OVER THE NEXT HILL

     Many of the early explorers and frontiersmen were always challenged by the next hill.  It was so difficult for them to not know what was just beyond them.  There could be a beautiful valley, a great river, or even that place that they were willing to call home.  I suppose that they were really looking for that place that would outshine all other places they had ever seen.  Some were looking for game and fertile land.  They wanted to know that they had all they needed to sustain life.

     I think the Apostle Paul was our great frontiersman.  He blazed the trail for Christianity today.  After God’s call near Damascus and his visit to Jerusalem, he wanted to see what was in Antioch.  What was over that hill?  He received another call of the Lord that would launch his missionary ministry.   Beyond the next hill one might have to deal with Elymas the sorcerer.  We may expect abundant fruit of the Spirit but often we find ourselves battling the devil and facing those who oppose Christ.  Over the hill and into Antioch of Pisidia, Paul gets to preach extensively to both Jews and Gentiles.  He sees the greatest results thus far in his ministry.  At the same time he was driven out of the city by unbelieving Jews.  Along with great success we may expect to create great controversy.  We may be greatly loved and accepted by some while being strongly hated and rejected by others.    Iconium lay over the next hill where they were able to stay longer than before and preach the gospel more.  While they had believers of both Jew and Greek they also had to deal with much adversity, so much that they left Iconium under the threat of being stoned. Beyond several horizons throughout his missionary journeys he finally comes to Rome, for which he had prayed. Here he was able to preach while under house arrest.  He was also able to write letters to churches and individuals.  Here, Paul found that when one door closes for ministry another opens.  We should always expect the same for ourselves.  Many doors close but we should always live with our eyes open, being ready to step through another door of opportunity.

     God help us to be explorers for Christ, always ready to go further for the Lord.  God grant us the spiritual stamina to keep going and facing obstacles that we must face.  We pray that souls will be saved and lives will be changed in the process.  May we always remember that only God knows what lies beyond the next hill.

I do know that one day I will approach that final hill. Beyond that hill lies the place that outshines all others. It contains the place where I will be fully satisfied. It is that place not made with hands; where thieves can’t break through and steal; where nothing ever will rust or rot. Beyond that hill is God’s glorious Heaven!

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram