**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, July 28, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Hurricane Hanna came barreling through Texas last week! Towns were flooded, 100’s of people suffered major damage. On top of the virus that is intense in Texas, the storm claimed at least 47 people that lost their lives. Untold people also lost power and the effects of the flooding are still being felt today. Hanna was a smaller storm compared to some of the category 4 and 5 storms we have experienced over the past few years in the US. In the past, we have been hit hard by some of these much bigger and more powerful storms. However, there are always people out there rescuing folks and always people refusing to evacuate and deciding to ride out the storm. My take away is that short memories can produce painful lessons! Some of the folks that suffered through previous storms and its deadly effects allow themselves to remain in the same situation regardless of the warnings.

As incredible as it seems, this is exactly what Israel did all through the book of Judges! They would worship false gods, come under the oppression of ungodly nations, cry out to God, and God would deliver them! But then they would intentionally then allow themselves to go back into and remain the same situation and need to be rescued by God all over again!

In Judges chapter 10:10-18 we read that once again “The sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, we have sinned against Thee, for indeed, we have forsaken our God and served the Baals.” Because this was a repeating theme for Israel, this time it seemed that God had had enough! They just would not learn the lesson! Their short memories produced painful results but no change of heart! So, this time God says, “Go cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress.” But the people pleaded over and over again for God’s help. Here is where you see the open heart of God! The text says, “So they put away the foreign gods from among them, and served the Lord; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer.” The result was that God once again came to their rescue! Don’t you just love that about God!

Two take away points:

1. God is looking for genuine humility that produces a true response of repentance. When I was a teenager, I stole some Christmas bulbs off of a house thinking it would be fun. I didn’t realize that the people inside saw me and happen to know me. Their son was in the band with me and recognized my face. When I got home, they had already called and told my dad the whole story. After admitting that I stole the lights and saying what I did was wrong, I said to my father, I will do whatever you think is best to prove that I am truly sorry. He said you will go back to that house with replacement bulbs, apologize to the whole family, and promise to never do this again anywhere! I said, now dad let’s not panic! Well, I was humbled by the thought of doing this and of course, I knew he was right and that I was ready to genuinely respond! Folks, unless we are prepared to first humbly repent of our past mistakes and be willing to do whatever God is asking us to do, there will be no real rescue. Are you willing to surrender whatever He wants you to? Ready to give up whatever He asks you to? Obey and do whatever He thinks best? Give up whatever foreign gods we know we must remove from our lives? There will only be a real rescue when we humble ourselves first with a genuinely broken heart.

2. God never fails to rescue us! He will always be there looking and ready to rescue even those who chose to allow themselves to be in that vulnerable situation. From the beginning of time, God has been rescuing mankind. From Noah and his family from a corrupt world to Moses from the sword of Pharaoh to the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, to Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah, to Joseph from prison, to Paul during a shipwreck, to us from Hell, Satan, and sin, through the cross of Christ! We have been rescued! God has never failed a rescue attempt for those willing to be rescued! Your rescue is foolproof! An attitude of humility and a genuine heart of true repentance is what we need. There is no situation that our Father can’t rescue us from! There is no sin, temptation, past event, present situation, or future challenge that is too much for our great God! Paul said it best in Romans 8:37, “We are more than conquers through Him who loved us.” Our rescuing Father is only a heart change away!

Blessings,

Mike