

Galatians 5: Resist the Devil

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. "Death is the last station on the road to freedom" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). Christ has made us free by His death. To stand fast in "that liberty" is to stand fast in His death. A "yoke of bondage" is very specific, it is the kind of bondage we give to oxen. They are in bondage to us to plow our fields. This is the goal of every false prophet, to entangle you in a yoke of bondage. For example, a governor of the state needs to stand fast and not be entangled. It is expensive to run for office, every large donor is trying to entangle the politician in a yoke of bondage. This has become quite obvious during this pandemic. Why the mixed messages? In Florida the governor pressured the person posting data on the State to manipulate the data, they refused and were fired. "As a thief is disgraced when he is caught, so the people of Israel are disgraced—they, their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets. Jeremiah 2:26 The governor of Florida is disgraced. His denial of the dangers of this virus, his refusal to heed the warnings, his arrogance in thinking this wouldn't come there, and now his declaration that the schools need to be opened next month. He needs to be held accountable for all of his actions. Is he representing the people, or the business interests? **2** Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. Circumcision is only an example of how that would work. It signifies that you have "cut off your flesh" and it marks you as belonging to a "gang" or "clique" or "sect". But it does not in any way indicate that you belong to Christ. It is also what we refer to as "party politics". During this pandemic the mixed messages are a result of party politics. **But I said, "Alas, Sovereign Lord! The prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.'"**

[Jeremiah 14:13](#). This is getting ridiculous. The number of people infected in Florida is 3xs higher than it was when they were first warned and rejected the warning. These public officials keep making claims that they don't need to shut down, don't need masks, don't need social distancing, and these same states are now responsible for half of all the cases in the US. [3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law](#). If you get a gang sign tattooed to your body then you belong to that gang. You become a debtor to do everything the gang does. Just like circumcision meant you belonged to the Jewish sect and now needed to keep every single law. Keeping the law does not make you righteous, rather it is when you don't keep the law that you are unrighteous. So then, circumcision is a pledge to keep the entire law. [4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace](#). "He who honors Me I will honor". If you attempt to be justified apart from Christ you are not honoring Christ. [This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. Jeremiah 23:16](#) They said it would go away in July just like the flu. That was a false hope. They said this only hits the elderly, that was a false hope. They said that children didn't get sick, that was a false hope. They said they had it under control. They said we would get a vaccine, now we know that a vaccine won't work because the immunity disappears quickly. One false hope after the next. Clearly those who are speaking this are estranged from the truth, they are estranged from the word of God, and they are estranged from Christ. It would have required faith to take the necessary steps to contain this in January. Shutting down the borders, monitoring temperatures, quarantining, tracing the contacts of people. It would have taken courage to listen to the Lord at that time. Likewise to impose nationwide standards for everyone to abide by would

have been very unpopular. But, six to nine months later it would have been apparent that you were walking by faith and one with the Lord. **5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.** "Faith working through love". That is how we walk the narrow path that leads to life, the path that few people find. The Florida governor fired the person responsible for posting data because she wouldn't manipulate it. In other words he told her to lie about it, she said no, so he fired her. He must be held accountable. **7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?** This would be a great topic for a book. For example, did Hitler hinder people from obeying the truth? He didn't hinder Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he didn't hinder Ann Franke, he didn't hinder Oscar Schindler. If you stand fast in the death of Christ no one can hinder you. Why did the Germans become entangled with a yoke of bondage? They felt they needed a "strong leader". But Bonhoeffer exposed the lie, he pointed out all authority is from God. You cannot be a "strong" leader if you are not under the authority of God. Second, a leader must have a servant mentality. Leaders are not kings, they are servants. It is up to you to choose to be under the authority of God and to serve others, if you do, then no one will be able to hinder you from obeying the truth. **8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.** Look at Jesus. No one was able to hinder Him from obeying the truth. They could crucify Him, that is true, they could bring false charges and have a monkey trial, that is true, but through it all He was able to obey the truth. **9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.** Witness Lee was a master at this. If you read his books, and his writings are truly extensive, you would be hard pressed to find any leaven. He never published the lie about Watchman Nee being excommunicated because his "mother" was living with him. No, you had to hear him speak, and ten thousand people in the US did hear this, but when

