**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, October 23, 2020**

Good afternoon!

In January of 2018, Charleston SC received about 6” of snow! For this area, this was close to miraculous. The last time this area saw such snow was back in 1973. That’s 45 years ago! People here don’t even have snow shovels. That day I saw one guy trying to clean off his driveway with a piece of plywood. Another with a broom. I was getting flashbacks to growing up in N.Y. However, two of my girls who have never before seen this much snow were ecstatic! Up to this point, neither one of them had ever seen more than 1” of snow. They said to me, dad, let’s go out in the snow and have some fun! My first thought was, let’s not panic! Then I thought, I don’t even have any boots, I am going to have to hunt for gloves, I hate the cold, I don’t like snow and ice. Even though I grew up in NY I couldn’t stand the cold! I looked out the window while I was sipping my morning coffee and said, I feel sorry for the palm trees out there covered with snow! I bet their thinking, whaaaaat is going on out here today! I was about to suggest to Liz and Allison, why don’t we just drink some hot chocolate and stay in! But you know what I did say to them? “Come on, let’s do this!” In a flash, we got dressed and headed outside! We had snowball fights, built a snowman, walked the neighborhood, and made snow angels in the middle of the street! Do you want to know why I did that? Because I was being blessed! You see it all depends on which viewpoint you choose! I could have chosen the, I don’t like snow ice and cold viewpoint or the I’ve got a unique and wonderful opportunity to make a special memory and spend some really fun time with my kid’s viewpoint! I’m glad I chose the blessings?

I had a friend in NY named Ron who loved wearing T-shirts with funny sayings on them for kicks. I remember one that said, “I like life in the left lane but I’m married to a speed bump.” Although he wore it as a jest, it got me thinking! When I live my life do you notice the open road of opportunity before me or do I just see the speed bumps? How about you? Folks, for the most part, we are a blessed people! We live in a free country, we have homes to live in, cars to drive, food to enjoy, family and friends to cherish. As Christians we have a church family to lean on and to be encouraged by, and most importantly a loving God who has not only provided salvation for our souls but a heavenly home to go to for eternity!

The book of Genesis begins with some very incredible blessings! The creation alone should blow us away! Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Psalm 33:6 says, By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” Yes, He created this entire world for us to possess and enjoy! But even more importantly this gives us insight as to who God is and His desire to have a relationship with us! It reveals His personality, His character, His plan for His people, and His deep desire to relate to us and desire to have fellowship with us! That’s what I call blessings upon blessings! He was only just getting started in chapter one! By chapter two the Lord formed man from the dust of the earth. However, what gave him value was the breath of life and a soul given to him by God. In addition to that, He provided the perfect place to live, the garden of Eden. And if that wasn’t enough, He provided a suitable helper that would complete him named Eve! Folks, God has certainly blessed mankind from the very beginning and all through time! Yet in spite of all these many blessings and so many more, we see even from the very beginning how mankind chooses to blow the blessings! We see how despite the blessings provided how Adam and Eve chose to notice only the speed bumps rather than the open road ahead of wonderful opportunities that were provided! It was Satan who distracted them as he does us, from the beauty of a special snowing day and an opportunity of a lifetime by thinking, I hate the cold, go ahead and blow the blessing right before your very eyes!

Beware of the blessing blocker:

\* Focusing on what we don’t have and forgetting what we do have. In Chapter 3 of Genesis God blesses Adam and Eve richly! A perfect garden to live in and eat from. Paradise! But when Satan comes along, he makes a single observation. What about that one tree you don’t have to eat from? “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” Genesis 3:1. I can hear the serpents distracting words and raising doubting questions saying, well, is God being stingy, too strict, or selfish keeping you from it? Listen Eve, maybe you ought to think twice about God’s goodness and blessings. I say He is holding out on you and Adam! You should start noticing the speed bumps! Eve took the bait and suddenly forgot all that God had given her and instead focused on the one thing she couldn’t have. Don’t blow the blessings! Folks listen, even if we had nothing in this life except Jesus, the bible says that we are very blessed indeed! In fact, Paul calls them “the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus...” Ephesians 2:7, as well as the “unfathomable riches of Christ, Ephesians 3:8. Folks listen, with Jesus alone, we are rich and blessed people! Everything else in life is gravy! Let’s not blow the blessings of God by focusing on what we don’t have and forgetting what we have been given! Look for the open road, not the speed bumps and you just may find yourself making snow angles in the street and realizing how very blessed we all are in this life and certainly in the one to come!

Blessings to all!

Mike