

Mark 3:7-19
March 11, 2018

The short, two word phrase, “All-in” used to be relegated to green felted Vegas poker tables. Now, because of the runaway success of Texas Hold ‘Em for TV, “All In” has leaked into the jargon of business professionals, soccer moms, university educators and us.

Ian Crouch of the New Yorker criticized the pervasive use of “all in” in his 2015 article called, “Going in on “All In,”

In American usage, the phrase “all in” began as a colloquial expression meaning to be in a bad spot—exhausted, worn out, and spent. In the game of poker, it refers to the moment when a player—whether out of bravado, recklessness, or desperation—bets all of his or her chips on a single hand. Thanks to the Texas Hold’em craze of the nineteen-nineties and two thousands, and the public’s appetite for new forms of dramatic hyperbole, the poker version of the phrase crossed over to general use and, along the way, became denuded to the point of near meaninglessness. Whereas “all in” once referred to a scenario in which someone either wins a hand or loses everything in a flash, now it means that a person is simply generally enthusiastic or fully committed. It’s everywhere these days—business jargon, marketing catch phrases, sports mantras, and the idioms of religion and self-help.

The all-in moment in poker is a thrilling win-or-lose-everything crisis of dramatic clarity: you’ve wagered all you’ve got, giving your fate over to the cards, and you can’t go back out again. Going all in is often a

spectacularly bad idea. But in life, it seems, it is all good—the only way to live boldly is to be all in on many different things at once.

Many of poker's words and phrases are tinged with a kind of roguish romance and drama that we hope may rub off on the more mundane activities of normal life—upping the ante, stacking the deck, calling a bluff, putting your cards on the table. In terms of politics, there is an obvious benefit, for both elected officials and the people who cover them, in making the business of government sound more dangerous or dashing than it really is—riskier and more headless, more heroic, more [“mavericky.”](#) Politicians become prizefighters or gunslingers or gamblers; elections are fights or showdowns or high-stakes card games. “All in” makes every event sound like a decisive, dramatic turning point that provides instant, unambiguous resolution. But politics isn't really like a poker game. And neither is life. As a phrase, “all in” is troublesome because it is almost always just an exaggeration, if not an outright falsehood. The free-climber Alex Honnold [goes all in](#) when he climbs vertical rock faces without a rope....the rest of us are doing something else.

Most of the time we are doing something else. Absolutely right. Most of the time, yes, but the book of Mark presents a vivid exception to rife exaggeration and falsehood of ‘All-In.’”

It is not too much to say that we must go all in to get any of Jesus. The book of Mark proclaims Jesus—the Son of God—we must submit to his call.

With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

With no hint of exaggeration or falsehood.

The book of Mark invites us to watch Jesus, listen to Jesus and go ALL IN following Jesus. We join Jesus again in Galilee by the sea—vs. 7,

“Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea ⁸ and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. ⁹ And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, ¹⁰ for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. ¹¹ And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” ¹² And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

¹³ And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons. ¹⁶ He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷ James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸ Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” Mark 3:7-19

PRAY

With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

As we join Jesus we find him again by the sea and we are going to meet three groups only one of which is all in following Jesus and two groups that are not in at all.

First, a loud roiling crowd nearly a mob on the verge of rioting. The crowd came to Jesus but they had no desire to follow him, instead they wanted to use him.

1. The Crowd wanted to use Jesus (3:7-10)

By this time, the word and work of Jesus had gone viral. The disciples went with Jesus to the Sea of Galilee and they were followed by what Mark calls, ‘a great crowd.’ This great crowd was made up of people from all over that region—some as far as 125 miles away.

Prescott, AZ is 125 miles give or take from this spot. How desperate do you have to be to walk that far to see Jesus? Imagine walking all the way to Prescott. How long do you think that would take with young children? How desperate do you have to be to walk all that way?

They did not come to hear him preach or teach they came in great numbers wanting something from him—look at this scene,

Vs. 8,

“When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. ⁹And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him...”

This is no polite, cordial gathering but a mob pushing and pulling and threatening to flatten Jesus. Picture in your mind a seething mass of cameramen pushing and trying to get a picture of a celebrity, yelling, violating personal space pushing.

That is this scene.

This is very nearly a riot scene. Jesus' popularity sent people into hysterics. Instead of playing to the whims and wishes of the crowd; instead of capitalizing on widespread popularity—Jesus plans a way out.

Verse 10 tells us why they came. They had needs that ONLY Jesus could remedy,

¹⁰ for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him.

This crowd wanted a piece of Jesus, they did not want to follow Jesus. And no wonder, he could heal them of their various illnesses. They came to Jesus because he could cure—

- That lump on their neck
- Unknown abdominal pain
- Legs that unable to carry weight
- My little girl with a fever
- A festering wound
- An incessant cough

So they pressed in.

Every member of that crowd knew what Jesus could do but didn't care who he was. They wanted him for what he could do, not for who he was. They wanted something from Jesus they didn't have any interest in following Jesus.

The crowd came to use and not follow—but With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

They came to Jesus but they did not come to follow him they came to get something from him.

It is very easy, common even, to come to Jesus wanting something from him rather than wanting to follow him. I've met many people who have come to Jesus to get something from Jesus—something like:

- A Happy Marriage
- Obedient Children
- A Fulfilling Job
- Financial Success
- Physical Healing
- Relational Restoration

You might not be so crass as to say, “I followed Jesus and I didn't get what I wanted,” but if you are honest you wonder if it is worth it to follow Jesus.

Following Jesus does not automatically mean that you will enjoy:

- A Happy Marriage
- Obedient Children
- A Fulfilling Job

- Financial Success
- Physical Healing
- Relational Restoration

What he does promise he delivers—complete forgiveness and total acceptance—but Jesus is no escape plan from the rigors of our life.

Did you notice how Jesus responded to the crowd?

He had an escape plan—he doesn't hang out with people who want to use him. He will not be crushed by our weighty expectations of a worry-free life.

The crowd wanted to use him, we meet the second group—the demons and they want to out Jesus.

2. Demons wanted to 'out' Jesus (3:11)

11 And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."

James Edwards said, "The crowds may fall on Jesus, but evil spirits fall before him." And as they fall, they call him out. You are the Son of God.

They are calling him out as the Son of God because they know exactly who he is. What does this do? They stand no chance before his power but they are naming him in an attempt to dilute his authority. It does not work.

They cannot withstand Jesus and all they can do is call him out.

He tells them to be quiet not because they were wrong but they were trying to. These demons are calling Jesus out as the Son of God, they have no intention of submitting to Jesus.

These demons recognized Jesus as a much greater power and knew that they did not measure up—but they did not submit to or worship him. They knew Jesus for exactly who he was but it did not matter one bit.

Unlike the crowd, the demons knew exactly who he was, but With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

The dizzyingly chilling thing is that the demons shared a common set of beliefs as we do about Jesus—they believed he was—

- Pre-existent
- Virgin Birth
- Sinless Life
- Equal with God
- All-Powerful

And yet they did not submit to him. That should give all of us pause. Theological knowledge is NO substitute for following Jesus because With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

If the confidence you have that you are a Christian is because you know the right things about Jesus—

- Pre-existent
- Virgin Birth
- Sinless Life

- Equal with God
- All-Powerful

Be wary. You might be numbered NOT with the disciples but with the demons.

With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

The crowd came to use him.
The demons came to out him.

There is a third group that we are going to spend the balance of our time on—

3. The disciples—they came to follow Jesus (3:13-19)

There is more here than might be obvious at first glance. The first thing we should notice is the location of the calling—

13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.

Jesus called and they came.

Mark never includes superfluous or unnecessary facts—what he tells us he tells us for a reason. The setting of this calling of his disciples dripping with imagery.

‘And he went up on the mountain...’

The most famous experience in the annals of Jewish is on a mountain recorded in the book of Exodus. The nation of

Israel was rescued by God from slavery to Egypt and they were 'born' on Mt. Sinai at the giving of the 10 commandments.

When the original readers read 'mountain' here is the image that came to their mind,

[16] On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. [17] Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. [18] Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. [19] And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. [20] The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

[21] And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish. [22] Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." [23] And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, 'Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.'" [24] And the LORD said to him, "Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them."

[25] So Moses went down to the people and told them.”
Exodus 19:16–25

The scene is on the one hand very different here in Exodus but also bears a striking resemblance here to Mark. It is strikingly different because God warns the people to stay off the mountain, “lest he break out against them.”

And with trumpets, and clouds, and thunder no one is going to test that. It would seem that a warning is unnecessary.

One thing is exactly the same about these two scenes—I should say one person is the same in these two scenes.

I’ll give you a hint—Exodus 19:20

[20] The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Compared to verse 13,

13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.

In Exodus the LORD came down on the mountain and called Moses up. The scene was frightening and a bit disconcerting, but not when Jesus did the calling.

Is Jesus any less than the LORD who descended from the sky onto the mountain? No.

But notice the form that God takes on the mountain--

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

Not a person in this room would think that a mountain on fire is a welcoming sight. You wouldn't say—hey there is a mountain shaking, thundering, on fire—how inviting!

No.

I would run the other way. All of us would—but Jesus came to us differently than he did in the OT,

Jesus descended not wrapped in smoke but wrapped in flesh. Jesus descended not accompanied by lightnings but as a baby. Jesus descended not speaking words of thunder but of words of life. Jesus descended not burning like fire but bringing life in his name.

Jesus did what Moses could never do—he called his people up to the mountain and they came.

None would comfort in a burning mountain wrapped in smoke, echoing with thunder. Many find comfort in Jesus wrapped in love and echoing with grace.

God has come to us as one of us. Jesus is showing us here that we do not have to be frightened anymore of a God who says—don't come up lest I break out against you. Sometimes you might feel that way.

Today we have no warning like this—

“Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish.”

