

## All In

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In the parable of the talents (large sums of money – representing the life of Christ implanted within all believers – given to servants who were then responsible to go out and bring in a return on the master’s money), the master (who represents God and Christ) said to the third servant (who did nothing with his master’s money), “Therefore you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.” (Mt. 25:27) Since this servant did not even do this least of things for his master, this lazy, negligent servant is “cast into the outer darkness.” (Mt. 25:30)

And in the parable of the workers who were each paid a day’s wages, all the workers, whether they had worked all day or only an hour, received the same amount of pay. (Mt. 20:9-10) And Jesus promised that anyone who would give even a cup of water to the least (poorest, smallest), would not lose his reward. (Mk. 9:41)

One inference we could make from these statements is that there is some bottom line, lowest level of activity that brings in a minimal increase that would still allow one to remain in Christ and God’s kingdom when our personal account with God is finally settled. But we must also immediately recognize that this minimum level that God will deem acceptable is known only to *God* – and it is likely to be different for each person because each one will be judged by what he has done with what he had been given. But no “bottom line” of acceptability is ever once mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament, neither spelled out nor given in specifics nor advocated. In fact, we find that God has always had a different standard in mind.

Jesus said that the most important commandment was, “You shall love the LORD your God with *all* your heart, with *all* your soul, and with *all* your mind.” (Mt. 22:37) And to the woman at the well He said, “The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (Jn. 4:23) As a condition for attaining eternal life, Jesus said to the rich young ruler, “Sell *all* that you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.” (Lk. 18:22)

The minimalists (as well as those who don’t even rise to that standard) will immediately point out that the first requirement is in the law and we are no longer under law, that the second requirement doesn’t say anything about “all” and that the third requirement was placed upon only one particular man with one particular hindrance in his quest for eternal life. All of these observations are true but these are given as an excuse to avoid the responsibility to the main point – not as a means to find truth.

The writer of Hebrews warns us, “We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Heb. 2:1-3)

Christ commanded His disciples, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (Jn. 13:34) If anyone ever gave His all to the will of God, Jesus stands head and shoulders above all others! (also see Heb. 10:7) By this same standard, we are to care for the others who also belong to Him. But because men have begun to care more about what is right in their own eyes (translated as “lawlessness” in the better versions), the love of most has grown cold. (Mt. 24:12, also see Jdgs. 21:25) Because this lawlessness is rarely recognized for what it is, it is rarely considered as a sinful or carnal way to choose one’s “church” or one’s preferred “theology” and so it remains the most popular foundation stone of churchianity. Because the

many have heaped up and followed the false teachers in their dangerous divisions (“denominations”), all these “church”-ites can attain to is a mere form of godliness that *cannot* enable anyone to love others as Christ loved His followers. (see 2 Tim. 4:3-4, 2 Pet. 2:1-2, 2 Tim. 3:5)

Jesus also said, “If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” (Jn. 7:17) Here Jesus invites *everyone* to question and challenge the source of *His* words and teachings. If anyone’s words and teachings ought to be above question, it should be the Christ’s. But since even His words are not above challenge (though indeed they will stand up to any and all challenges), let us be free, once and for all time, from the monstrous, demonic lie that teachings from the clergy are above question. (also see 1 Ths. 5:21-22 where Paul says to test *all* things!) Let us also clearly recognize that one who will not stand to have his teachings or practices questioned or examined – especially by the light of the Scriptures – *is* clergy. It is the “all in” attitude for the will of God that protects us from the deception that is the characteristic of the end times (Mt. 24:4) – that is, unless someone wants to do God’s will above their own will, they will be ripe for failing to discern just where any particular teaching comes from. This is serious business indeed since the end times will be characterized as “perilous” (2 Tim. 3:1) and will be fueled by “doctrines (teachings) of demons” that will cause many to depart from the faith. (1 Tim. 4:1) The stakes are high where deception and truth are concerned. Those who teach otherwise are perhaps the most dangerous of the deceivers because they are as deceived as those whom they deceive!

There simply is no safer place in God than to be “all in” – anything else leaves far too much of ourselves exposed as a target or as a captured “beachhead” in our enemy’s assault upon our eternal soul. Only fools parade themselves openly in battlefields and dance brazenly in minefields. Those who take the battle seriously and fight like they want to both win (attain to God’s will) and survive (remain in Christ’s kingdom when this life is done) are those who are “all in.” All else are deceived – already wounded, maimed or even dead on the battlefield and are “out.”

Let he who has ears hear.

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