**Text: Galatians 5:1**

**Subject: Don’t Be Entangled!**

 In the last couple of weeks or so, we have heard a lot about entanglement. As a result, I have been trying to gain some perspective on exactly what that really means.

 Of course, we have heard Hollywood’s rendition of what it means to be entangled. However, I felt like it was important for us to learn what it means from a Biblical perspective.

 In my research, I learned that there are several definitions and contexts in which one could be found to be entangled. First, in the Greek, to be entangled means to “be involved” with someone or something. I guess this definition is close to the definition that Jada gave—as she was “entangled” with August Alsina.

 Now, I don’t know the details; nor do I want to know the details because truth be told, all of this is a distraction from the real issues that we really need to be paying attention to.

In another sense, Biblically, to be entangled means to be interwoven with something else. For example, day before yesterday, I went outside to do a little yard work. And when I was out there, I noticed that some poison ivy had become interwoven with some of my shrubs.

Of course, I was reluctant to touch it because it is toxic and may cause great discomfort if touched. Yet, at the same time, I had a dilemma because if left alone, I knew it will grow even more intertwined and will even begin to take over and ultimately choke out the shrubs that we had paid to have installed.

Now, I did what I could to remove it but I am cautiously optimistic because we should all know that if we don’t pull up a weed by the roots, then it will most likely come right back and perhaps will be worse than it was at first.

Thirdly, another definition of entanglement means to be ensnared. In this context, one becomes ensnared actually means that we become enslaved by something that initially seemed to be attractive or enticing like 24K gold but after while, if we weren’t paying close attention, it may actually turn into a source of discontent that causes us to break out in a rash because really, it was fake gold.

Or worse, this type of entanglement may cause us to get bogged down with heavy weights and burdens in our hearts, minds and souls which then cause us to spiral downward in our perspectives, and decreases possible, positive outcomes from occurring in our lives.

Perhaps, that’s why the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 5:1,”be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Now, let’s press on this for a minute because the key word here is entangled again.

This implies that at some point in the past, we were once entangled, then we were not entangled, and then we became entangled again.

Specifically, here the Apostle Paul was speaking to the Galatians who were once Gentiles who served and worshipped false gods. And because of that, they did not know God, nor did God know them.

As a result, all they had was a worldly idea of who God was—but that idea was woefully inadequate even though, to some it was temporarily satisfying because it appealed to the flesh. That is why the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 4:8-9, formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.

But now, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

Now, what was happening here was the Galatians were a fickle group of believers who were subject to give in to any wind of doctrine. And in their midst, there were some Judaizers who were trying to convince them that they should live according to Mosaic law and not according to the Doctrine of Grace that the Apostles were teaching.

Here, the Apostle Paul was simply trying to encourage them to keep standing in Christ which made free from being entangled by the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world

Now, I believe this encouragement is relevant to us today because nowadays, there are a great number of weak and worthless things that are trying to entangle us so that Christ would be of no effect to us.

Therefore, let me take minute to identify some of those enticements. First, one thing that can subtly entice us to fall away from Christ, are the cares and affairs of this life. In 2 Timothy 2:4, in the ESV, it says, no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. In the King James, it says, no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

In other words, nowadays, there are so many thins happening in and throughout our lives; in the news; in the atmosphere; and in our minds, that it is real easy to get so enticed, entangled, and then enslaved by those things that we forget about our freedom in Christ.

As a result, unnecessarily, we walk around with the yoke of bondage around our necks because we are so bogged down by the cares and the affairs of this life.

Don’t get me wrong, I get it—because these times in which live are times that are foreign to this generation. I say this because even though there is nothing new under the heavens, for the most part, things have been fairly comfortable for us.

But now, there is nothing comfortable with this pandemic, this high rate of unemployment and economic turmoil, and these heightened racial tensions that continue to get worse as each day goes by.

As a result, too many Christians have forgotten our freedom in Christ and have become entangled again in the yoke of bondage. In other words, I believe that because we are so consumed by everything happening around us, we have forgotten what’s Spiritually happening within us—that makes us free, and free indeed.

In other words, Church, too many have lost sight of our Spiritual freedom, and instead, we have become “entangled again” by the cares and affairs of this life.

