

## ALL IN Series – Part Three

### Playing Offense

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Opens with ALL IN Video clip.....

We are in the midst of a series called ALL IN. We are exploring what it means to live a life that is sold out to God. Full abandonment. Full surrender. Going All In.

We are not trying to create a cookie cutter Christian because going ALL IN will look differently for each person, however, there are some basic truths that we can all grab ahold of.

We are using a set of questions to help us define the idea of going ALL IN.

Today's question is: **Am I living by faith in what God can do, or in fear of what I might lose?**

The title of today's message is PLAYING OFFENSE. A lot of Christians play defense instead of going on the offense. They circle the wagons to keep the devil out instead of fully engaging the culture and taking the fight to the enemy's camp.

A sports team can have good defensive players and have a great defensive strategy but if they don't have a strong offense they aren't going to win any games.

**God didn't put us on the earth to play it safe but to be dangerous.** To take ground. To advance the ball downfield. To attack the gates of hell. To take risks.

The Christian life is not a spectator sport. Actually, **We have been born on a battle field right in the middle of a cosmic war. A war between good and evil and evil advances when good people do nothing.**

There are those who are satisfied sitting on the sidelines and there are those ready to charge the gates of hell and take back what the enemy has stolen from us.

A great example of these two types of Christians are Jonathan and Saul in the Old Testament. One played it safe and the other went ALL IN. (1 Sam 14)

Context: During the early days of Saul's kingship, the Philistines controlled the western border of Israel and battle lines were drawn at the pass called Mikmash.

Saul and his son Jonathan took two different approaches to the problem. One was content to sit on the sidelines and one wanted to be on the frontline.

**READ 1 Samuel 14:1-23**

- 1. Going all in requires that we reject passivity.**

Saul was satisfied taking it easy under the shade tree. As long as the enemy wasn't causing him any problems he wasn't too concerned.

Sometimes we do the same. As long as my kids aren't on drugs, as long as none of my family members are homeless, as long I am not affected by whatever - I am really not that concerned.

German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller, after the Nazi holocaust, challenged the world by stating *"We must openly declare that we are not innocent of the Nazi murders, of the murder of German communists, Poles, Jews, and the people in German-occupied countries"*. He wrote this poem.

**When the Nazis came for the communists,  
I did not speak out;  
As I was not a communist.**

**When they locked up the social democrats,  
I did not speak out;  
I was not a social democrat.**

**When they came for the trade unionists,  
I did not speak out;  
As I was not a trade unionist.**

**When they came for the Jews,  
I did not speak out;  
As I was not a Jew.**

**When they came for me,  
there was no one left to speak out.**

Our passivity does not make us guiltless when people are hurting all around us.

Maybe Saul was just tired of fighting. *"I paid my dues. I just want peace"*.

**Story of the Anabaptist** – The early Anabaptists experienced and saw powerful expressions of the Holy Spirit. This power took ordinary men and women of faith and turned them into powerful preachers and teachers. It was displayed through the spread of the gospel, healings and miracles.

They embraced suffering. They walked with courage into obedience that would bring torture and death. In the midst of being martyred they challenged those who were left to remain faithful.

Everything changed when they became the “quiet in the land.” In exchange for their freedom and safety, these early Anabaptists made deals with governments in which they promised to forsake their evangelistic ways if they would be allowed to worship and live in peace. They became passive and they lost their power. The movement became a culture.

The willingness to compromise for security and comfort is a danger for all of us.

Maybe Saul was resting on his past victory. The spirit of the Lord came on him earlier and he slaughtered the enemy and rescued the people of Jabesh. We like talking about the victories of yesterday but are we winning any new battles today?

What is your current testimony of going ALL IN and seeing God come through.

I like the **Men’s Fraternity** slogan. Authentic Manhood is:

**REJECTING PASSIVITY - ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY -**

**LEADING COURAGEOUSLY - INVESTING ETERNALLY**

Being a Christ follower begins by rejecting passivity in our lives. Being willing to get up off our duff and do something to make a difference in our relationships and our world.

Jonathan had that moment when he couldn’t stand it no more. King Saul had left the situation get so bad that in 13:22 it says on the day of battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in their hand. Only Saul and Jonathan.

Jonathan decided to reject passivity. Reject the excuses. Reject the status quo and do something about it even if it cost him his life.

- He would rather die trying to make a difference then sit under a tree complaining how bad the world has become.

**2. Going all in requires courage and faith.**

Jonathan decided to go ALL IN. Risk it all. It wasn’t a blind faith. It was faith in God. He asked God for guidance and confirmation before heading headlong into battle.

I love what he said to his armor bearer – *“Let’s go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows.”* - let’s go take on the enemy. It was crazy- It was dangerous,

I like what Mark Batterson says; **“When did we start believing that Jesus died to make us safe? He died to make us dangerous! The will of God is not an insurance plan. It is a daring plan.”**

He had no guarantee of victory but he was not going to sit around and do nothing.

I love his sense of going ALL IN. *“Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf.”*

No guarantees but a burning passion to make a difference. At least give God the opportunity to do something through us.

Note his faith – Vs. 6 – *Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving us, whether by many or few.*

His armor bearer encourages him. - I got your back. I will die with you. Let's go for it.

How precious it is to have those armor bearers in our lives. Those that encourage our faith. Many of you have been armor bearers to me over the years. I'm praying for you, stand strong. Let's go for it. Let's not settle down. Let's keep dreaming. Let's keep taking risks. Let's charge the enemies camp.

I don't know if you saw the movie called *We Bought a Zoo*, which is based on a true story. Matt Damon plays the role of a British writer, Benjamin Mee, who rescues a failing zoo shortly after his wife died leaving him as a single father. One line in the film is powerful when he says: *"Sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage."*

Twenty seconds of insane courage can change your life.

Maybe a better way of saying it would be twenty seconds of irrational courage.

That's how long it took Peter to get out of the boat and walk on water.

That's how long it took David to charge Goliath

This caused me to think about my moments of insane or irrational courage. Not that I didn't pray about these things but the moment of decision required raw courage – What some would call insane courage...It wasn't always rational. Here are some of my moments of moving out of passivity ....

- Quitting my job and going to bible school
- Deciding as a farm boy to sell everything I owned and respond to the mission call to the concrete jungles of the inner city
- Taking the crazy step of going into the Baltimore city jail and saying I want to come in a do a bible study with the inmates – not a clue
- Taking a job as a big rig truck driver when I never drove a truck on the road before – before you needed a special license – keys and directions
- Apply for a job as a psychiatric assistant with no education or experience.- exclusive for the rich and famous
- Starting a church in a high crime high rise community – having police telling us stupid white folks to get out
- Taking this girl on a motor cycle ride and asking her to marry me.
- Starting Petra – many more stories of twenty seconds on insane courage
- Looking to the future knowing there will be more steps of faith and courage.
- Following God is never boring that is for sure – but it takes courage

Going all in is the unwillingness to give up. No matter how many times you get knocked down, you get back up.

Failure is not the enemy of success. It is part of success.

- I could have given up after my first church plant failed. But I refused to let my life be defined by my failure.
- Instead I turned it into a learning experience and a stepping stone to my next challenge.

Most every dream goes through a death or refining process. But then comes a resurrection if we don't give up.

Most everyone has failures and scars and bruises. But let's quit making excuses and look for more opportunities. I can give you a list of people who betrayed me, abandoned me and used me. But let's stop playing defense and trying to protect ourselves from more hurt and failure and start playing offense.

Let's shake off passivity and take on those twenty minutes of insane courage and head for the end zone of victory.

### **3. One step of courage by one person can change everything.**

Jonathan and the armor bearer struck panic in the whole enemy army. So much that the ground shook as the enemy began to run and turn on each other. Vs 15

Just one person sold out to God can change the destiny of a nation.

Not only that but one person's courage can produce courage for others to join the battle. Read Vs 22.

Jonathan's courage changed everything. It saved a nation.

Throughout history we can find many men and women of courage that changed everything.

- William Wilberforce took on the cause of slavery and started a movement that led to the abolishment of slavery in most of the British Empire
- Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King
- Mother Teresa

### **Conclusion:**

This year is the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reformation when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberger church. He started the reformation and was persecuted for it. He also later persecuted others but the fact is he decided to take a stand and stop being passive.

When he was put on trial he said **“My conscience is taken captive by God’s word, I can not and will not recant anything. For to act against my conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”**

Who do you need to stand up for?

The homeless, the fatherless, the addicted, the abused, the voiceless?

Your life can make a huge difference. I know some people are by nature more risk takers than others but if you touch one life and they touch one life it can change everything for generations to come.

It just takes a little bit of courage to do something. What can you do to make a difference in someone else’s life? It’s time to go on the offense and do something.

Jesus took the ultimate step of courage in willingly going to the cross, willingly suffering, willingly taking on our sins and punishment. His one step of courage changed everything forever.

Let’s follow in his steps. Two thousand years ago, Jesus gave the command to charge the enemy and He’s never sounded the retreat.

*Let’s go on offense - “Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf.” – Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving us, whether by many or few.*

Have people stand for a prayer of blessing – a charge to go

- I am going to pray a charge over you, after which you will be dismissed and those that would like prayer for various needs or would like to surrender their life to Jesus and go all in for him come to the prayer ministers at the side for prayer.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, I give you this charge:

- Do something new to move out of passivity into action
- Do something courageous that you have been putting off
- Find a need beyond yourself and fill it
- Find someone discouraged and go out of your way to encourage them
- Speak up for those who are helpless and have no voice
- Stand in the gap of prayer for someone this week
- Instead of cursing the darkness, light a candle
- Decide to live your life playing offense

Prayer Ministry