**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, July 3, 2020**

Good afternoon!

“Don’t make me pull this car over!” Have you ever heard this phrase as a kid while traveling in the car with your parents? I heard it from my parents. I’ll bet you have heard it from your parents too! When young kids are acting up in a car and a bit out of reach while an adult is trying to drive, that’s what they say. Every kid knows what it means! Didn’t you? Stop what you are doing or you will get what you deserve! When my daughter Brooke was 3 years old, she was in the seat directly behind the driver’s seat where I was driving. She thought it would be fun to push with her feet against the back of my seat and see me move back and forth. Chuckling while she was doing it was the icing on the cake for me! So, I called out with a loud voice, “Don’t make me pull this car over!” She continued, so I actually pulled the car over, got out and swiftly whipped open the back door to give her what she deserved! But before I could, with a tear in her eye and a bit startled by my abrupt action, in her quiet 3-year-old voice she said, “Can we talk about this?” Unable to keep myself from maintaining a serious look on my face, I actually laughed out loud and said, sure we can sweetheart! And we did! I figured it would be a bit hard to be disciplining a 3-year-old on the side of the road while laughing! Listen, I’m a big believer in following through with what I say as a parent, but on some occasions, mercy is a better response. It was God’s response!

Ephesians 2:1-5

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

Did you catch it? We were dead in our sins. We were all deserving of our Father’s discipline, deserving of His wrath. BUT GOD, being rich in MERCY, because of His great LOVE.... even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive! How? MERCY! Micah 7:18 tells us that God delights in showing mercy! Listen, if we all got what we deserved, we would all be on a one-way ticket down spiritually speaking! Yes, unable to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps! There is only one reason that we stand before God with a tear in our eye unpunished? His rich Mercy, driven by His great Love, resulting in being saved by His amazing Grace! No one is sinless, but we now stand before Him blameless! How? We have been pardoned because Jesus took our place on the cross!

My daughter Brooke is now a parent of her own with two children. Currently one of them is a typical 3-year-old. There have been times in her car, I’m sure, where she has called to the back seat, “don’t make me pull this car over!” They say what goes around comes around! Some parents say, I hope when you grow up you have a child just like you! I say, I am glad we all have a father like God, who certainly disciplines us when we need it but is a God of rich mercy and great love which saved us from getting what we deserved! Amen?

Have a great 4th of July weekend,

Mike