the books came out it wasn't there. The only leaven I can find in print would be His exposition on the ground of the church. It is a master class on how to entangle others in a yoke of bondage. That teaching is 90-95% Biblical and true. It just takes a "little leaven" to leaven the whole lump. **10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.** "No other mind" refers to "faith working through love". If you don't have this confidence you would get angry, very angry. Many of those that protest for Black Lives Matter have expressed the feeling that people are not bearing their own judgement. For me, I can see a lot of progress in the last 50-60 years. I have also seen that the Lord is faithful, whatever a man sows that shall he reap. So I do have this confidence. 50 years ago when a politician spoke it wasn't uploaded to Youtube where you could easily find it. I was able to find a Youtube video of Florida's governor boasting about how these "prophets of doom" had told him that four weeks after reopening he would see a spike and here he was four weeks later no spike. However, two weeks after that there was a spike, and a few weeks later Florida was one of the very worst spots in the nation. **11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.** We are all familiar with this phenomenon. People are accusing the Black Lives Matter movement of supporting rioting and looting. There is a debate over face masks, one month they tell us they aren't necessary, the next month they are. Here Paul is preaching against circumcision, but didn't he circumcise Timothy? Paul's message was very consistent that salvation depends solely on faith in Jesus Christ's redemptive work. There is no suggestion anywhere in his writings that circumcision was necessary for salvation, or for any Christian. His circumcision of Timothy was about "not offending others with my liberty". Not that different from Hudson Taylor dressing the same way as the Chinese, or of any gospel preacher preaching

the gospel in the native language of those they are sent to. Besides it doesn't make any sense. The Judaizers are claiming you can't know what Paul teaches, because one day he is for circumcision the next day he isn't. If that were true then why are they persecuting him for teaching you don't need to be circumcised? Initially the word on masks was that they won't prevent you from getting infected. That is true and no one has changed that. Then they promoted them because they would limit the spread of the disease, meaning the person who wears the mask is less likely to infect others. Since then there have been studies done that show that although masks don't prevent the infection from spreading it does slow it down, and it does cause the severity of the infection to decrease. **12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!** Well, thank you Paul! Just when you think these apostles were too spiritual he goes and does something that I also do. How often when debating with some clown on the internet about whether or not masks violate your constitutional rights, or watching a video of some Karen trying to use white privilege to get her way have I thought "I wish those who trouble you would even cut themselves off". This isn't just Paul's word, it is also the word of God! Ha! There is still hope for me yet. **13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.** Oops. OK, what he just said is that if I cut that person off it would be an opportunity for the flesh. So when he wished they would cut themselves off, he was prohibiting himself from taking that action. It is OK to be the angry prophet like Jonah. It is OK to hate the things Nineveh and the King of Nineveh are doing. It is OK to wish they would cut themselves off. But, even so, we have been called to serve them in love. **14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** Jonah in the Old Testament really struggled with that. It seems he was more concerned about the animals and the trees than about his

neighbor. To be fair to him he did go to Nineveh, he did preach and they did repent. But, even at the very end God was still working on him over this last point, "to love your neighbor as yourself". He was angry that the tree had died and now he had to suffer in the blasting heat without any shade, yet at the same time he is sitting there hoping God will rain fire on Nineveh to destroy them. That is not the same mind as Christ, the mind to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". **15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!** Many people do not know what to think about Donald Trump. I think that this four years has been characterized by him "biting and devouring" many, many people. He insults a man who was a POW in the Vietnam war even though he himself dodged the draft. He insults the family of a man killed in the war. You could go on, and on, and on. Well, now, four years later we see him being consumed by books from Bolton who he fired and called an idiot and from his niece. He is being mocked on the internet. One person is lip synching his words, a comedian called Sarah Cohen, she does this on Tik Tok, and her mockery of him is consuming him. To me these last four years are a cautionary tale warning that if you bite and devour one another you need to beware lest you be consumed by one another. **16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.** Again, using Trump as an illustration, it seems he has no filter. He says whatever is on his mind. Even though you walk in the Spirit you may also have similar thoughts, the difference is that you won't fulfill them. Paul wished that those who were troubling you would cut themselves off, he had very similar thoughts to Trump. The difference is that Trump "cuts off" those who he thinks are troubling him, whereas Paul didn't fulfill that lust. **17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.** The more we walk by the Spirit the stronger our filter becomes, so that we don't fulfill the

lust of the flesh. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **19** Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, **20** idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, **21** envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is like rat poop. You might have a hard time discerning a false prophet. But, if you see any of these things you know there is a false prophet. Our current political situation is filled with hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, and heresies. **4** What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3) There was a teacher selling candy and soda to raise money for a trip to Europe at my son's school. The items she was selling were prohibited by the Chancellor. I brought the regulation to the attention of the principal because my son was eating this stuff and I could see the impact all the sugar had on him. The teacher was angry she couldn't get what she wanted and the principal let it slip that this was because of me. That is hypocrisy, it was because of the Chancellor's regulations which the principal and teacher had chosen to ignore. I would gladly give money for them not to sell anything, it is very disruptive to have kids skipping class every week to sell candy and soda. If they were clear where the money was going I suspect all the teachers would give them the money rather than have them selling junk food. They don't have because they don't ask and when they do ask they don't receive because their motive

is to spend it on their own pleasure. The same is true in politics. **4** You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4:4) The authorities that exist are from God. If the chancellor's regulation prohibits certain foods to be sold because they cause obesity and diabetes, well that is from God. These women have made themselves enemies of God. **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Once I was hiking in the adirondack mountains. I wasn't following a trail just enjoying the woods. I found an animal trail and followed it. I found some scat and realized it was from a big cat, a mountain lion. That night in my campsite this same mountain lion showed up and strongly expressed its displeasure at me following the trail. My point is we can "track" the Spirit. If you spot love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, or any of these you know you have found someone who is walking according to the Spirit. Someone who is Christ's. **5** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? (James 4:5a) Jealously! Brothers and sisters are flirting with the world? How shameful! Have a backbone. The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid. We have a promise Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. (James 4:5b) So stop allowing the enemies of God to push you around. What did God say to Job? **9** Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Yes! The Spirit God has caused to dwell in us does have an arm like God, it does have a voice that can thunder like God. The church is that arm, the church is that voice! We are the Body of Christ! God longs that the spirit He has caused to dwell in us would be revealed, pulling down strongholds and everything that exalts itself against the name of God. **6** But he gives us more grace.

That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." (James 4:6) There are snipers on all the rooftops looking for pride and arrogance. We need God's grace and we won't get it if we are proud, or self righteous. **24** And those *who are Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. This is very important. Satan takes on the appearance of an angel of light. So if you see the works of the flesh, you know it is a fleshly person who won't inherit the kingdom. If you see the works of the Spirit you know it is a spiritual person who belongs to Christ. But, what if you see both? Then you know it is a deceitful person, like Satan, attempting to appear as an angel of light. **7** Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7) Many times when we are under attack we want to rebel. On the other hand if we do not respond we feel we are being subservient to the devil. The key is to "submit yourself to God" first. Whatever happens, take it as coming from the Lord. Submit to it, receive it as from the Lord. Then, if the Lord says to "resist the devil" do so. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Church is not someplace we go Sunday morning, it is who we are all week. Many people enjoy the church service because it is like pumping them full of air, they "live in the Spirit". Well if that is the case, you need to also walk in the Spirit all week long. If that means standing up to Hitler, then do that. Stand fast, all week long, in the death of Christ. The woman who was fired because she refused to manipulate the data is an example of someone walking in the Spirit. Yes she got fired but she has credibility and only a few months later people trust her more than the governor and state. **8** Come near to God and he will come near to you. (James 4:8) If you are going to resist the devil there is one thing you have to do, nothing else is even remotely as important. Make sure you are standing with God. Think of yourself as the little lion cub and the Lord is the Lion. I hear the drums of war, where is God, let me get as close to Him as I can. **26** Let us not

become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Becoming conceited is like milk becoming sour. Provoking one another and envying one another is the smell. Some have recently called for tearing down monuments to George Washington, the father of this nation. That is a provocative statement. Another person said that July 4th is a celebration of white supremacy. That is an envious statement. You have to be extremely conceited to make such statements. This is not faith working in love. You will become "sour" or bitter if you do not have the assurance of faith that these ones will bear their own judgement. The gospel message includes the call to repentance from sins. **Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:8b-9)** Secondly, you may be rescuing a lamb from the wolves. But even if that is true don't be self righteous. You are a sinner saved by grace. **11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor? (James 4:11-12)** One knee jerk reaction is to slander those who are giving you trouble. Jesus is Lord, not you. If you act as a judge you are usurping the Lord, the one who can save and destroy. Warfare is about balance, if you are usurping the Lord you are unbalanced.