**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, August 25, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Politics anyone? With the Democratic Convention just wrapping up and the Republican Convention happening this week many people in our nation are still wondering and anxious about what to do! So much to consider from COVID to unemployment, jobs, healthcare, schools reopening, the stock market and so much more! Times like these can test our faith. What is true, what is real, who is telling the truth, who isn’t! What will the future be like with whoever wins the Whitehouse? People on cable news all have a wide range of viewpoints. Thousands on Facebook boldly express their opinions! There are podcasts, ZOOM meetings, and neighbors talking in the streets. There are public protesters and silent supporters, bumper-stickers and yard signs. There is fear in the air, riots in the streets, and power struggles in congress! What’s a Christian to do? A better question is what is a Christian to know? Fortunately, we have been reassured that God is still in control regardless of our upcoming future!

What do the scriptures say about governing authorities, God’s sovereign control, and our response? Here are a few!

• “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” Romans 13:1

• “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.” I Peter 2:13-16

• “It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings.” Daniel 2:21

We see other examples of God’s sovereign control as it pertained to who was in a position of power in the countries and cities of the day. Even when His people needed to be redirected due to their disobedience God used an opposing power to accomplish His cause. The prophet Habakkuk called out to God himself in Habakkuk 1:1 saying “How long, will I call for help, and Thou wilt not hear?” God responded by saying in Habakkuk 1:6 “For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous people who march throughout the earth to seize dwelling places which are not theirs.” Likewise, even after the fall of Jerusalem and God’s people were taken into Babylonian captivity under King Nebuchadnezzar, God Himself referred to the king as “My servant” in Jeremiah 27:6. You see the Lord was orchestrating the events of the day, not the rulers! Daniel was one of those who were carried into captivity. In the first chapter of his writings he states three times, “the Lord gave.” 1:1, “God granted” 1:9, “God gave.” 1:17. All referring to God’s sovereign control and providential plan even during a time like this! Many people continue to think that they are in charge when all the time God is using different people and circumstances to the spiritual blessing of His people and His cause! We are ultimately all His servants! However, how we are living may play a part in how God is responding and directing in our best spiritual interest!

Now, this does not mean that one should not vote! Sure, the providence of God does not relieve us of our responsibility to make wise and godly judgments. God uses our free scripturally guided decisions to bring about His will. In the end, however, He is weaving His providential tapestry working out all things for our spiritual good as He promises in Romans 8:28. I Timothy 2:1-2 says, “First of all, then I urge that entireties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we might lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” Regardless of the election outcome, we need to be praying for God to be working on the heart of that leader! God for His own reasons will be wanting to use that person in accordance to His will! Prayer is powerful and works! Remember the story of Esther; Nehemiah? After a time of fasting and prayer, God moved in the hearts of those kings in accordance with accomplishing His will!

The point is that God is in control! He has always been, is now and will always be! He is sovereign! God is bigger than any one king or ruler or platform being presented! God puts people in place and removes people from those places as well! Sometimes it may be hard to see or make sense of it all but regardless, God’s agenda is what is important! Our response is best found in Proverbs 3:5-7 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.”

In His service,

Mike