You might think that the Lord will break through against you—but it is not true. You might feel that God is angry at you ready to kill you himself. You might feel that the Lord will break out in anger against you—

You might feel that way—but it is not true.

Jesus knew in coming the Lord would break through and one would perish for the many. Jesus was not just warned that this would happen to him—he came so that one might die in the place of the many.

The anger of the Lord that should be directed toward us—is instead directed at our Lord. Directed at Jesus. The Lord broke out in anger toward Jesus when we deserved it.

With Jesus it is either all in or not in at all.

But also Jesus was all in for us.

Do you see that?

When we say, With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.” We have great comfort that Jesus gave all of himself for us—

He gave all of himself—

- In life
- In death

- In new life

So that you and I might be able to follow with all we are.

In the time we have left, the passage gives us 3 reasons that it only makes sense to “All in or not in at all.”

Application:

He made his followers.

He named his followers.

He knew his followers.

1. He made his followers—

Look at verse 14,

14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons.

In the original the language is more formal and implies some serious pomp and circumstance—

Instead of the word of appointed, it would be better rendered, ‘And he made the twelve.’ That, friends is creation language. Jesus is creating by his word the people of God starting with these 12 men.

Jesus does not do anything at random and surely does not pick 12 followers randomly. He picked 12 followers for a very specific reason. The nation of Israel had 12 tribes and now the people of God had 12 apostles.

The OT people of God was created on a mountain in Exodus—and the NT people of God was created on a mountain in Mark.

Each of us can trace our spiritual heritage to these men here on the mountain with Jesus. Their testimony about who Jesus was, what he taught, what he did, how he died and that he rose again—is the foundation of the new people of God.

The Christian people were born that day. The people of God would no longer be bound by a nation, but now the people of God would be bound together by a savior, Jesus Christ.

He does not ask you to be something before you come to him—he does the creating. Because he does the re-creating we just have to believe that we want to be all in.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2
Corinthians 5:17

Jesus is no recruiter—looking for the best and brightest that he could use for his kingdom. He remakes those who are all in.

Not only does he make the 12 he continues to make us. He has made us new creations and patiently works with and prods his new people. These created 12 were going to have more failures than fanfare in the pages coming but he does not abandon his creation.

He made his 12—he makes you too.

2. He named his followers—

By that I mean Jesus takes absolute authority over his followers. To name in the Bible means to have ownership of—Jesus names and renames here—but first look at verse 13,

13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.

That is a very un-American statement—those whom he desired—but there it is nonetheless. Jesus often ruffles our American sensibilities. If you are a follower of Jesus you are because he has called you to himself. The reason you love him now is because he loved you first.

When they came to Jesus he gave them a new designation—he called them ‘sent ones,’ or apostles. And he changed the personal names of some of these guys as well.

Simon became the Rock.

James & John became the Thunder brothers.

Interesting because Peter (Rock) is anything but a rock in this book. Peter is impetuous, random and flighty. He is going to reject Jesus in his greatest hour of need. He is anything but a rock.

But later he would live up to his name.

The Thunder brothers did wreak havoc as disciples and not in a good way. Soon they would ask to be raised to the highest position of honor—save Jesus—in all the universe. But—they learned—and because they were all in—Jesus made them into something different—

The echoes of their thunder lives today—James was the first apostle lost to martyrdom and John would write a full 20% of the NT. There are words of thunder in his books.

He renamed these men and all of them. They were collectively—the apostles. The sent ones.

They would be sent out to spread the work and word of Jesus all over the world.

Most of these apostles have disappeared into the pages of history without much fanfare or notoriety. But there is something here:

Jesus called Simon the Zealot and Matthew the tax collector. So what?

Simon was a political zealot who was radicalized as a child and wanted to forcibly overthrow the Roman government from Israel. He was revolutionary. He may have been involved in planning, supporting or acting in terrorist activities against Rome.

And Matthew was the opposite.

Matthew was a tax collector. He was a Jew who worked for Rome over and against his own people. He was regarded a

sell-out to his own. He levied heavy taxes against the Jews and sent money to the capital of the evil empire—Rome.

And Jesus calls them both.

Two opposite ends of the political spectrum BOTH following Jesus. Simon and Matthew could be apostles because they were organizing around Jesus NOT political persuasions. The difference between the zealots and the tax collectors is much more radical than the red and blue divide in the US.

Do you let political philosophy divide and detract from fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? Political philosophy is not our guiding principle, Jesus is.

He named you too. You are—if you are his—in Christ. You belong to him. And With Jesus we are either: “All in or not in at all.”

He continues to make his followers
He continues to name his followers
He continues to know his followers

3. He knew his followers—

Not everyone he called was all in. Jesus knew his followers and he knew that Judas Iscariot would be a traitor him. Here is the thing that should give us pause—not one of Jesus’ followers knew Judas was not ‘all-in.’

Jesus did.

He knew what Judas would do and called him anyway. He knows who we all are.

None of us are going to betray Jesus personally but maybe some of you are wondering if it is worth it.

