

Title: Living All In

Text: 2 Chronicles 16:9

Big Picture: God desires ALL of us, at ALL times, to give ALL of ourselves to Him.

Good morning, family! It's so good to be home and to see all the beautiful faces! I love you guys... Teria and the boys send their love and I thank God for the opportunity to share with you this morning. So, let's get to it! If you have your bibles, please turn to 2 Chronicles, chapter 16. There is only one verse we will focus in on, from this chapter. But before we dive in, let's get the context.

In 2 Chronicles, chapters 14 through 16 summarizes the life of a King named Asa who ruled the southern kingdom of Judah for 41 years. Chapter 14 gives us a summary of the beginning of his reign--the bible says that he started off doing what was right in the eyes of God. In chapter 15, Asa doubles down on doing things that are right in the sight of God.

But then we get to chapter 16 and it begins to go downhill for the brother. Chapter 16 gives us insight to one of his **major** failures.

This chapter starts with Asa being confronted and threatened by another king. But as opposed to seeking God to defeat this king and his armies, Asa decided to take matters in his own hands. He went to the house of the Lord and took money that belonged to God and used it to bribe a third king to join forces with him to eliminate the threat. Well, they did it and the threat was eliminated.

Then God sent His prophet to rebuke Asa because he did not rely on God but he relied on man. But hidden in this rebuke, lies a very important gem that gives a timeless truth regarding God's call and desire for every single person in this room. I want you to see it, hear and embrace it because it gets to the core of how the believer is called to live.

Let's pick up at verse 7. **7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand.⁸ Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand. ⁹ For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. 2 Chronicles 16:9a (NIV).**

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the whole earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. Our topic, this morning, is: **LIVING ALL IN**. Let's pray. >>Pray<<

In February of 1921, Dr. Evan Kane was performing an ap-pen-dec-to-my in New York City. He had performed over 4,000 of these procedures, so for the most part, there was nothing unique about this one except two variables.

The first unique variable of *this* particular surgery was the use of local anesthesia. Up until this time, the practice was to always use general anesthesia. But Dr. Kane was strongly against general

anesthesia and his argument was that local application is far safer. Many of his colleagues agree with his theory, but it needed to be proven.

So, Dr. Kane began his search for a volunteer patient who was willing to undergo surgery while only under local anesthesia. Needless to say, he had a very hard time finding somebody. Eventually, however, Dr. Kane finds somebody and the historic operation using only a local anesthetic occurs for the first time.

After the procedure, the volunteer is placed in a hospital ward where He recovers quickly and is dismissed two days later. Dr. Kane had proven his theory...Thanks to the willingness of a brave volunteer, Kane demonstrated that local anesthesia was a viable, even preferable, alternative.

But earlier I said there were two variables that made *this* surgery unique. I've told you the first: the use of local anesthesia. But the second unique variable is the patient. The courageous volunteer for this surgery by Dr. Kane *was* Dr. Kane. He operated on himself, to prove what he believed! **The *doctor* became a patient in order to convince the patients to trust the doctor.**

Likewise, when Julius Caesar landed on the shores of Britain with his Roman armies, he took a very bold step to ensure the success of his military venture. He deliberately burned every ship they used to travel to eliminate any possibility of retreat. Now that his soldiers were unable to return to the continent, there was nothing left for them to do but to advance and conquer!

>>*Transition:* You know what these two stories have in common? The men in them were **all in!** And this is the kind of heart God is looking for.

He's looking for full commitment. He is looking for a people who are completely sold out for Him. For a people who are fully devoted. For the ones who are not moved by culture, not moved by society, not moved by political views but whose hearts are fully committed to His standards. For the ones that say as long as I have breath in my lungs, I will serve God! He's looking throughout the earth for a people who are ready to LIVE ALL IN. **For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth looking for those whose hearts are *fully committed* to Him.**

I have two sections to focus on, this morning. Section I deals with the characteristics of an all-in life. Section II deals with how to sustain an all-in lifestyle?

I. The Characteristics of An All-In Life

a.) Having a Faith in God

Let's read verse 8 again. ***8 Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand.***

You know what faith is not? Faith is not belief. Faith is *acting* on what you believe. You see, it's easy to talk big faith, it's easy to preach big faith. But how far are we willing to go? Does our faith walk match our faith talk? **ILL:** Simple Chair Illustration.

Living a life that is all-in says that our trust, our dependence, our reliance is in God alone. **For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth looking for those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.** The second characteristic of an all-in life is...

b.) Living a Life for God

Bill Hybels, Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, was talking with one of his members about some of the "tough topics" he had taught on over the years—hell, money, sex, relational confrontation, self-discipline. The man asked, "Of all the topics you've preached on, which has been the hardest to get across?"

Bill states, "I didn't even have to think about it. Becoming totally devoted to Christ." Bill considered getting across the aspect of a completely self-sacrificial lifestyle was his greatest teaching challenge. He states that for many people, total devotion to Christ means squandering the only life they have.

What about us? Do we consider total devotion to Jesus a goal worth striving for? Or do we see complete commitment as something that would infringe on our comfortable lifestyle? What does God require, if not your life? What is the call of the Christian, if it's not full surrender. If it's not fully committing the whole of our lives, then what is it? If it's not to offer Him our lives as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing--completely giving up our will for his, then what is it?

It's the same heart the Apostle Paul reflects when he gave his farewell speech to the elders in Ephesus. He said, **²² "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³ I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace. Acts 20:22-24 (NIV)**

See, Paul was singular minded. He said his life is worth nothing, if it's not aimed at finishing the race, if it's not aimed at completing the task, if it's not aimed at living a life that brings glory to God. THIS MAN said he doesn't even know what would happen to him in Jerusalem, but he went anyway. Why? Because he was living a life for God, with no regard for his own life.

He was fully committed, he was all in. He knew that he was bought at a price for a higher calling. He knew that he was saved, renewed, redeemed to live a life ALL IN for the sake of Christ. **For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth looking for those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.**

c.) Giving a Heart to God

There's a story of a time a young very wealthy man approached Jesus to ask Him, what shall he do to inherit eternal life?

¹⁷ As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do so that I may inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ But 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 give false testimony, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰ And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth." ²¹ Looking at him, Jesus showed love to him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But he was deeply dismayed by these words, and he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

Question: is there anything, in your life, you've deemed "too much" to give to God? Now, the church answer is 'oh, no, Maurice. I'll give it all.' And I'm sure this young ruler felt the same way until Jesus challenged him to let go of the very thing that had his heart.

II. How to Sustain An All-In Lifestyle

a.) Stay Hungry

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Matthew 5:6 (NIV)

b.) Stay on Guard

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)