GREAT LOVE

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his **great love** wherewith he loved us, Eph 2:4 (KJV)

 Not all rich people love well. They may love their wealth and riches but may not love their family as they should. It is equally true to say that not all poor people love well. Love is something we choose to do. It involves actions as well as feelings. To love well one must act on his feelings of love and also act lovingly when he doesn’t feel very loving. When it comes to love we are still amateurs. But God, who is rich in mercy, is the Master.

 D. L. Moody told the story of a man in the state prison in Ohio by the name of Reuben Johnson. I’m not sure what he was in prison for but he had been there for nineteen years. The officials at the prison had gone to the governor and asked the governor to agree to issue pardons for five prisoners with the best behavior. The governor agreed but asked them to keep this secret until the time of the pardons. At last the day came for the pardons to be issued. All the prisoners were brought into the prison. The president of the prison commission said “I hold in my hand pardons for five men.” There was complete silence in the chapel. It seemed that the heart of every prisoner had stopped beating. The chaplain finally spoke up and said “please let us know who they are before we die.”

 The president proceeded to announce the first name “Reuben Johnson.” No one moved. He called the name again and again no movement. “Is Reuben Johnson present?” “All prisoners are here and accounted for.” Finally the president looked directly at Reuben and said “Reuben this is your pardon. You are a free man.” Reuben was looking around expecting someone else to step out and receive their pardon. Finally someone shook Reuben and helped him realize they were talking to him and slowly he walked the long aisle to receive his pardon. When the service was over he fell in line with the prisoners to go back to his cell and someone had to pull him out of line and remind him he was a free man.

 In this case the governor was looking for good character to reward with a pardon. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his **great love** sought out men and women with terrible characters and offered pardons to them. He offers pardons to chief of sinners, to the drunkards, the drug addicts, to sex offenders, to the thieves and murderers. This love that is practiced by our God is **great love.** I am among the most blessed for being a recipient of this love. I pray you are too.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram