FISH HEADS

 Growing up, we had a pond located just a few hundred yards from our house. It was stocked with bass and bream. There were blue gill bream and shell cracker bream. They were some of the best fish for eating around. My mom liked to fish with us kids in the pond. Often we would dig some worms down around the old dairy barn and get our cane poles and go out to the pond especially when the bream were on bed. Usually we could catch a whole stringer full of fish. It was not unusual for us to catch more than we could eat at one meal so we would clean them, wash them good, and bag them to freeze and eat at a later date.

 One day we were fishing, Mom was with us, and we were really catching the fish. Mom, my brother and my sisters were catching so many that I was not really fishing but just stringing the fish they were catching. I would use a long piece of cord with a loop in the end of it. We would loop the cord through the mouth of the first fish and make it secure and add the rest of the fish one by one on top of the first then put them in the water and tie the cord off to a bush on the bank.

 After a while things began to slow down and I got my pole and moved a little way from the rest and began to fish. No one had any idea that big old hungry turtle was easing up toward our stringer of fish. I had fished for about ten minutes before I caught a nice little shell cracker bream and took him over to the stringer to add him to our catch. When I pulled the fish from the water I only had a stringer full of fish heads.

 Now there are few things to consider here. I don’t eat fish heads. We had imagined our supper consisting of fish, gravy and biscuits. Fish heads were not on the menu. Our pleasure had been turned to disappointment. Our happiness in fishing had been turned to anger toward an old turtle that we could not even locate. I am not sure what we would have done. We might have beaten his old shell with our cane pole. A day of joy had been turned to dismay over our loss.

 Things can change in our lives very fast. It takes only minutes, sometimes only seconds, for victory to become defeat, gain to turn to loss, top of the mountain to become a deep valley. Sometimes the gifts that have been given seem to be eaten up by the devil and we feel all that is left is lifeless heads.

 Oh God, remind us that the joy of walking with you is walking through those valleys of disappointments and sorrows and knowing that you never miss a step but you are with us all the way.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram