & say, “Who’s following you???”
- EXPLAIN THE WORD “TRIBE.”
 - Seth Godin Book – Given that book over a decade ago.
 - A group of people w/ a common interest & a way to communicate.
- I want us to look at 2 passages today & I want to share 2 simple principles with us, that center around this idea of “Owning Our Tribe!!!”

Mark 2:13 “Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.

v. 14 “As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

v. 15 “While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.”

STOP!

- I love this story b/c it shows us so much about the heart & passion of Jesus.
 - He would rather be hanging out with sinners & tax collectors than with the high and mighty of society & the religious community.

- Question... ??? Who’s “him”???
 - HIM is LEVI!!
 - They weren’t following Jesus yet, they were investigating Jesus!
 - So... The “him” they were following was Levi!!!

- Here’s how I imagine this went down...
 - Levi starts following Jesus & then Jesus is like, *“Hey man, do you have any plans for dinner???”*
 - And Levi is like, “Not really, I was just gonna hang out with some friends...”
 - And Jesus is like, “Well, I’ve got an idea... what if leverage your dinner party for good?”
 - *I mean, we gotta eat, right???* *Why not, throw something together where we can love on some people!?!”*
 - So who does Levi invite???

- He invites the people that he has influence with... in his case, it was the 'sinners' & tax collectors like him!

- Jesus was passionate about Levi "Owning his tribe!!!"

- I believe the same is true with us!!!

1. Jesus wants us to take Spiritual Responsibility for our tribe of influence.

A. MIP: Jesus wants you & I to "Own our Tribe"!

- B/c we all have "many" who are following us, most of us just don't realize it!

- God has given each of us influence for eternal purposes!

- & He wants us to start seeing our relationships differently!

B. **PUSHBACK:** *"Wait a minute, Matt... Not me! I don't have "influence" I just go to work every day, take my kids to school & practice, sit on the bleachers, grocery shop, and look at Facebook... well, & watch America's Got Talent!"*

- Right!!! Did you just hear how much influence you have?!?

- Work - Kids / Spouse - Other Bleacher Parents

- Random Interactions - AND... FACEBOOK!!!

C. God wants everyone of us to start to see just how much influence we've been given for those who are "Like us!!!"

- We are best suited to Reach & Influence those who are similar to us & like us!!!

D. THE JESUS CAR ILL.

- I was driving on the interstate & the car had Stone Tablet Pictures on the Bumper & it said, "Got Questions? Ask Jesus!"

- While I applaud the effort & I'm sure their heart is in the right place!
- I'm just not sure that's the best way to reach people!
- Jesus didn't tell Levi to put up a billboard or get a bullhorn or wrap his car, he simply wanted him to see the influence God had already given him & leverage that for Jesus!

E. MIP: The same is true with us!!!

- God wants us to start to see "our tribe" differently!!!

"Let's look at the 2nd illustration..."

Mark 5:1 "They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.

v. 2-3 "When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.

v. 4 "For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

V. 5-6 "Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.

v. 7-8 "He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

- He heals him, casts the demons into a bunch of pigs & the townspeople want Jesus to leave b/c they're scared!!!

- Sidenote: How terrible! You have JESUS in your town & you ask him to leave b/c of fear!

- & yet... today, Jesus is in our midst & yet, so many of us are allowing fear to hold us back from receiving what He wants for us week in & week out!!!

- MIP: ? Aren't you ready to be delivered from fear???

- So then Jesus gets ready to leave & the formerly demon-possessed man wants to go with Him...

v. 18 "As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.

v. 19 "Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

- Jesus tells him to go home "to your own people."

2. Jesus has "our own people" that He wants us to reach, love & influence.

A. MIP: ? Who are "your own people?"

- We are best suited to reach those who are like us!!!

- God has uniquely given you your story, your past & your life so you can reach people nobody else can reach!

B. I believe God wants to give EVERYONE of us a Fresh Testimony of Love & Grace for this new season we are walking into!!!

- BILLY & RACHEL ILL.

- Went through Freedom in the Spring...
- Sharing it w/ family members, people at work, etc.
- YES!!! That's what God is doing in our church!

C. MIP: If you don't have a Fresh Testimony, it's time to open your heart & begin seeking God & giving Him permission to Change you in a Radical Way!!!

- God wants to set you free like the man in the story & then turn you loose on those who are LIKE YOU!!!

C. Church: God made you who you are, where you are for a Season & a Reason!

- None of us have the job we have, live in the neighborhood we live in, shop where we shop, do what we do, workout where we workout, go where we go & are passionate about the things we are passionate about on accident!!!

- It is a DIVINE SETUP from our Heavenly Father!!!

PUSHBACK: "Yeah, but Matt, I don't want to be where I am, I don't like my co-workers, or neighbors & I think the other moms on the playground are annoying!"

- Levi – knew & embraced who God had given him influence with.
- The formerly Demon-Possessed guy didn't want to.

- MIP: Some of us need to stop wishing we were somewhere else influencing someone else & start leveraging our influence where God has presently put us!!!

- MWK ILL – This has been my story in seasons past!
 - I have looked past where I was instead of embracing where I was.

- Church, I'm just telling you, I am so in love w/ our cities & our region & our church!!!

v. 20 "So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."

- Result: He influenced 10 cities!

- God will multiply our influence when we are faithful where we are!

2 Challenges:

1) Begin praying for 5 people who are "Like you" but are "Far from God."

2) This Week, invite 1 of them to come with you.

- We start our Fall Series called, "Overcome!"

- Week 1: We are talking about LOVE!

- SING: WORLD NEEDS JESUS AT THE END