GREAT LOVE XVII

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Matt 5:44 (KJV)

I was saved at the age of eleven. It was a peace and comfort to know that I would not ultimately end up in hell. For some years I just lived in relief that if I died I would go to heaven. It wasn’t until my latter teens that I found that desire to live for Jesus.

In nineteen seventy-six a friend and myself began running a little filling station. One day as I waited on customers I found myself praying and asking the Lord to help me live and love like Jesus. As I finished my prayer I saw a car coming toward the station. Recognizing the car as one that was driven by a guy who had previously stolen my girl- friend, I was pretty sure that he would not stop at my place of business. Back then, we young punks all drove loud cars and I could tell by the sound of his glass packs he was slowing down and then I saw his blinker indicating that he was turning into our establishment. “Of all the nerve, he is coming in to brag and try to pick a fight.” My thoughts were running wild. I had all sorts of retaliations planned for whatever he might say but then Christ reminded me of my prayer “help me to live and love like Jesus.” Then I found myself wanting to argue with God. I considered putting off living like Jesus until the next day. Had Jesus been watching when this man had wronged me? Wouldn’t Christ agree that I had every right not to speak to this guy or even approach his car? By the way, those were full service days. My job was to pump their gas, wash their windshield, check their oil and even check the air in their tires if they so desired. Well, to say the least my heart was convicted. In true sincerity my heart prayed “Lord, help me.” I found something within me that I did not know existed and as I approached his car I heard myself saying “Good morning! Fill her up?”

Some months later I found the love of my life. I have had the joy of loving her for thirty-nine years. It wasn’t long until he found someone else also. Since that time we have loved each other as Christian brothers. We have worshiped together laughed together and talked about our old cars that we used to drive. Some time back I received a call and was asked by his wife if I would have a part in his funeral. Oh to love as Jesus loves and live like Jesus lives. How easily he can turn an enemy into a friend. How surely he can take pain and create peace. The love that Jesus has and the love that Jesus gives is Great Love!

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram