GREAT LOVE XLII

And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. Ruth 1:8 (KJV)

In college, I took a speech class and during one of my speeches I said that I was “kindly nervous.” I went on to speak of the weather on a certain day as being “kindly hot.” My teacher asked me, after the speech, what language I was speaking for she had no idea what “kindly” meant. We all use some sort of slang or words that the people that are around us, most of the time, also use and fully understand but if speak the same way outside of our circle of friends and neighbors it may not be understood. At the time of my speech I did not know that I was using Biblical language; the same language that Naomi used. Naomi’s use of “kindly” was much more meaningful than mine.

God’s love is expressed to us through his kindness. At the time Naomi used this word she was really a bitter woman but she realized that the love she had received from her daughters in law was special. Though her sons were dead and her husband too, she had been loved by these two women. Her heart was broken but God still loved her through Orpah and Ruth. God was still present in Naomi’s heart as she gave her daughters in law permission to return to their families and to marry men from their Moabite heritage. That was how she dealt kindly with them.

Many times we are loved when things may not seem very loving. In sorrow we look for love and may not recognize it quickly. In pain we look for comfort and may not experience it for some time. Have you ever noticed that salt water does not taste good but it often brings ease to sore feet? I think Naomi was saying that our way has been salty but you have brought some comfort to me by loving my sons and by loving me. We also may deal kindly with people who are going through some difficult times. Though we cannot change their circumstances we can deal kindly with them. Their water may taste salty but through a kind gesture they might find some healing.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram