

The Gospel in Disney: #5 - *Tangled*

“I’ve Got a Dream”

Scripture: Romans 6:11-14 (to be read during the sermon)

Video Clip: Tangled - When Will My Life Begin - Mandy Moore

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=je4nDvNJXsg>

2:21 minutes

PP#1: Sermon Series: The Gospel in Disney - *Tangled*

Sermon #5: “I’ve Got a Dream”

“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” -Romans 6:14

The Gospel in Disney. *Tangled*. “I’ve Got a Dream.” “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” -Romans 6:14.

PP#2: *Image of Rapunzel’s full tower with Rapunzel in the window.*

Rapunzel is stuck in her tower. She is kept there, her guardian-mother tells her, for her own good and safety. Out there the world is full of darkness and evil. Out there people will use her and the secret renewing power of her hair, for their own greedy and selfish benefits. But in the tower she is safe. Mother Gothel will take care of her.

She believes it. And she tries to be content. But after a while, the daily routine gets rote. She tries to be creative, but she is stuck. “When will my life begin?” Is this all there ever will be?

PP#3: “I’ve Got a Dream”

1. Stuck in our good life

Right at the very start I see a Gospel message. Rapunzel’s story connects with us because we can identify with her. It’s not that we are stuck in towers. But we know what it means to have our lives feel stuck.

We fill our days with activities, going through the motions. And most of them are good. But underneath it all, a nagging question persists: What is the point of my life? What is my significance? Is this all there is, a daily grind keeping me busy, with no long-term plot for my life?

Rapunzel feels deep inside there has to be more. But she doesn’t know what we know. She missed the prolog we get to see at the beginning of the movie.

PP#4: *Mosaic image of the royal family with baby Rapunzel.*

A king and queen were expecting a baby, but there were complications in the birth. So, they sought out the magic, healing flower to save her. And the baby, Rapunzel, is born with hair that retains the magic renewing power of the flower.

Now, time for some plot. Gothel had been using the flower to stay forever young. So she steals the baby, hides her away in a hidden tower, and uses her hair to stay young. Gothel, you see, is not her mother. The tower is not her home. And her daily routine is not her life. She has a lost identity as the missing princess.

There is a prolog to our lives, too. We have been born with an identity. We belong to God. God has created us with a purpose for our lives.

But as we live into our lives, we are kidnaped by sin. Our world becomes closed.

Now, we believe our lives are basically fine. They are filled with good things. We should be happy.

And here I think Disney captured the genius of our towers. We believe the lie that this life is for our own good. It's best for us. Just keep on going. The prison we live in, we believe is best for us.

But down deep we ask, when will my life begin?

I had a wake-up moment when I was a teenager. I walked away from my faith upbringing. I denied that there was a God who loved me or who had a claim on my life, who made me for a reason. I couldn't prove it, so I shut the door.

But my wake up moment was that when I walked away from God, I walked into a prison cell. Oh it looked all nice and attractive. But I couldn't stop asking, "What's the point?"

Have you ever had that kind of a wake-up moment? It's not that life's bad. Actually, it is quite good. But so what? My education, my resources, my life's journey...for what?

And I heard the song deep inside, "When will my life begin?"

PP#5: *Image of Flynn Ryder climbing up the tower.*

Disney was originally going to name this movie Rapunzel. But they discovered, after releasing *The Princess and the Frog*, that boys really didn't want to go watch a princess movie. So they changed the name and developed a strong male character: adventure-loving, risk-taking, funny and smooth Flynn Ryder. Flynn, however, is a thief. He robbed the palace and took the princess crown for ransom. Then, as he's running from the soldiers, he discovers the tower.

Although Rapunzel doesn't trust him—he must be bad if he is from the outside—she makes a bargain. She will give him back the crown that she had hidden if he would take her to see the floating lanterns.

PP#6: *Image of the floating lanterns off in the sky.*

You see, ever since she could remember, thousands of paper lanterns mysteriously filled the sky on her birthday each year. She was so intrigued by them, and she desperately wanted to find out what they were all about.

It was soon her 18th birthday, but Mother Gothel continued to refuse to let her out of the tower. So, in her absence, Flynn agrees to take her to the city to see the lanterns.

Rapunzel's feet touch grass for the first time. Then water, then running all around. It felt amazing to be out! Freedom!

But then, her guilty conscience kicked in. She was blatantly disobeying her mother. And Disney just so excellently captures her good character, her guilt, her inner turmoil. "I can't believe I did this!"

Video Clip: Tangled - Rapunzel's Conflict [1080p HD]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4JxmGel1GI>

2:02 minutes

“I am a despicable human being!” I love that! “Crush her soul?” “Like a grape.”

PP#7: *Image of Rapunzel all wrapped up in her hair.*

But don't you feel like that? Like Flynn says, we're at war with ourselves.

For me, when I really felt the purposelessness of life without God, I finally gave Him my heart and decided to trust in Him for my life. Give it a try! I highly recommend it!

But you know what? When I did, everything didn't get miraculously perfect. All the same problems were there. They didn't magically just go away. Choosing Jesus for your life doesn't mean you just get everything you think you want. It means choosing to live God's way, which is very different than what we think we want, but it also means finding a deep satisfaction and centeredness.

