**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, September 7, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Did you ever accidentally discover something of value? As a kid at the age of 10, I found something of great value but did not realize it’s worth. On my way to the local candy store to buy some Bazooka bubble gum, I noticed that among the change in my pocket was a penny that was dated 1955. It caught my attention because it was seemingly defective. You see I noticed that the date appeared to be stamped twice. I was happy to spend it on the gum and not get stuck with a defective coin! My brother Kevin collected coins back then so I mentioned it to him and asked if he had ever come across a penny like that! He said that the 1955 Double-Die penny was a rare and valuable coin and worth lots of money! Whaaaat? Today that penny has an average value, of $1,200 in average condition and can be worth $4,000 to $16,000 or more in uncirculated mint condition! The key is truly appreciating true value when we see it!

Finding treasure was something that happened in Jesus’ day as well!

· “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” Matthew 13:44

In first-century times treasures were often hidden in fields. There really weren’t any formal banks as we know them today. You may remember that in Matthew 25:25 a person also hid some money in the ground. On occasions when a town was going to be invaded by an enemy force, homeowners hid valuables in their fields so that if they were overtaken and robbed, that later they would at least have something to fall back on. However, if the homeowner died in the raid, their treasure stayed hidden! The hidden treasure may stay hidden for years and years without anyone being aware of it! In this story, a man finds a treasure, and then from joy sells all that he has to buy that field! Symbolizing the value of our salvation in Christ, the apostle Paul put it this way in Philippians 3:8 “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

You see the value of the kingdom (our salvation) far outweighs any other item of value we may possess in this life! Therefore, not only do we give up all, if necessary, to obtain it, but we should do so with joy!

During a sermon, I was presenting one time, I handed out a few small chocolate candies to a young boy in the audience. After a few minutes, I asked him if he would be OK giving them back to me. The kid shook his head no and said, thank you Mr. Hipes, but I would like to keep them. As I continued the lesson, I presented a huge 5lb. Hersey Bar (that I bought at Cracker Barrel) and asked the boy again if they would now trade the few small candies for the huge 5lb. candy bar! Not only did he want to switch with me, but he did so with excitement and joy! Point made! Our salvation is the most important thing that we can possess no matter what the cost! We need to be forever thankful for the salvation we have in Christ and never minimize its value compared to anything else!

You see the value of the kingdom does not vary! I have had people call and say, Mike, I am in a crisis situation in life. I have lost my job, lost my home, lost my health, I have problems with family, and so on. They go on to say, I really need God’s help! Folks, when we are healthy or get that long-awaited new job, or when life is good or more, we still need God’s help! The gift of God, your salvation in Christ, the hidden treasure, has the same value today as is does every day and in every circumstance! The sacrifice of everything in this life is worth what we will gain in the next life! The joy of receiving far outweighs the releasing!

When I asked my dear sister in Christ Pearl, who I knew in NY at 90 years old what she had to give up to become a Christian, without hesitation she responded, “nothing of value brother Mike.” She has since gained her reward in heaven!

Have a great day,

Mike