

26-0329p Transcript

26-0329p - *Are You All In For Jesus Christ*, John Nousek

Bible Reader: Mike Mathis

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Are You All In For Jesus Christ

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading (0:04 - 0:28): Mike Mathis

Proverbs 23:7: (0:04) The scripture reading for this evening is taken from 2 Samuel, the 6th chapter, verses 12 through 22. (0:20) Now it was told King David say, the Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom (0:30) and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God (0:43) from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David with gladness. And so it was (0:55) when those buying the ark of the Lord had gone six paces that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. (1:08) Then David danced before the Lord with all his might and David was wearing a linen (1:16) evening. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord (1:24) with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

Now as the ark (1:34) of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window (1:43) and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord and she despised him in her heart. (1:55) So they brought the ark of the Lord and set it in his place in the midst of the tabernacle (2:05) that David had erected for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the (2:15)

continued

Lord. And when David had finished burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people (2:25) in the name of the Lord of hosts. Then he distributed among all the people (2:35) among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, (2:46) a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

(3:00) Then David returned to bless his household and Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet (3:09) David and said, How glorious was the King of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes (3:20) of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself. (3:33) So David said to Michal, It was before the Lord who chose me instead of your father (3:42) and all his house to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord over Israel. (3:52) Therefore, I will play music before the Lord, and I will even be more undignified than this, (4:03) and I will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maid servants of whom you have spoken, (4:17) by them I will be held in honor. This completes the reading. (4:24)

Transcript (0:04 - 27:31), Preacher: John Nousek

(4:29) Well, good evening.

It's a fine evening indeed. Thank you for reading that through, Mike. (4:37) A lot of stuff there.

This evening's sermon is entitled, *Are You All In For Jesus Christ?* (4:48) And we just heard the reading about David, and I like the final words there of that passage (4:58) that really hit home with me. Verse 22, which says, I will become even more undignified than this, (5:13) and I will be—this is the NIV—I will be humiliated in my own eyes. You know, (5:28) David is one of three people that I want to talk to you about tonight that were all in for the Lord.

(5:39) He didn't care who saw, heard, anything. He was going to do it because he was dancing before (5:49) the Lord, he said. You know, each one of us have referred to it as a circle of influence,

(6:04) people around us that we speak to, bump into, talk to semi-regularly, (6:15) and the things that we do and say have a big influence on that.

(6:22) And I had a conversation with a co-worker not too long ago. Before I explained, I said, (6:29) this is a non-believer, and I said, when you come to realize that Jesus Christ is (6:40) the Son of God, made everything, everything is His, everything is to be done in relation to that, (6:49) it changes everything. The whole perspective on the way the world is and what we are to do and (6:56) how we are to do it, everything's different.

All of a sudden, it's not about me, it's about the (7:05) Lord. Here, I'm going to talk to you about three people who are totally all in for the Lord. (7:18) Now, the first one, if I can get the image on screen, this is an image of David (7:24) dancing as the Ark of the Covenant is being brought into Jerusalem, (7:29) and he's wearing the linen ephod.

The linen ephod is the garment that the priests would wear, (7:41) and he's demonstrating his humility and his desire to worship God authentically. (7:50) Not just kind of wishy-washy, he really was wanting to worship the Lord. (8:01) On the other hand, we have Michal, David's wife, and we heard what she had to say about this.

(8:10) I noticed that it says, back up to, I can find it. Oh, here. (8:34) Michal observed this thing from a window, it says.

She observed David dancing before the Lord (8:42) from the window, and I think to myself, I picture the scene where she's upstairs somewhere, (8:51) looking down, checking it out. Look at my husband, and he looks like a fool. Maybe so.

(9:05) He didn't care. See, in this instance, the wife is, she's criticizing him for doing this, (9:20) holding him in contempt. See, she wasn't all in like he was.

See, as Christians, (9:31) there will be instances where, like the person I spoke to recently, (9:37) where non-believers see what we do or don't do, and they find themselves in total disbelief. (9:50) Actually, I kind of hope they do, because that means that we're standing out apart from the world (9:57) in the way the world behaves and things that they do. I go to different events, (10:05) events having to do with my employment, and I've had to stay overnight, and after hours, (10:13) a crew gets together, the alcohol comes out, and a little more alcohol comes out.

