**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, July 29, 2020**

Good afternoon!

While I was living in Lubbock Texas years ago and attending preaching school, one of my instructors asked me if I would fill in for him and preach at a church in New Mexico on the upcoming Sunday. I was happy to do so! I drove from Lubbock to this church of Christ early one morning to be there on time. The morning worship went great. It was the wintertime of year, and as the weather began to turn bad and snow was beginning to fall, I thought that I should leave after the pot luck that was planned following the morning service. However, the brethren asked me if I would consider staying to bring the evening message as well. I agreed and thought that I would present a lesson on the great commission, from the passage Matthew 28:18-20.

• And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

After the lesson, I thought that I would try to lighten the mood and the concern felt by some due to the weather with a bit of humor since now it was snowing rather heavy and I still had to drive back home. Sharing some parting words, I said, well folks considering the weather at this time and the roads that will be snowed over on my way back to Lubbock, I had considered flying back to Texas. However, I decided to still drive because in our text tonight we read that Jesus said lo, I am with you always! I waited for a reaction but the audience never cracked a smile. Like oil paintings in the pews, they just stared back at me! Well I thought, I’ll probably never see these people again!

Jesus’ also shared these same parting words to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20! I got to thinking if Jesus was our guest speaker and offered these final words to our church, what would be our response or reaction to what He was saying? Would my reaction be stoic like the crowd in the church I preached at? Would my response be silence?

Based on the parting words that He shared let’s consider the following two thoughts:

1. The single central issue of our lives is to glorify the Lord. “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Clearly Jesus is to be uplifted as having all authority in heaven and on earth! This included lifting Him up as the head of the church! Paul put it this way, “To Him be the glory in the church.” Ephesians 3:21. Our first priority as Christians is not necessarily about our pardon from sin, our need for our daily bread, divine protection, to live a pure life, to be a good parent, a good husband or a good wife, etc. Our first priority is to glorify Him in all that we do. “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jesus Christ.” Colossians 3:17 When my daily goal is lifting up Jesus first, then I will do and say all the things listed and more for the right reasons! When you live to glorify Him first it will change what you say, what you do and why you do it! When it comes to what you say and how you say it to others, what you watch on TV, where you go and what you do through the filter of, is this giving Him glory, are my actions in line with word and deed being done in His name, it will give pause to those with hearts for God! You see Jesus expected people to look at themselves honestly. Not in a hurtful way but in a helpful way. Do you know what brings us to the cross of Jesus? Not thinking how good we are but how much we need Him! Are you honest with yourself?

2. Tell people that Jesus is for all mankind. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Jesus also said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world but that the world should be saved through Him.” John 3:16-17. Jesus didn’t come to the world to condemn it. The world doesn’t need any help to do that. We do that very well! The world is already good at self-destruction! It gives God no pleasure when His people hurt or are in pain or seek to rise up against one another in war or battle! This is not about Christian against non-Christian, it’s not about some people against other types of people. It is about God’s people against sin and Satan! I John 3:8, “The Son of God appeared for the purpose that He might destroy the works of the Devil.” Let’s keep our eye on the real enemy! Jesus has called us to go out into all the world to tell people that Jesus is for them! I did an experiment one time at church services. I had all the lights turned off during our worship service for a moment. All you could see where the exit signs that were hard-wired into direct current by code. After turning the lights back on I asked if anybody noticed the exit signs before the lights went out. Not many did. Be a light in the world! It is easy to be a light among other lights at church. But remember God’s light shines brightest in Satan’s darkest holes. Let your light shine where it counts.

Blessings,

Mike