**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, November 26, 2020**

Good afternoon!

When you think of Thanksgiving what comes to mind? What are you thankful for?

Several years back Margie and I were in our car traveling to Florida to see her mom. About an hour into the trip Margie’s sister Barbara texted Margie. She wrote, “Are you on the road yet, and do you have your kids with you?” The text response back was, “No kids on this trip, only me and my wonderful husband that I am thankful for!” Now that caused me to nod and smile! Margie’s sister then returned another text saying, “Yes he is a wonderful husband to be thankful for.” The next text went like this, “This is a confession, this is Mike, Margie is driving and I am texting!” Folks listen, even if you have to generate your own thanksgiving entrapment, today and every day we need to be thankful people! As Christians, we have much to be thankful for! Mainly for the many blessings, we have in Christ! The feast of fellowship we have in Christ! The salvation that we enjoy in Christ, and so much more!

In the past, I have asked people, what was their favorite thing about Thanksgiving Day? Some said the turkey and the stuffing, others talked about the delicious appetizers, many spoke of the desserts that followed, a few liked the nap on the couch afterward or watching the football games on TV. I even had a number of people that talked about looking forward to the leftovers the next day! When I was a kid living in NY, we always had a big feast of a meal! My mom Rose was one of nine children. That’s a big family! She was from Bari, Italy and I can still remember most or all of my aunts and uncles that would come over throughout the day. Uncle Danny, Veto, Johnny, Joe, Pip, Rocky, and Frankie, and their wives and kids. Along with my mom’s sister Antoinette and her husband, my mom Rose, my dad, and all five kids we had a full house! We would start with the appetizers, then go into the homemade pasta with hot and sweet sausage and homemade meatballs. After that came the turkey with all the trimmings. In addition, my mom always had a pork loin or fresh ham she would cook with all the side as well since my dad and brother-in-law Jerry were not Italian and enjoyed that better. After the feast, we continued to eat desserts, fruit, nuts, pastries, and so much more. We were literally at the table the entire day! We would be so full that to eat any more that evening we would have to rub it on! But you know what? With all the food to enjoy, it was always second to the family being together enjoying the feast together!

Brothers and sisters, the church is a family of believers as well! In Ephesians 3:14-15, the apostle Paul says, “For this reason I bend my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.” All of us in Christ in heaven and those still on earth are one big family! All of our loved ones in heaven and those still here on earth are part of a wonderful family as we feast together in Christ!

As we feast here on earth, they feast in heaven at a great banquet feast in glory! May we be thankful today and every day of our lives for the blessings of being in Christ. Let’s always remember, Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Some folks say, but Mike I don’t deserve all this! In a sense that is true, but you are worth all this! You see you don’t deserve it based on your actions but you are worth it based on Jesus’ actions on the cross! He has qualified us, Colossians 1: 12 tells us, “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

When it comes to a life of blessings in Christ, I have a friend that says, “Why me?” I like to think, why not me, why not all of us! I don’t think that we need to apologize, downplay, or make excuses for God’s goodness in our lives! Let’s celebrate it and give Him the glory for it! King David said it best concerning thanksgiving for the Lord’s goodness in Psalm 118:23, “This came about from the Lord; It is marvelous in our eyes.”

Have a Happy Thanksgiving,

Mike