**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, August 10, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Last night I smelled something burning in the house! It turned out that it was my daughter Liz downstairs who was burning incense! We live in a townhome with three floors. Liz occupies the separate downstairs apartment area. I was relieved when I found out that it was not a fire, but I was also a bit confused. Wasn’t burning incense a thing of the sixties? Liz is a young girl with an old school love for the times gone by and burning incense is one of those things. In reality, incense burning is timeless! In fact, as Christians, we are all living incense burners!

Listen to this passage that tells us so.

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.” 2 Corinthians 2:14-18

Fragrances either attract or detract. The text says that we are the fragrance of Christ! When people are around us, what do they smell, the fragrance of ourselves, or the fragrance of Christ? The passage says that for one group the sweet aroma of Christ was a reminder of the smell of victory, but for another group, it was the smell of death. Smells can mean different things to different people.

We finally got our first real phone call last night from our daughter Allison who is now almost halfway through boot camp. The phone call only lasted about 8 minutes. It was wonderful to hear from her. She sounded like she is doing great. She is even a team leader in her platoon! Amazing! We asked her about how she did going through the gas chamber exercise. We had heard that some young soldiers got sick from the smell. She said that for her it wasn’t too bad. She came through victoriously! She is kind of quiet but really a tough cookie, and now a leader of others in the military. For her and the team that she is leading, the gas was a smell of victory but for the others who were overcome by the smell is was a smell of sickness.

In first-century Roman times, during the military procession of victory, the leaders led their captives in triumph and victory, burning the incense of their choice. For those who walked in victory, it was the smell of celebration, for those who were defeated it was the smell of defeat.

As followers of Christ who leads us in triumph, through the difficulties of life victoriously, we are all incense burners for Him! We are ambassadors of Christ! May we not only let our light shine and our salt be salty but may we be that sweet aroma of Christ to a world that needs to smell the victory in Jesus!

Blessings,

Mike