

Mark 10:17-22

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" 20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

A year ago, I was getting ready to enjoy my retirement. I've worked hard all my life and have been bi-vocational for most of it. After 50 years of ministry, I wasn't planning on stopping ministry altogether, but I was planning to start enjoying my retirement. At my age, I'm all about comfort and enjoyment. Charlene and I were planning cruises, trips, and how to spend our time in a comfortable way.

Then in January I sat down with Nathan to talk about whether or not he felt he was called to be a Pastor. The answer, as expected was no. What wasn't expected, was that not only was he going to step down as our pastor, he was going to step away from the church altogether and join the Chapel.

If I'm honest, my first reaction was that JesusChurch was done.

But God!

Jesus loved him.

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him,

As I began to pray the Lord said to me the He wanted me to, not only become the Senior Pastor of JesusChurch, but He also wanted me to be all-in.

I had a decision to make. I could take the easy way out and retire and whatever happened to the church happened or I could be obedient.

Being all-in meant that I would have to be willing to sacrifice all my plans and dedicate myself to serving Him in any and all ways that He wanted.

It sounds like I had to make a tremendous sacrifice, and I did. However, God did not call me to be all in as a punishment or because no one else was available. He did it because He loved me and wanted the best for me. My mother dedicated me to the Lord as an infant. I answered the call to the ministry at 19. Since before I was born, God knew my future and He put a plan in place for my life. That plan did not end in 2021. He loved me and wanted me to enjoy the plan He has for my life.

The Cost of being all-in

"You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor,

However, in order to gain the benefits of that calling, there is a cost to being all-in.

In poker, there are two possible results. First, if you go bust you lose everything and it's over. Second, if you win, then you rake in all the winnings at the table.

The reward of being all in

and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Jesus was telling him he would reap two benefits from his actions. First, he would have treasure in heaven. God rewards those who sacrifice and serve Him. Second, he would get to be part of Jesus' inner circle and be one of His disciples.

After all the things I've seen and experienced in my life, I knew that regardless of how things turn out with the church, what I would gain would far exceed what I will lose. All my chips are in because the Lord has shown me the enemy's hand and I know he can't win.

I'm all in because being obedient I remain close to Him.

I'm all in because I love all of you and want to serve you.

I'm all in because I love His Church.

I'm all-in because I don't know any other way of responding to the Lord's calling.

I'm all in because I don't want to stand before the Lord and have Him tell me that I did all these great things, but that I lack one thing.

I have to be all-in, because He was all-in for me. Nothing less and it wouldn't show Him how much I truly love Him.