

All For Jesus

“All In With Jesus”

Acts 2:22-24, 36-42

This year we have been on a journey walking through the gospel accounts and discovering the various marks of a follower of Christ. I describe it as a “journey” because, in my personal time with the Lord, I feel like I have been walking along the footsteps of Jesus, discovering wonderful truths about His interactions with the disciples. I anticipated that the original sermon series would conclude before Easter, but like any good journey, there are things that have come up along the way. While some detours may be a bit of a distraction, others are wonderful because they allow you to take in scenes and observe wonderful things you might have missed along the way. At the same time that we as a congregation have been journeying through this study, our pastoral staff has spent much time in prayer, intentional focus, and planning toward the future that we believe God is calling us to. As a staff, we have been praying about this for nearly a year, but at a pastoral prayer retreat in January, the Lord began to give further clarity and confirmation for where He would have us to go. As we together walked through the discipleship sermon series, the Lord clarified that **now** is the time to cast this vision for where He wants us to be.

When some people hear words like “vision” they immediately get excited. There’s a yearning within them for something new and different. For many others, though, their mind goes to fear and uncertainty. This probably comprises most of us because in our nature we don’t like change. We don’t want things to change, our environment to change, and frankly, we don’t want to personally change. Mark Twain was largely right when he said, “The only one who likes change is a wet baby.” However, some changes are vital for there to be growth. Perhaps there’s a third group that looks at vision a bit more skeptically. They hear the direction and plans and resort to critical thoughts like, “Well, we’ll see about that. I could have come up with something better myself. Big deal, it doesn’t count until we do it.” There are a host of responses to vision, but my hope and prayer is that God will capture our hearts with a renewed sense of passion and focus on Him so that we as a congregation wholeheartedly pursue what He has put before us. Beginning today, and for the next two weeks, we will unpack what this vision entails. Our mission at Crosslink Community Church has been and will continue to remain the same. We are called to “Impact the Valley and Bless the Nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” This is our mission and our rallying cry, but how are we going to get there? How are we going to effectively further impact the Valley and bless the nations with the Gospel? While there are components of this that are certainly being accomplished as we gather together on Sunday mornings for our weekly worship services, the fact is that we will not fully impact the Valley and bless the nations by mere Sunday morning participation. For us to fulfill the mission that God has given us, it requires a wholehearted commitment from every single one of us. This is not a time or place for spectators, seat warmers, fans, cheerleaders, or disingenuous followers of Christ. The mission that God has put before us is to plant churches throughout this Valley in areas of need and to take this Gospel message and make disciples to the ends of the earth, but for us to accomplish this it means that every follower of Christ must be fully committed. Over the coming weeks we will further unpack the details of this, but moving forward, our vision at Crosslink Community Church is to be a body of believers where we are “ALL In, ALL Together, and ALL Out for the Glory of Jesus Christ.”

It is interesting to note that this pattern has been clearly evident in Jesus' process of calling and equipping the disciples. When Jesus called them, they fully surrendered to Him and were "All In" with Christ. But Jesus not only called them to Himself, He called them to a relationship with one another, "All Together." Then He spent three years pouring into them, developing them, and then ultimately sending them out to be on a mission for Him, "All Out." It should not surprise us then that when we come to the book of Acts, we immediately see this pattern unfold once again, and it is seen repeatedly throughout the New Testament Church.

Perhaps it is helpful to connect the dots for a moment. Last week we studied Matthew 28:18-20 where Jesus gave His final words to the disciples before He ascended into heaven. It was then that He told them to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations. The disciples clearly understood the task and the mission that the Lord was putting before them. In **Acts 1:8**, Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Jesus then ascended into heaven and the two angels appeared and asked, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here in amazement? This same Jesus who is taken up from you will return." After that, they returned to Jerusalem just as Jesus instructed, and they went to the upper room where they began to pray. They prayed fervently and then, just as the Lord promised, they heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They began to speak with other tongues. As they made their way out of that upper room, Jewish people from every nation were present and they were amazed that they could understand, each in their own language. This was humanly impossible, but it is how God was working in that moment for a sign that He was doing something new. **Acts 2:12** says, "And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' " God was working in this moment to open eyes and draw people to Himself. As they looked on in wonder for what this all meant, the apostle Peter stood to proclaim the truth about Jesus. As we stand to read the text, we're going to read the heart of his message, and then we'll focus intently on the response they gave.

Show Text

We live in a culture today where most people know what it means to be "all in." An employee may be on the job, not doing the best, and their boss may call them to a meeting to determine if they are "all in." Are they fully committed and invested? Are they giving their all? A financial investor may see an investment that has tons of potential, so they will go "all in" on the opportunity. My favorite illustration is of a sports team. A coach will challenge his players to be "all in" – fully committed, fully engaged, not half-hearted or lacking. While these things – a job, an investment, a team – can all be wonderful, they are nothing compared to what our commitment should be to the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you imagine what would happen in the Church if every church attender today was actually "All In" with Jesus? Can you imagine how God might move in our communities if we didn't simply profess Christ as Savior, but lived it out? This is what God is calling us to as we seek to be a church where we are "All In" with Jesus. What does this look like? I believe Acts 2 models three simple things about being "All In" with Jesus:

I. Being "All In" With Jesus Means that We Fully Trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior (vs. 37-41a)

Acts 2 records what is happening on the day of Pentecost. During this time, Jews from all over the ancient world gathered in Jerusalem to worship for a harvest festival which is often called the Feast of Weeks. The Greek word for “Pentecost” means “50th,” which is interesting when considering that this is happening 50 days after the resurrection. There are Jews from everywhere gathered in Jerusalem, but it is very important to note that the news of Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, and reported possible resurrection was being told throughout the town. It was largely the locals here in Jerusalem who had been a part of the crowd chanting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” Just like a famous trial might get our attention today, what happened to Jesus was all the latest news. Most thought at this point, however, that His resurrection was a sham and that they would hopefully now be able to move on with their life without this crazy person talking about salvation and the kingdom of heaven. Much to their surprise, though, when the Holy Spirit began to empower the apostles to speak with other tongues, the Jewish unbelievers stood at attention because they had never seen anything like this before. As Peter stands to explain the truth, he immediately points them to Jesus. In **verse 21** he gave the emphatic **promise**, “It shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Then he explains the **basis** for how this promise can be fulfilled in verses 22-24. Then he closes the message with the **meaning**, concluding with **verse 36**, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.”

What a wonderful message of hope, encouragement, and life. God gives a promise that all can be saved, tells us how it’s possible through His death, burial, and resurrection, and then explains that this means that Jesus alone is Lord and Christ, the Ruler and the Savior. These realities of God are amazing, but Peter did not dismiss the reality about man. He lays the charge squarely at man’s feet, “This Jesus whom **you** crucified.” God was giving Peter a clear boldness to proclaim the truth, and it is a truth that man must accept if we are to ever be “All In” with Jesus. How do you think you would respond to that moment? These are largely the same people who crucified Jesus less than two months ago. They far outnumbered the disciples and had the power and weight of the law on their side, but the Holy Spirit was at work doing what only God can do.

A. There Was Genuine Conviction

In our nature, we would think that the crowd would respond like many people today. Perhaps they would retaliate, refute, argue, threaten, protest, or a host of other unacceptable things. The Scripture says that when they heard this they were “pierced” to the heart. The word in Greek literally means “to prick violently, to pierce all the way down, to be deeply or thoroughly pained, to be emotionally stunned.” The original language shows us that they were devastated to their core. With every fiber of their being, they understood what Peter was saying was true. For all that time Jesus had been with them performing miracle after miracle, teaching with authority in a way they had never seen or heard, and yet they were so adamantly against Him that they called for Him to be crucified. Now, at this moment, it’s as if the Holy Spirit is opening their blinded eyes to see the truth of who Jesus is and the truth of their sin. They are not **condoning** their sin and making excuses for it, “Well, we didn’t know any better so you know, sinners just sin. That’s what we do.” They are not **minimizing** their sin and making light of it, “Well, it’s no big deal. We’ll just try to do better next time.” They are not **blaming** others for their sin, “We were just following our leaders, and the Pharisees thought this was God’s will.” They were under deep conviction by the Holy Spirit of God, and they could not dismiss what God was doing in them. This deep conviction led to a simple question for Peter and all

the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Can you imagine the scene as thousands of people press upon these disciples? This is not a few people coming forward to the altar but a multitude of people coming to be right with Jesus. “What shall we do? Can anyone tell me? Is there any hope for us? We know we’ve messed up and sinned against God. We see that His death is on us.” What would you say at that moment? Would you look down **disdainfully** at the ones under conviction? “You can do nothing, you’ve done enough. You crucified Jesus.” Would you look to them and offer them a **false hope**? “You just need to love everybody, be kind to your neighbor, and sprinkle some faith in there somewhere and I think that’ll be good enough for God to accept you.” Would you tell them the truth?

The truth is that all mankind are sinners in need of God’s grace. **Romans 3:23** says it plainly, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **Romans 6:23** sums it up well, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Without Christ, we are all sinners in need of grace who are dead in our trespasses and sins, and in that state, we will spend an eternity separated from God, but God in His grace and mercy has offered the gift of eternal life. This gift, however, is not something that we are entitled to, something that we can earn, or something that someone can receive for us. It is something that we can only personally receive by God’s grace through faith. Peter next answers the question.

B. There Was a Genuine Call to Repent

The word “repent” means “to change one’s mind,” but our change in mind always leads to a change in action. Peter is describing that they must trust in Jesus and turn from their sins. When there is genuine repentance in our life it is not only a mental exercise, but it is evident in a change of behavior as well. ****ILL:** If a driver is on the road and suddenly realizes that he’s going the wrong direction, mentally he understands the change that is needed, but his actions follow as he either makes a u-turn or finds the nearest exit to reroute his course. **Repentance does not simply mean remorse for sins but a change of course from sin.** They had been unbelieving in Jesus, and now Peter is calling them to believe. They had crucified Jesus, and now Peter is calling them to confess their sin and turn from it, leaving it behind.

This call to repent is not new. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, His very first sermon in **Matthew 4:17b** was, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Jesus even prepared His disciples for this in **Mark 6:12**, “They went out and preached that men should **repent**.” This is exactly what Peter and the apostles are calling this multitude to do. If this call of repentance needs further clarification, listen to how Peter described it in his very next sermon in **Acts 3:19**, “Therefore **repent and return**, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” There are many people in our culture today and even sitting on pews in the church who have convinced themselves and believed a lie from the enemy that they can be right with God by doing “churchy” things. They feel good when they hear the songs, when they hear an encouraging message, and they feel close to the things of God in those environments, but we will never be right with God and pardoned from our sins without trusting in Jesus and turning from our sin. You cannot live your best life now by simply living your best life, but by turning from your sin and trusting the One who is THE Life to be your Lord and Savior.

C. There Was Genuine Change

The greatest evidence of change will be unpacked over the next few weeks, but in this moment there was an immediate change that first occurred internally. The text says, “Many of those who were present **received** His word.” This may not initially sound like some great change, but please tell me if you hear a difference in response from when Jesus Himself stood before them. In Luke 23, Pilate, the Roman governor, presented Jesus before the crowd. Pilate was dealing with all sorts of pressure and trying to find a way to let Jesus go. He gave the crowd an option of punishing Jesus or a well-known convicted criminal. Listen to the response of the crowd in **Luke 23:18, 20-23**, “But they **cried out** all together, saying, ‘Away with this man (Jesus), and release for us Barabbas’...Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they **kept on calling out**, saying, ‘Crucify, crucify Him!’ And he said to them the third time, ‘Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him.’ But **they were insistent**, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail.” **Verse 25b** concludes, “He delivered Jesus to **their will**.” What a sobering image of the hatred and sin in their hearts, but how do they respond to the words of Peter who has just proclaimed the truth of Jesus, pointing out their sin and calling them to repent? “They received his word.” There was no argument, no denial, no delay, no dismissal. They fully received it. In Greek the word literally means “to welcome, to accept gladly.” The word was often translated as “to welcome or embrace.” In other words, they fully embraced the truth that had been proclaimed. This indicates a powerful change of heart that was happening in their lives as they turned from sin and trusted in Jesus. If any individual is ever going to be “All In” with Jesus, it begins first by fully trusting in Him and turning from their sin. Is that you today? Is that the step that God is calling you to take? If so, I want to remind you of the promises of **Romans 10:9, 13**, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved...for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

II. Being “All In” With Jesus Means that We Fully Identify With Christ through Baptism (vs. 41)

The Lord gave two specific commands through Simon Peter. The first was clearly to repent, which was happening as they received the word and believed in Jesus. The second instruction is to “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” Please understand that Peter is not saying that baptism is a second aspect of God’s grace. We experience God’s grace and salvation at the very moment we call upon Him as Lord, but having been forgiven of our sins He now calls us to demonstrate that through the outward act of baptism. There are many professing Christians who look at baptism and determine that this is not for them. They offer a host of various reasons, but before we dismiss it, we need to consider a few things. First, we need to remember that God established this precedent when He sent John the Baptist as a forerunner to Jesus. John said in **John 1:33b**, “[God] sent me to baptize in water.” Second, we also need to remember that Jesus Himself modeled baptism for us as He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Third, Jesus and the disciples also practiced and modeled this for us in **John 3:22**, “After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.” Then, as He departed to heaven, He directly commanded the disciples that as they made more disciples they were to baptize these new believers. Here in Acts 2, God is speaking through Peter and gives a direct word of command, “Be baptized.” It’s that simple. Any dismissal that we give to God’s calling to be baptized is an act of disobedience to Him. The only individuals who should not be baptized are those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There’s nothing magical about the

water or the act itself that brings salvation because that comes only through faith in Christ and repentance of sins, but once this has occurred in our life, baptism is instructed for every single one of us. This point is so clear that Peter says, “Each of you.” The ESV is more emphatic, “Every one of you.” In other words, there is no one left out. This is important because this is how we identify with Christ.

A. The Message of Baptism

Last week I explained that baptism is both a public picture and a public declaration. It is first a **picture** of His death, burial, and resurrection. The word “baptize” literally means “to sink, submerge, or overwhelm,” and in that culture, the word was used to describe the sinking of a ship, the immersing of a cloth completely in water for washing or dyeing it with color, or an object that was overwhelmed as in being pushed under something. You are put under the water and brought up as a picture of what Jesus did for us. Jesus was lifted on a cross where He died. His body was taken down and buried in a tomb, and then on the third day He rose again from the grave. The picture of immersion is a demonstration that we are buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in the newness of life. Not only is it a powerful picture but it is a powerful public **declaration** that we no longer live for ourselves but for the Savior who gave Himself for us and to us. **Romans 6:4-5** says it simply, “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death (baptism), certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” So, repentance is someone’s personal response to Jesus, but when repentance takes place, God next calls us to make it publicly known through the outward act of baptism.

Because baptism is an outward expression of our inward relationship, I have often likened baptism to a wedding ring. ****ILL:** We all know the purpose of a wedding ring. It is a symbol or a picture of a relationship and commitment that exists in one’s life. When I got married, I put a wedding band on my wife’s finger, and she put a wedding band on mine as a public picture and reminder to us and others that we belong to one another. My wife was so thoughtful that she even included the date inside of my wedding band because she knew how forgetful I would probably be. 😊 Of course, at some point, all illustrations break down, but similarly, baptism is an outward display saying, “I belong to Jesus, and He belongs to me.” For this to happen though it means that we have to be humble before the Lord and before man. The Bible does not indicate how many eyewitnesses there were at this moment, but as this multitude of new believers made their way to the baptism pool, many people were looking on. We don’t get the impression that there was a sense of embarrassment, fear, or pride that hindered them. They are now publicly being baptized in the name of the very One that they had sentenced to crucifixion. They were publicly confessing the name of the very One that they once accused of having a demon and being insane (John 10:20). Their outward actions are loudly proclaiming, “We were wrong. Jesus is true, and by faith, we now live for Him.”

B. The Moment of Baptism

When should a new believer be baptized? The Bible tells us that it happened that very day. Can you imagine the scene as these individuals hear the message, believe in Jesus, repent of their sins, and immediately the apostles take them to baptize them? There is no going home for

an extra change of clothes. There is no putting off until later what they knew that God was calling them to do at the moment. To be clear, there is nothing wrong with planning and preparing for a baptism service tomorrow, next week, or any other point in the future, but in every situation, there should be a desire and a willingness for **immediate obedience**. When a person truly repents of their sin and trusts in Jesus, they experience the grace of God and the cleansing of their sins. In this moment of salvation, a genuine believer will want to obey the Lord as quickly as they are able. I believe this is one of the primary reasons that when someone experienced salvation from God there was such an immediate response. They desired to please the Lord, obey the Lord, and identify with Him, and we see this all through the book of Acts.

Have you been saved? Have you been baptized as a believer in Jesus? Don't let pride, distractions, or excuses get in the way of robbing you of the joy of following and obeying Him. Those who are "ALL In," fully surrendered to Jesus, **Trust** in Him as Lord and Savior, and **Identify** with Him through baptism.

III. Being "All In" With Jesus Means that We Fully Commit to Christ (vs. 42)

This final point will lead us directly into the next aspect of our vision that we will discuss next week, but for now, I want us to understand clearly that to be a fully devoted follower of Christ does not simply mean that we have prayed a prayer and walked into the baptism pool to make our faith public. These things are wonderful because it is part of God's divine design for us to know Him and publicly identify with Him. However, this is only the beginning. If you were to envision a race, this is the starting line. Every runner can begin the race, but it's how we run the race that determines how we will finish. If you have trusted in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and you have been baptized, then I praise the Lord for the wonderful work that He has done in your life. However, being a follower of Jesus is not simply about entering and starting the race. There's more that the Lord wants us to know, and as we've seen recently, a true follower of Christ is a learner of Christ. We want to learn more about Him and His Word. We want to grow in our relationship with Him and live our lives for His glory and praise, not for ourselves. These 3,000 individuals who have now repented of their sins, trusted in Jesus, and publicly and boldly proclaimed their faith in Him continue to do something very strategic. "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Through faith in Jesus and repentance of sins, a change had occurred in their heart. Through baptism, they outwardly confessed that they were changed by Jesus. And now in the days, months, and years that followed, their life demonstrated that the change was genuine. Their claim of a change was not empty or in vain. Their baptism wasn't for show. They had been genuinely changed by the Lord, which is evident in their actions. "They continually devoted themselves." The Greek word for continual devotion literally means "to attend constantly." The word is often translated "to persist, to persevere, to continue steadfast." There was such a commitment in their life that there is nothing that could get them to waiver from it.

They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. This is important because we must remember that the Bible was not yet complete. They had the Old Testament Law and Scriptures, but they did not know all the ways that Jesus had come to fulfill them. The original disciples were blessed to have had three years with Jesus, and what little time these new Jewish converts had with Him, had been largely spent rejecting and dismissing Him. They had a lot to learn, and they understood that it was the Holy Spirit working in and through these apostles to reveal His Word and will. As the

apostles preached and wrote, they were proclaiming the Word and will of God. **2 Peter 1:21** explains, “For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” We have the record through the entire book of Acts and throughout the various letters of the New Testament to see many of the ways that they were instructing the people and teaching them so that they might grow in relationship with the Lord.

