**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, October 8, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Have you ever been in a debate? One of the classes that my daughter Liz took when she was in high school was a debate class. On one occasion the teacher posed a question for the class to debate. The topic had a spiritual overtone and so the class became a bit uneasy. The teacher instructed all who were in favor of the position to stand on one side of the classroom and all who were opposed to stand on the opposite side of the classroom. Possibly because of fear and not wanting to be labeled by other classmates the entire class moved to one side of the room, with the exception of my daughter Liz. She stood alone facing the whole class and promptly stood up for the truth as she saw it in light of scripture! Talk about bold courage! When she got home that afternoon, she not only shared the experience with me but then put together a list of Bible passages and made copies to hand out the next day as to why she stood up for this biblical principle. In her debating the truth from God’s word people were impacted! With some, it tested the level of her friendships. With others, it was an enlightening experience. With all, she gained respect for speaking the truth in love! With Christ and His Word, you always win the debate!

Listen to what Paul said in I Corinthians 1:20-21 about the debater of his day when he comes up against the word of God! “Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”

Whoever came to know God through the world’s wisdom? Nobody! When you gather up all of the world’s wisdom into one big ball, the PHD’S, of the world, and more, the world's wisdom directed no one to God! Saved no soul! Not one person! It brings no one closer to God! All of this world’s wisdom and those who debate its value and positions, help no one to know God, love God, or serve God! Period!

This is why Paul says in the next chapter in I Corinthians 2: 1-5 “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the [testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

When it comes to debating this world, we have a Superior message, a Spirit-powered message! Therefore, Paul tells us 4 things we need to know about how we need to share it or even debate it with others.

1. How we shouldn’t speak. Paul begins by saying, “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom... persuasive words of wisdom.” He didn’t try to speak with fancy words. He didn’t rely on zingers or “got ya” statements. He didn’t resort to persuasive words of worldly wisdom or personal pressure, badgering, browbeating, or other tactics. He simply shared with them and showed them the testimony of God. Like Liz after the debate, simply distributing the written word of God! Case closed!

2. How we should speak. Paul continued saying, “I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, Trembling at what? A whole class against one person? No! But rather the thought of the importance of the task. To not only share it but follow it up with the written word to confirm your own words. It should be a sobering task!

3. What we should speak. Paul says, “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” Notice, the tactic Paul used to draw people. No human philosophy, play on emotions, guilt trips, human accomplishments, worldly success stories. Only the exalting of the Christ and Him crucified!

4. Why we should speak. Paul ends with the most important point of debate, “so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.” The most convincing reason for putting your faith in someone should have little to do with the person themselves, but the power of God that is directing that person! In the end, the credit for success should never go to man’s efforts but to exalting the source of victory, God Himself!

If you find yourself in a debate over politics or worldly principles in the upcoming days, even if you are on your own as my daughter Liz was, remember, with Christ and His word you always win the debate!

Blessings,

Mike