

Tangle

When the USS Cole was bombed in a Middle Eastern harbor, the external damage did not look that severe. But those in the damage control party saw an entirely different story inside the ship. Things were in such a tangled mess that the destruction simply could not be fully appreciated from topside. The ship was floating just fine, but men had to spend hours inside it cutting through torn metal and twisted pipes to get out the bodies of their dead comrades. Then there was much more work required in dry dock to get the ship back into operation.

Sometimes we feel that our life is just as messed up, and that our insides are just as seriously tangled. "Oh, what a tangle web we weave", doesn't only apply to telling lies. Our problems may not be so complex, but it is easy to become so frantic in our efforts to extricate ourselves that our life becomes completely knotted up. When that happens, we need some help getting relief.

We must have confidence in God's ability to rescue us. David had this confidence, for he wrote in Psalms 18:4-5,

"The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me."

God has that infinite wisdom and power to get us out of any situation that we get into.

I am pretty bad when it comes to getting things in a tangle, and have created some tremendous messes in my time. I am particularly horrible with string or cord of any sort. I can create the world's greatest backlash in seconds, even if I am not fishing. Usually we find that the only thing to do is to cut the knot apart. But as someone once said, "Never cut what you can untie."

I also have problems with cassette tapes. Recently when I had to take apart a cassette tape apart; the inner core fell out of one reel and left me a huge mound of snarled tape! I had to be very careful as I tried to straighten it all out. I had to keep from allowing any part of the knot to tighten up; I had to keep spreading it out and loosening it up, giving stress relief to the tape. Tangled strings or tapes are generally not yet knots, but loops within loops that tighten up on each other. Once the loops tighten up, it becomes just as good as a knot. It is the tension, rather than the confusion that is really the problem. If you know enough about the situation, you know which strings to pull to unravel it all.

On a more global scale, the world is like a huge ball of tangled string. Jesus was sent to deal with the mess. Man's attempts to straighten it out just keep tightening up the knots; only Jesus can find the ends and the loops that have been snagged and work the problems out. We must relax in the grace provided through His blood and let Him work out things for our good.

We must see that it is good to be entangled in the right way. Our word strength comes from a word signifying twisted together. If God is our strength, then we must have our lives entwined with Him. Our lives are weak, but like the grapevine entangled in the limbs of the mighty oak, we can be secure with God.