However, this is not good because bondage the second time around is worse than it was the first time around. We know this because in 2 Peter 2:20, the Apostle Peter said, for if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

If we really think about this, what this tells us is that the knowledge of Christ is what causes us to get free and stay free but the pollutions of this world are the things that are working overtime to entangle us again with the yoke of bondage.

And if we are not careful, we may become entangled, and then overcome by those things like that vine of poison ivy that seeks to overcome and overwhelm the shrubs in my yard.

Let’s take this thing deeper because what we also need to know is that once we are entangled again, the enemy becomes bolder and bolder within himself, and begins an all-out assault. He does so because whenever he then sees an opportunity to take us all the way out, he goes for what he knows.

And what he knows is that when he sees us caught up in some barbed wire, instead of setting us free, he instead puts a knee on our necks so that we cannot breathe.

We know this because in Exodus 14:3, God told Moses that after the Children of Israel made their Exodus out of Egypt, they would find themselves pinned in against the Red Sea and that Pharoah would say to himself—they are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.

And because of that, his heart became hardened and he came after them with a vengeance so as to destroy them because in his mind, there was no way out for them.

So it is with us. When the enemy sees that we are entangled with the cares and the affairs of this life, his heart gets hardened and his mind gets focused on his mission which is to kill, steal and destroy the abundant life that the Lord Jesus Christ has come to give us.

And that’s why I stopped by here to say: Don’t Be Entangled! Because being entangled puts in danger of all manner of unnecessary trials and tribulations that we have already been set free from.

In other words, just because entanglement is happening all around us, doesn’t mean that it has to happen within us. Instead, we can live in Christ, and let Christ live in us who has already made us free.

That’s why the Apostle Paul told us, in Galatians 5:1, to stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Let’s break this down.

First, to stand fast means to be firm and unwavering in what we know and what we believe. And, what we already know is that the Lord Jesus Christ has already made us free from the yoke of bondage.

Also, what we already know is that the knowledge of Christ is what helps us to escape the pollutions and entanglements of this world.

However, in the alternative, what we should know is that the pollutions of this world are the things that cause us to fall away from Christ. Therefore, we have to stand fast in what we already know about Christ.

That means we have to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, [our] labor is not in vain.

Also, in 1 Corinthians 16:13, the Apostle Paul said, that we should be watchful, and stand firm in the faith. I believe he told us that because the enemy is looking for every opportunity to entangle us “again” so that we will be worse than we were at first.

However, even with all of his subtly and trickery, we still have a choice to stand firm in what we believe notwithstanding what it looks like. Now, I realize that’s a hard thing to do. What we should know is that it is not impossible to do because if it was, he would not have told us to stand firm. Therefore, Stand!

We also know that we can stand because in Ephesians 6:10-11, the Apostle Paul told us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might…[and] put on the whole armor of God [so] that [we] may be able to stand against he wiles of the devil.

And then, he went on to say, and having done all, to stand.

We can stand against the pull of the cares and the affairs of this life; and we can stand against the pollutions of this world that are trying to get us to forget the knowledge of Christ.

We can stand against despair.

And we can stand against depression.

We can stand against fear.

And we can stand against worry.

Church, we don’t have to entangled “again” because we can stand in Christ.

In fact, if we consider our text closely, we can stand fast in the liberty (or the freedom) wherewith Christ has made us free.

What that means is that over two thousand years ago, when the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, and was raised from the dead, He led us up and out of the bondage that we were in.

We know this because Ephesians 4:8-10 says, therefore, when He ascended on high, He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men. And in saying that He ascended, it means that He had also descended into the lower regions of the earth.

He who descended is the one who also ascended far above the heavens, that He might fill all things.

In other words, when The Lord Jesus Christ swooped down from heaven for the 33 years that He was here, He healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind, and He set the captives free.

In fact, one of the first things He said when He began His earthly ministry was: the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind, and To set at liberty those who are oppressed.

In other words, the main reason why the Lord Jesus Christ swooped down from heaven, to the lower parts of the earth, was so that you and I could be set free from our captivity.

Therefore, today, I say to you: **Don’t Be Entangled Again**!

Instead, **Stand Fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free!**

**Because You Are Free, and Free Indeed!**

Thus, when you have done all you can do, then just stand!