(10:22) Before you know it, things are going crazy, but they don't. (10:28) People have been, I've been asked more than once, what's up with that? (10:34) Well, I just, I don't want that. Well, why not? What's the problem? What problem? I just don't (10:45) want it.

Well, sometimes they just leave it there, but they also know that I'm a Christian, (10:56) and as such, I want my testimony, my behavior to match that which I profess. (11:05) So I do those things as best I can to make sure that that's in line. You know, sometimes, (11:18) if they don't leave it alone, there might even be some, I've had this, sharp criticisms.

(11:25) Who do you think you are? What do you mean? Come on, there's nothing big. (11:31) Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. I want to tell you something.

Praise be to God for those moments, (11:37) because, hey, there's something different going on with that guy. (11:44) And maybe somebody takes notice, not from me, but praise be to God that there

are those moments where, (11:53) hey, why is he different? It's because of his belief in the Lord. It's not to say I'm not (12:08) faltered in many instances, in different areas.

Of course I have. We all should attain, (12:16) or we all should aspire to reflect the character of God in all the things that we do. (12:25) So I want to give you three examples of people that are found in the pages of Scripture (12:31) that have done just that, and sometimes it's cost them.

So let's look at another example of someone (12:44) who's all in the Lord. And I'm going to ask, this is found in Joshua, Joshua 24, (12:54) and it's a few verses. It's Joshua 24, verses 11 through 15, which reads, (13:04) And you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho.

The citizens of Jericho fought against you, (13:10) as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, (13:16) Levites, and Jebusites. But I gave them into your hands. I sent the hornet ahead of you, (13:25) which drove them out before you.

Also the two Amorite kings, you did not do it with your own (13:32) sword and bow. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil, in cities which you did not build. (13:43) And you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.

(13:51) Fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped (14:02) beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But, this is verse 15, (14:14) but if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, (14:22) then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors (14:30) served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living.

(14:38) But as for me, this is Joshua, he says, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (14:51) So Joshua is actually forcing the question to the people around him, his circle of influence. (15:02) In this instance, it's a pretty big circle of influence.

He's demanding that those around him (15:10) make a decision, and he's unwilling to accept a middle-of-the-road response. He makes it clear, (15:21) Joshua is all in. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

So how do we do this? (15:36) For those that choose Jesus Christ, those that have accepted the Lord as (15:44) master of all, how do we do that? Well hang tight, I'll tell you. Let me give you the third example. (15:58) And I can see we have the slide up on screen, and I'm going to talk to you about what I call (16:05) this big meeting between King Ahab and Elijah.

This starts out in 1 Kings 16. (16:18) In 1 Kings 16, verses 29 through 31, we get an understanding of who King Ahab is. (16:33) Verse 29, in the 38th year of Asa, king of Judah, Ahab, son of Amasai, became king of Israel, (16:44) and he reigned in Samaria over Israel 22 years.

Ahab, son of Amasai, did more evil in the eyes of (16:55) the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of (17:05) Jeroboam, son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel, daughter of Ephbaal, king of the Sidonians, (17:15) and began to serve Baal and worship him. Now Ephbaal, king of the Sidonians, was a Phoenician (17:24) king.

He was over the cities of Tyre and Sidon. These are two cities that are on the edge of the (17:34) Mediterranean, just a little bit north of what you see on screen where Mount Carmel is pointed (17:44) or shown, a little bit to the north, and they're pagan worshipers. And Ahab's wife, Jezebel,

(18:00) I mean, I think that's pretty, even today, if you refer to a woman as a Jezebel, (18:09) it's not a compliment at all.

So this Jezebel was putting to death the prophets of the Lord. (18:20) She was actively pursuing, had the power. She was the princess in the land of the Phoenicians, (18:30) and here she marries King Ahab.

Now we have this, (18:37) call it this evil alliance at the top. I'll throw this out there to you. (18:46) Sometimes we think we had it bad under Mr. Biden.

They had it bad. They had wickedness, (18:56) absolute wickedness, his and hers to boot. So now we bring in Elijah.

(19:05) I'll ask you to flip over, if you will, 1 Kings 18, two chapters later, (19:12) and here's the big meeting between King Ahab and Elijah, which takes place on Mount Carmel. (19:25) Starts at verse 16. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

(19:34) When he saw Elijah, he said to him, is that you, you troubler of Israel? (19:43) I have not made trouble for Israel, Elijah replied, but you and your family's family have. (19:52) You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. (19:59) Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel, (20:04) and bring the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah.

Asherah was the female (20:20) version of Baal. Baal was the male version. And the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at (20:29) Jezebel's table.

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. (20:42) Elijah went before the people and said, how long will you waver between two opinions? (20:50) If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal is God, follow him.

But the people said nothing. (21:06) Here's Elijah. He's faced 850 to one.

It's just him. And he has 450 prophets of Baal, (21:21) 400 prophets of Asherah, and he asks a simple question. Dead silence.

(21:32) You'd have thought somebody of the opposition would have the guts. (21:39) So let me tell you a few things about this Mount Carmel where this all takes place. (21:48) See, Jezebel, I told you, was the princess, the daughter of the king of the Sidonians.

And (22:01) those cities are just a little bit north of Mount Carmel. And we read that King Ahab reigned for 22 (22:13) years. It says he reigned in Samaria over Israel 22 years.

That's verse 29, 1 Kings 16. (22:26) So he's in Samaria, a little south of Mount Carmel, and his wife's family and all their power (22:38) is a little bit north of that. Mount Carmel is smack in the middle of it.

(22:44) If we were talking about a sports team here in Cleveland, Ohio, we would say (22:50) they're not the home team. They're the away team. Elijah's in the territory of the enemy, (23:02) and he's standing up to 850 of them to one.

You would think the odds were against him. (23:12) You would think. He was all in.

He was all in for the Lord, and he was not backing down. (23:24) I'd call him a tough guy, but he had Jesus Christ backing him. Now, I want to point out, (23:36) I learned something this past week.

I didn't have any idea about this, but I learned this, (23:42) that Mount Carmel is actually, in modern Israel, it's a very large national park. (23:56) It's known for its beauty. It's known for all of the scenic views.

(24:04) It has approximately greater than 32 square miles of property today in this national park. (24:14) That's 20,000 acres of ground. We're not far here from Lakewood, Ohio.

(24:25) This would be as if you had five Lakewood, Ohio's all grouped together. That's how big this national (24:33) park is in Israel today. Very picturesque area.

I'm going to ask to flip to the next slide. (24:44) I learned they have a website. They have a Mount Carmel website.

Imagine that. (24:55) And they offer all kinds of things, hiking, sightseeing, lots of scenic views, (25:05) nature preserves. I'm sure they have all kinds of birds and plants and great stuff.

(25:12) And you can go see it, right? Well, I want to point out, this is a real place. (25:24) These are real events. Even today, it's promoted on the internet.

I can ask to go to the next slide. (25:41) So, they even have camping. You can stay in little huts.

Amazing. Great fun. But in the day of Elijah (25:52) and King Ahab, there was no camping going on.

But it is a place of extreme beauty. (26:04) In the book of the Song of Solomon, it references Mount Carmel just that way, (26:16) where it says, this is the writer speaking of a lovely woman. Your neck is like an ivory tower.

(26:27) Your eyes like the pool of Heshbon. By the gate of Bath-Rabbin. Your nose is like the tower of (26:37) which looks towards Damascus.

Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel. (26:48) Beauty. And the hair of your head is like purple.

A king is held captive by your tresses. (26:58) A beautiful girl. Tresses are the long locks of a woman's hair.

(27:08) So, Elijah faces these 850 people, and he shuts everything down with a single question. (27:20) The text reads, they said nothing. They had no response.

He was just asking them, pick, (27:32) choose, which one? They were the priests of the pagans, and they couldn't even speak up to say (27:47) who they were. How do we do this today? How do we reflect God's character in what we do and how we (28:04) do it day in and day out that pleases the Lord? Here's the answer. It's found in the New Testament.

(28:20) The answer is, it is by faith. It's not blind faith, rather rational faith. Faith that is (28:28) supported by evidence.

I'll bring us to Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11 starts out, (28:40) Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (28:49) For by it, the elders obtained a good testimony.

By faith, we understand that the world's (29:01) were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen (29:07) were not made of things which are visible. By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent (29:19) sacrifice than Cain. The book of Hebrews continues on, verse after verse, naming people who pleased (29:30) God because of their faith.

Verse 5 says, By faith, Enoch was taken away, so that he did not see death. (29:42) Verse 7, By faith, Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, (29:53) prepared an ark for the saving of his household. Verse 8, By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was (30:06) called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance.

Verse 11, By faith, (30:17) Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the (30:24) age. Verse 13, These all died in faith. These were all people who were all in for the Lord.

(30:43) They made a decision. If you recall, what comes to mind as I read this even standing here now, (30:50) Sarah. It says, By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she (30:59) bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

(31:07) Maybe you remember Sarah's initial response when she was told, I'm going, you're going to have a (31:14) child. She laughed. Not possible, she thought.

But you know what? Sometimes we have that initial (31:26) response. Sometimes we do. How could this be? God promised.

He said so. In his word, (31:35) he says a lot of things. How couldn't this be? We started out there, but we come to realize (31:43) through faith, faith in things that are rational.

Yes, it is. This is God's word. (31:53) We can hold on to it, and we can rely on it, and we can live by faith because God's given it to us.

(32:01) He's given us his word, his promises, his good news. So verse 13, These all died in faith, (32:13) not having received the promises. See, they hadn't received what was promised to them yet, (32:21) but they believed because it was rational to believe, and they chose that.

(32:30) They were all in on that decision, not having received the promises, but having seen them (32:38) far off, were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims (32:47) on the earth. That's what we are. This is not our permanent home.

This is not the place where (32:57) it's all going to be utopia, and everything's going to be great, and if I get this, I'll be (33:02) happy, and if I get that, I'll be happy. No, that's not the case. This is not the permanent residence (33:09) for those that put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Verse 16, But now they desire a better, that is, (33:22) a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared (33:29) a city for them. So we have a much better place to look forward to by faith.

Hebrews 9 verse 27 (33:46) and 28. Consider this. Hebrews 9, 27 and 28.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, (34:00) but after this the judgment. So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many to those who (34:15) eagerly wait for him. He will appear a second time apart from sin or salvation.

(34:26) Are we eagerly waiting? Just half waiting? Just sort of waiting? Are we really all in? (34:36) Are we really? God knows the heart. Is any part of us just living for now? (34:51) Just enjoying the moment? I don't think Christianity is about buying an insurance policy. (34:59) I'll pick this one and see what happens.

If it goes bad, you know, I got to back up over here. (35:08) It's not how it works. All these people that have just described to you out of the pages (35:15) of Scripture, out of history, out of real places, real events, at real times.

(35:21) These are things that happened. And these are folks that God found favor in. These are examples (35:42) of people who are all in for the Lord.

But see, the other side of it is God rejects those that (35:53) are not. In his final book, the book of Revelation, he gives a warning. It's Revelation 3 verses 14 (36:06) and 15.

And he's speaking to the church in Laodicea. Revelation 3, 14 and 15. And to the (36:19) angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, these things says the Amen, the faithful and true (36:28) witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot. (36:40) He's referring to someone not all in. Sort of on the fringe.

Maybe buying the insurance policy, (36:48) kind of. Maybe this will work. Maybe it won't.

He says, I know your works that you are neither (36:59) cold nor hot. I could wish that you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm (37:08) and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

That doesn't look like someone (37:18) who God desires at all. He's forcing the issue. Like Joshua did.

Like Elijah did. (37:34) Choose. Pick.

Don't play the middle of the road. Don't pretend. That's giving us fair warning.

(37:48) So I ask you, are we really prepared like David to be humiliated in our own eyes (38:00) in order to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Can we remain faithful having made that decision? (38:09) Like Joshua, he says, now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. (38:17) But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Be sure to make up your mind ahead of time (38:30) before challenged in all circumstances.

How am I going to react? How am I going to respond? (38:38) There's going to come trials in life. Scoffers, critics. I told you in my circle of influence, (38:48) I have critics.

You think you're, no, I just know who I follow. (38:58) And I try to do everything he says as best I can. I sit here and I believe as I look around, (39:13) I don't find anyone who hasn't made that decision.

But I will say there will come (39:21) times when we will be challenged and God tells us to be ready. (39:30) But if there's anything that needs to be done tonight, look forward as we sing.