In addition to the apostles’ teaching, they were also fellowshiping, breaking bread, and praying together. This sounds like a lot of food and potluck meals to me ☺, but there was something greater and far more important that was happening in these gatherings. Yes, they had a God-given love for one another, but even more, they had a hunger to know and grow in the Lord. Just as Jesus had invited the original disciples to a personal relationship that would transform them and put them on mission, God was still doing the same with these new believers through the presence of the Holy Spirit working through the teachings of the apostles and the encouragement of the saints. So great was their commitment to the Lord and their hunger to know Him more, that their actions continued day by day (verse 46). These newborn believers didn’t know what would come next, but they knew that they were fully committed, fully surrendered, “All In” with Jesus, and they were willing to go and do whatever He desired of them.

So, what does this look like today? Being “All In” with Jesus is about our personal response and our relationship with Him. It begins by trusting in Jesus, it is made public through baptism, but this should lead us to a place of deep, personal commitment. There are many practical ways that we can grow in the Lord and live out our commitment to Him, and God has given us a multitude of tools and resources, but I’d like to share a few practical applications. **First**, spend intentional time in prayer. Many pray in moments of crisis, but we often forget that prayer is about a relationship. God invites us to come to Him as our Father and ask. When you are awake, start your day with 5 minutes of prayer. Praise the Lord for who He is, confess any sins that are heavy on your heart, and ask for your needs and the needs of others you know. **Second**, spend intentional time reading God’s Word. Ask God to help you understand, and then begin reading. Start somewhere like John or James. You will probably be able to read a whole chapter in less than 10 minutes. Underline verses, write down questions, and take a moment to consider what God may be showing you. Close the time with a prayer asking God to help you apply what you’ve read and to open your eyes to His movements throughout the day. **Third**, when you conclude, sing a worship song, or put on a worship song and praise the Lord for who He is. These things are all very simple, but it requires something from you – COMMITMENT! To be clear, this is not to be legalistic, and you may find that a different timing or routine works better for you, but the point is this – make your personal relationship with Jesus the TOP priority. We prioritize the things that are important to us, and when we fail to make them a priority we show by our actions that they simply aren’t that important. It is easy to claim that we are fully committed to Jesus, but if we can’t even give Him 15-20 minutes of our day, then our claim is false. It’s time for all of us to get serious and be fully committed – “ALL In” with Jesus!

Crosslink, I rejoice in the many ways that God is working here, and I believe wholeheartedly there is so much more that He wants to do in and through us. There are many things that I think the Lord wants to show us in the coming weeks and even years ahead, but it begins with us first personally making sure that we are “All In” with Jesus. Does that describe you today? Are you truly devoted to Him? Have you trusted in Him to be your Lord and Savior? Have you identified with Him

through baptism? Are you fully committed to Him, living out your faith daily? To those who have never truly trusted in Jesus, there is no greater moment than this moment. Today is the day of salvation. For those who have been saved but have not yet publicly demonstrated your faith through baptism, don't let anything hinder you from publicly identifying with Christ and making it known loud and clear what God has done in your heart to save you and clean you. Finally, to those who have been saved but have been distracted and perhaps even a bit disillusioned, the Lord is inviting you today to rededicate your life to Him. He's loved you all along. He's never left or forsaken you, but you know that in your relationship you have grown distant and cold. Today the Lord is inviting you back, to humble yourself, to repent, and to be renewed to a right relationship with Him. There's much more that we can and must do beyond this message and this point, but there is not anything that we should do until we first make sure that we are personally "All In" with Jesus. Friend, now's the time. Take the step. Won't you go "All In" with the Lord?