**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, January 27, 2021**

Good afternoon!

Recently my daughter Brooke moved from the town of Cary NC to another town nearby. She was telling me about all of the boxes that she had packed up in each room, marking them as well as getting them ready to go. It reminded me of a previous move she had made years back when she moved from Ohio to Cary. I remember one unique fact that stood out to me when I was helping her move back then; the boxes and how they were marked! I remember picking up a box containing lamps and lampshades, marked fragile. The next box I got contained dishes and glasses, it too was marked fragile! The box after that had knick-knacks, also marked fragile. The following box was filled with kitchen items, you guessed it, marked fragile! In fact, many of the boxes regardless of their content were marked fragile! To her, every package regardless of what was in it had great value and was very special indeed!

When Jesus began His ministry, He also traveled from town to town! What did He see? He saw us all regardless of who we were, like no other. He sees us as “valuable vessels.” No matter what our inner baggage may contain, Jesus sees us as people having great value. Very special indeed!

Two lessons that we need to embrace!

1. When Jesus came to town, He came to cure the incurable. “When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. And a man with leprosy came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus reached out with His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” Matthew 8:1-3. Jesus had just finished the Sermon on the Mount. As He comes off the mountain, large crowds are with Him. He steps into a world that is filled with loneliness, pushing and shoving, yelling, fighting, political posturing, unemployment, sickness and so much more, much like our own world. But what does He see? Jesus saw the burdens of many. People wandering around like sheep without a shepherd. People who need to be loved! The homeless, the lepers, the victims of a disease. The discouraged and distressed, the searching souls with heavy and hurting hearts. But most importantly what Jesus saw was an opportunity! “Seeing the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd.” Matthew 9:36. Jesus is moved to compassion to bring hope to the helpless! A cure to the incurable! Why? Because for Jesus every person is a valuable vessel, containing great value! My friends, a place with no hope, no cure, is a terrible place to be! Today, right now, without Jesus, we all stand before the Master with another incurable condition. It’s called sin! There is no pill we can take, no ointment we can put on, no vaccine we can get to avoid it, no deed we can perform, no political party we can rely on, to cure it! But there is a Lord who can remove it! His name is Jesus!

2. When Jesus came to town, He came that we should put our total faith in Him. “And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, begging Him, and saying, “[Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, terribly tormented.” Jesus \*said to him, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed... “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.” Matthew 8:5-10. Centurions are the backbone of the Roman army. They were self-dependent type men who also had many servants at their disposal to serve them. But this centurion is different. He is concerned about his servant. To him regardless of the servant’s position in life, he was valuable in his eyes. In addition to the centurion’s compassion, he had extraordinary faith! Knowing that as a gentile, Jesus being a Jew, would not be expected to enter his house, so the Roman says, just say the word and I know my servant will be healed. Jesus then praised his amazing faith! This lesson is driven home in the following section of Matthew 8:23-27 where the disciples are caught in a sudden storm. The disciples cry out, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing!” He said to them, “Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.” Folks, Jesus came to remove our fears and doubts and instill us with great faith! Remember, you are never a failure until you give up! When our faith begins to falter, it does not mean we have failed. I know people who live in fear! Fear of health, old age, losing our kids to the world, or death itself. When the waves of life come crashing down upon you... Just reach for Jesus and He will lift you up! Because when Jesus sees us all, He sees all, He sees us as people worth rescuing. And that is special indeed!

In His service,

Mike