**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, August 13, 2020**

Good afternoon!

My wife Margie recently completed a study of the book of Jude. She shared verse 22 with me “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear...” In addition to the passage, she offered some thoughts that struck me about being merciful and patient with those who are doubting before we pass judgment.

Some years ago, I inadvertently overheard a brief conversation between two women who met for the very first time at church. Before it ended the one woman said to the other, please forgive me for disliking you before I ever met you! She had passed judgment on her long before meeting her based on what she was told. Without mercy, and without knowing what was going on in the other woman’s life she made her judgment about her.

Are you a judgmental person? Do you make your assessment of others based on your personal standards in life? Have you decided that the things that you have overcome rather easily should be the things that others should be able to do as well? If you have been able to quit smoking do you think why can’t others? If you have kids that are well behaved do you say, hey why don’t those parents make their kids obey? If your faith is strong and has been for the most part of your Christian life, do you wonder why it’s such an issue for others in the church? Have you found yourself sitting at church passing judgment on others by the way they dress or speak, where they are from, or how offend they attend? Have you decided that you know exactly what someone’s problem is without ever speaking to them like the two ladies I spoke of? Do you tend to decide the level of their faithfulness by what you think a faithful Christian is? Would it be equally as fair for others to judge you in the same way? Don’t we all have a list of things that we have overcome in life as well as a list of things that we constantly struggle with? You may have done well with one set of challenges but suppose your list of weakness are the list that others are doing well with? Should they be judging you in the same way? Maybe you are at services all the time but your attitude is negative? Maybe you give generously but you rarely call and encourage others? Could it be that you have the gift of teaching but struggle to visit the sick? Should they be judging you by looking at you in the same judgmental way toward your shortcomings?

Some of the following verses help put all of this in perspective:

“Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another?” Romans 14:1-4

“Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.” Romans 14:13

“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” Romans 14:19

“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.” Matthew 7:1-2

We all have shortcomings, weaknesses and things that we need to grow in. And yes, we all need each other to lift each other up in doing so. However just as one person’s weakness may be another’s strength and visa versa, is not a cause for critical judgment. Yes, we are all judged by the word of God and need to help each other from slipping off. Jude said, “save others, snatching them from the fire.” But, remember for those who are slipping, falling doubting and struggling, “have mercy.”

Have a great day,

Mike