**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, September 14, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Have you ever gone searching for something valuable and find it? One of my favorite things that I used to do was going to garage sales in search of hidden valuables! While I was living in New Jersey, Margie and I went garage sale shopping one Saturday morning looking for some real deals. As I walked up the driveway of one of our first stops, I noticed a 40 horsepower Johnson outboard boat motor sitting on a stand with a price tag of $25! I assumed that people thought that something must have been wrong with it as some other onlookers were showing no interest. I walked up to the woman who was doing the sale and said to her, “why are you selling that outboard motor so cheap, is there something wrong with it?” She responded, “No, I’m getting a divorce and it’s my husband’s.” I said, “I’ll take it!” Listen I didn’t even have a boat, but I know a good deal when I see one!

Folks, never pass up the most valuable thing of all, the kingdom of God! In Matthew 13:45 we read,

· “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

The pearl in ancient times was a gem of great delight! It was reported that Cleopatra had 2 precious pearls worth $400 thousand dollars each. Pearls are unique among gemstones in that it is a product of a living organism from several types of oysters found mainly in certain areas of the Pacific Ocean. In biblical times divers operated from small boats. They would dive down about 40 feet or more to the oyster beds. They would risk being cut on the dangerous reefs or attacked by sharks, moray eels, or devil fish. On average they would only fine one pearl in 1000 oysters. But when one was found, especially one of rare size and quality, it was a time of celebration! Some pearls were of such rare size and value that certain people would sell all that they had to obtain this once in a lifetime find!

The kingdom of God is like that! It is a rare, priceless, and perfect find! Don’t miss out on obtaining it! Pearls are the only gem that cannot be improved on by man! Diamonds are cut to be improved, other gems are cut and polished to look better. The pearl is no diamond in the rough, it is perfect from the start! What better symbol for the kingdom of God could you have? There is nothing more valuable in all the world than being in the kingdom of God! No matter how poor you are, lonely you feel, destitute your situation, jobless or even close to death, just remember you are the richest, wealthiest, and the most blessed person on earth in the kingdom of heaven!

Two Lessons:

1. Precious pearl kingdom seekers are driven by the highest purpose in life. Did you notice in the text that the merchant was seeking “fine” pearls, a priceless perfect jewel! He was not just looking for what was expectable and OK. His quest was for the best! Folks, spiritually speaking, let’s not be satisfied with less than what’s best when it comes to our Christian lives and service to the Lord. When it comes to our prayer lives, our relationships in Christ, our relationship with God, evangelizing, giving, involvement, and more, may we be seekers of the best we can be for the kingdom we serve in!

2. Precious pearl kingdom seekers are willing to pay the necessary price for the perfect pearl. The merchant knew that his lifetime of seeking would be in vain unless he obtained the pearl. Notice he didn’t just wish he had the pearl. He didn’t try to degrade the value or wait for it to go on sale! He acted swiftly! Why? To miss an opportunity like this would be tragic! There are some people these days casually looking for the kingdom and only wishing they had it. Others degrade the kingdom saying, it is no big deal to be a Christian. Still, others are waiting for a seemingly better time to take that step. Don’t miss out on the greatest thing this side of heaven! Better than any super deal at a yard sale is the eternal kingdom of God! The riches are “unfathomable” Ephesians 3:8. If you are part of God’s eternal kingdom, keep celebrating!

Blessings,

Mike