**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, February 3, 2021**

Good afternoon!

If you have ever been to a church pot-luck or dinner on the grounds there is one thing that you may have noticed. The food people bring often reflects their gifts and talents! I’ve seen Italian’s bring food like spaghetti and meatballs. Southern folks arrive with black-eyed peas, collard greens, or grits. Midwest folks come with corn on the cob and chicken with dumplings soup. Of course, there is always the all-American food like hot dogs and apple pies. Then there is the young single’s food..... a bag of ice, or a liter of coke! (LOL). Finally, all of the teens and little ones arrive bringing a big appetite and a lot of energy!

When it comes to ministering in the kingdom of God, in like manner, we all have very different gifts and talents and therefore minister in God’s vineyard in many different ways. We have some who are shepherds, others who are deacons, some who teach, others who preach, still there are those who song lead, some who work with children, and so much more.

As different and important as each of these areas are, for each and every one of us, no matter your background, talent, the gift you possess, or food you bring to a church family meal, we need to minister “Jesus Style” if we want to be fully effective. There are three things that we all need to know about ministering “Jesus Style” if we want to truly make a difference for the cause of Christ! We can find them in Luke chapter 4.

1. Expect to be confronted by the devil. In Luke 4:1-13, on the heels of just being baptized, Jesus goes into the wilderness “for forty days, while tempted by the devil.” 4:2. Jesus is just about to embark on His ministry after working for many years for Joseph, in the carpenter’s shop. He finally steps out and goes public, getting ready to preach, teach and proclaim that the kingdom is at hand when Satan shows up. I can hear the devil saying, wait just a minute, I want to tempt you and pour cold water on any new excitement you may have about getting started in your ministry. Satan is like that! He wants to remind the newly baptized Christian of the rejection and difficulties that may come his or her way as they try to begin sharing their faith. To the newly appointed church leader he whispers, your job is going to be very hard. To the teachers who have volunteered to take on a class, he tells them, do you really have time to prepare, what about time for your job and family? To those wanting to evangelize he says, you will be discouraged. The evil one says to these and all others who are trying to serve in His kingdom, hey, you are in the wilderness, you are hungry, weak, and lonely! Give it up already! You see, Satan loves quitters! Folks, when you minister “Jesus Style” expect to be confronted by the devil! But realize this, “resist the devil and he will flee from you” James 4:7. Let’s respond by resisting! Let’s also respond by knowing that “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” I John 4:4. When you minister “Jesus Style” expect to be confronted by the devil, but plan on being victorious in the end! Amen!

2. Remember it’s not about you, but all about Him. In Luke 4:14-30, Jesus is in the synagogue on the Sabbath and stands up to read. After reading a passage out of the prophet Isaiah, about releasing the captives, recovery to the blind, freedom, and more He says, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” v.21. You can almost visualize the grins of satisfaction and smiles of great expectation turning to awkward amazement when Jesus said in so many words, well here I am, the One who will make all of this happen! No wonder they respond by saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” v.22. Where is the status, the regal, the royal blood? You’re too ordinary to represent the extraordinary! The next thing you’re going to tell us is that your followers and helpers of spreading this good news to the poor, are street people like tax collectors, fishermen, and prostitutes! Bingo! They were so hung up on the wrapper that they missed the content! Before you knew it, they were trying to “throw Him down the cliff.” v.29 Wow, talk about not liking the sermon! Folks, the next time someone responds to you saying, who do you think you are to preach to me or speak to me about my life, you’re just a common laborer, don’t get offended! Why? It’s not about you, but all about Him and His message! God is reminding us that the highly important will be done by what we look at as everyday ordinary people like us! Amen!

3. Know that His message is one of power. In Luke 4:31-37, Jesus speaks with power and authority. We read “And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another, saying, “What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” v.36. What gives Jesus’ teaching such authority? Was it His appeal to tradition, opinion, or popular schools of thought? Was it because He was trying to be politically correct or tickle people’s ears? No. His own word was authority! In like manner, we must always appeal to the text of the scripture, the bible, the written word of God! The word of God and its power is second to no document! If you want to see heads turn, lives change, people arise, souls saved, hearts rejoice and heaven happy, remember the amazing power of the word of God and share it! Amen!

In His service,

Mike