**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, November 5, 2020**

Good afternoon!

When I was a young teenager, I got into a street fight with one of the kids in the neighborhood. The other kid and I typically got along well as friends, but on this occasion, things escalated to a fist fight right there in the street! Because the other boy was a bit older and bigger, I was quickly losing the fight. At one point I ran from the street towards my house where I met my dad who had just come outside and was standing on the front lawn. With a bloody nose, I blurted out to him, “Dad I’m bleeding!” He responded, “Son, you’re in a street fight!” He then went on to say, now you can run or you can settle it with your friend. I turned and went back to the street where my neighbor stood waiting. This time we talked and decided to end the fighting and put it behind us. What happened that day taught me a lesson that would continue into my future. When you’re in a battle don’t be surprised if your opponent tries to hurt you! After all, it is the nature of the situation. I played football when I was in school. Playing offensive halfback, I got to carry the ball much of the time. Sometimes it was painful. In fact, I broke bones over the years. Imagine a football player getting tackled and running to his coach on the sidelines and saying, hey coach that guy on the field tried to knock me down! He may say, son, you’re in a contact sport! When you carry the football for the team others will always come at you! Now you can leave the game and sit on the bench or you can get tough and stay focused on the goal! Wouldn’t it be just the same in professional boxing if the boxer came to the corner after the first round and complained to his trainer saying, hey that other guy is trying to hit me in the face! The trainer surely would remind him as my dad did me, son, Uhh, you’re in a boxing match pal! As Christians, fighting the good fight of faith includes a spiritual battle! It is the very nature of the lifestyle. We can choose to run or engage! Fight or flee! When you carry the ball for Jesus there will be opposition!

At this very moment in our country, there is a fight for the White House going on! Teams of lawyers on each side are gearing up for a great battle! It seems that both sides are ready and willing to fight not to flee, engage not run. At some point, a victory will take place.

My question today is one that addresses our faith spiritually speaking. Are we as willing to fight, engage in the good fight of faith, as we would be in our physical lives? Do we share the same vigor when it comes to winning the race for something greater than the White House as we look to the mansion Jesus has prepared for us in glory? Without trying to minimize the importance of our election, is not eternity a greater prize than the next 4 years? Listen to some of these very encouraging verses of scripture that address our spiritual fight of faith.

· “fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience.” I Timothy 1:18-19

· “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” I John 4:4b

· “Let’s run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” Hebrews 12:1-3

· “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.” I Corinthians 9:24

· “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil... Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” Ephesians 6:10,13

· “We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Romans 8:37

The good news is that we have already won! We are not fighting for victory but from victory! How is it that we are more than conquers? It is not about the tally of numbers, a landslide, or winning by one vote. Whether you win by one or many, in this world a win is a win. Spiritually speaking, the reason we are more than conquerors is that the victory was already won by Jesus at the cross! WE WIN! For Christians, it is simply time to celebrate! Remember my friends, no matter how this election turns out, we are already victorious! Let’s put as much vigor into fighting the good fight of faith in this life so that whether we face a spiritual street fight or an attempt to be tackled by the world, that we will not lose heart. Let’s “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14

Blessings,

Mike