FOR LOVE’S SAKE

PHILEMON 1:9

 Love plays the major role in the Christian walk. The book of Philemon has only one chapter but even in this one chapter, Paul refers to Philemon as “our dearly beloved,” another brother as “our beloved Apphia,” and to Onesimus as a brother “beloved.” Paul remembered the love and faith that Philemon had for all the saints and the love that he constantly displayed in his life. Love played a major role in how Paul wrote this letter to his brother in Christ, Philemon.

 Paul had a convert by the name of Onesimus who was very helpful to him while he was in his bonds. Onesimus was a run-away slave. His owner was Philemon. Paul’s desire was for Onesimus and Philemon to be together again, not as owner and slave but as brothers in Christ. As an apostle for the Lord, Paul could have commanded that Philemon take him back and treat him right. The word used in verse eight is “enjoined” which means to put upon one as a duty, but in verse nine Paul said “for love’s sake I rather beseech thee,” which means to make an appeal. From the heart of Paul, with all the love he had, he asked Philemon to forgive and accept Onesimus as a brother in Christ.

 I am amazed at how Paul trusted the love of God. You see, Onesimus was the messenger or the letter carrier to Philemon. Paul had to trust that the love of God would cover a multitude of sins. Paul trusted the love that was in Philemon’s heart also and knew that he would forgive the great debt that Onesimus owed him.

How well do we trust God’s love? Do we trust it to the saving of our souls? Is it the dominant theme of the chapters of our life? Is it part of who we are? When someone starts to describe us, is love part of the description?

For love’s sake, Christ left heaven and came to earth. He loved us so that he left the comforts of glory and took on the pitfalls of mankind to save us from the destruction and damnation of our sins. It was for the sake of love that he climbed the stony face of Golgotha to pay our sin debt on Calvary’s Cross.

Love made the difference in the tone of the letter to Philemon. What could have been an authoritative command was a loving appeal. Love made the difference in the lives of Philemon and Onesimus. Love makes the difference in our lives also. Without the love of God we have no hope of true happiness here or the hope of heaven but with God’s love HEAVEN IS THE LIMIT!

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram