



Fence Post of Faith March 2017 In Memory of Mike Menn the man at the Gate...

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the

Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12.28-31)

Where do you fall in the hierarchy? This is about a guy I know who choose to be there for the first horse in the arena and for the last horse out. When everyone is done and back to the trailers, he is still there helping get the arena ready for the next day with just a thank you. Mike Menn was one of those guys, a guy who always saw the best in people, had a heart that forgave the worst, a mind that forgot the bad, and a soul that never lost faith in God. Mike’s life was lived many ways like the scripture from Mark: “Love God with all you have, and love others like you love yourself”

*In the scripture Jesus points out the place we should take in relationship to God and others. Jesus tells the teacher: **Mission—Men—Me**. We take last. Jesus tells the teacher is that we are to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” This is our primary function, our **mission** if you will, as human beings. We were created to love God and be in a relationship with Him. Mike was one of those kind of men. Mike was a 3rd generation family businessman and co-owner of Menn’s Firestone in Carthage. Mike was a tireless supporter of Carthage and Hancock County and had just recently been recognized as the Carthage Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. Mike was a member of the Hancock County Saddle Club for over 40 years and had served as president for many of those years. In 2016 the Hancock County Fair Board dedicated the horse arena in his name. In addition to watching and teaching his own grandchildren how to show and care for horses he also spent countless hours getting other youth involved in horses and agriculture. Mike was instrumental in bringing the High School Rodeo and other events to Carthage. His own interests involved having racing Quarter Horses and Thoroughbreds at county fairs and other tracks and traveling with barrel racing organizations, serving as a gate official for many Barrel Bash’s and other horse related events.*

*The second thing Jesus tells the teacher is to love other people (31). He says, love the **men** (and women) around you! We do this by serving those around us and bearing each other’s burdens. Mike had a way with people and horses and at many of the Barrel bash’s he worked, there was always order at the gate, whether the first or last horse through, Mike was keeping order. Mike placed himself between the holding pens and gate, many times we forget to be thankful for gate man and calmness he provided to the contestants.*

If we are to love God and then others, where does that leave us? Last place. In the grand scheme of things, Jesus shows us that last place in the hierarchy is where we are to live, to die,

to thrive! Mike chose last every time in the arena. He had taken shots many times into a wall, fence and even drug a few times in the alley, because he understands that he lives in last place. He is the first and last one to safety at the arena. He lives by the motto: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15.13)

*Jesus spoke these words the night he would be betrayed. The night that he showed the disciples the full extent of his love (John 13.1) and told them to copy him (13.34-35). Jesus **chose last!***

As you go through the day, how often do you live in first place, choosing your way instead of God's? How often do you get off-mission? How many times are you serving others? Holding a gate open? Taking ahold of an unruly horse? Inconveniencing yourself to convenience others? When do other men come before you? How often does "me" choose last? Mike did that many times for us. Thank you Mike Menn.

Ps Renea Bolling and Danielle Mae Lamb had the idea of creating a BARREL BASH scholarship in Mike Menn's name in memory of our beloved gateman. They have spoken with Kaylee Krekel and she agreed this was a good idea and that her dad would be honored to have this in his name. Mike was a great supporter of all things barrel racing but especially the youth of our sport. Please consider this.

Kaylee will get an account setup and have asked Kaylee and her family to help choose the winner each year. Tentatively we will plan to give one away for the fall 2017 Semester. For those of you that want to donate you can make checks to the Mike Menn Barrel Bash Scholarship. FOR THOSE WANTING TO MAIL SEND TO Kaylee Krekel 1426 N Cty Rd 1900 Carthage, IL 62321

Jeff Metcalf