And you know what else? I still had all the same temptations and habits. As I lived for God, I still had that inner war to live for myself.

Paul talks about this. In Romans 7 he wrote that as a Jesus follower, he was all tangled up.

PP#8: Romans 7:15-25

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do....For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing....So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

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PP#9: “I've Got a Dream” [*There will be 3 of these.*]

1. Stuck in our good life
2. Tangled between old and new self

Even when you leave the tower and choose the new adventure, you are tangled in that inner conflict. Every day we leave the tower, we are at war with ourselves.

The Gospel answer to our torn reality is the good news that when we choose to step out and pursue Jesus, He gives us the inner power to choose the right. Our desire for good can win. It's not easy, but it is possible.

And here in Rapunzel, Disney shows a willful choice, a tenacity to keep pushing on. “Don't make me use this!” she threatens Flynn with a frying pan. She will proceed.

Walking with Jesus does take a daily willful choice. It is a continual realignment under His plan for your life.

Paul also talked about that, too. We need to be vested in our own walks. It requires disciplined decision making. But the ability to win comes because we have Jesus. Romans 6.

PP#10: Romans 6:11-14

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

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Let’s talk about this a minute. How do we do this? How do we count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God? How do we not let sin reign in us? How do we not let sin be our master?

I need to leave the movie here a minute and pull out some biblical principles to help us. You see, in Disney, it is always a choice the main character makes, pulling on her own strength and determination, and everything turns out well in the end. Yeah, but that’s Disney. That’s the way we all wish it were. I, however, am in real life.

PP#11: Tangled between old and new self - Biblical principles for leaving the tower

1. Get rid of excuses

I see four biblical steps that keep us heading away from the tower, from the pull back.

The first is to get rid of our excuses. Now that’s hard! The Bible calls for honesty.

Jesus tells the story of a man who hosted a huge banquet. People he invited didn’t come. When asked why, it says, “And they began to make excuses.” One got married, one bought some live stalk, another some property. Excuses flowed, and they missed the banquet.

Listen to me: there will always be good reasons to go back. Don’t try to evaluate based on merit, because we can do an excellent job of making what we want to be the answer to sound good. And I have found from experience a truth I pass on: nothing great will come when you take the easy way. Nothing great comes from taking the easy way. At some point you have to get honest, stop making excuses, get fed up with the tower, and determine not to go back.

PP#12: Tangled between old and new self - Biblical principles for leaving the tower

1. Get rid of excuses

2. Make the break

Two: make the break. We are at war with ourselves. So make the break and starve the carnal man within you. No, it won’t seem to be very effective right away. That carnal man seems strong. But when you feed the good in you and starve the sin, it’s power will grow weaker over time.

Whatever your temptation is right now, whatever your pull back, choose to go to bed today without feeding it. It is too strong for you to eradicate all at once. But over time, by the grace God puts within you, weaken it through starvation. You don’t have to slay the giant today. You only have to keep it from winning today.

This is why you need the church. You need other Christians around you to talk you through

this, to cheer you on, to hold you accountable, to get you through today. Lean on somebody.

PP#13: Tangled between old and new self - Biblical principles for leaving the tower

1. Get rid of excuses
2. Make the break
3. Fill the void

Three: fill the void. Here's the great lie of sin: we think we can simply turn it off, and we're done. But sin is too crafty. Evil has a will. We're kind of like a big pool. We scoop out some of the bad stuff and throw it away. But the problem is that more bad stuff fills it in. It simply gets replaced with something else that is unhealthy. One of my good friends quit smoking and gained 20 pounds. Do you know what I mean? I choose to watch less TV, but then I spend more time playing online games. We have to fill the void with something better.

Let's call this the Gospel of Replacement. If you are not feeding the carnal man, how are you using that food to enrich the good man? Don't just choose to resist...choose to replace. Replace TV time with spending time with your family. Get out of your chair and go somewhere else. Do a project that helps someone. When your anger flares and you want to cut someone down, catch yourself and choose to speak a word of encouragement instead. Give the money away that you were going to spend on yourself, and experience the joy of giving instead of the joy of taking. Don't just stop hanging with that certain person, build a relationship with someone else. Sign up to mentor a youth! 1 Peter 4:10 "Each one should use whatever give he has to serve others" The Gospel of Replacement.

PP#14: Tangled between old and new self - Biblical principles for leaving the tower

1. Get rid of excuses
2. Make the break
3. Fill the void
4. Take the next step

And finally, take the next step. Keep working on the next thing. Your nemesis, you see, will show up again in a different costume. You may make progress against spending your *time* selfishly but find you are tempted to start accumulating more *things*. My victory in giving generously to a missionary may lead to a desire to eat out more. It's amazing how our core problems are such disguise artists. So, the answer is to keep working on the next thing. Continue to grow. Be persistent. John Wesley put it famously, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, to all the people you can, in all the places you can, as long as ever you can." Keep going, and you will find each little step takes you farther and farther away from your tower.

So, Rapunzel is taking step after step away from her tower. Flynn is trying to get her to turn back. So he takes her to a pub filled with criminals and ruffians to show her how scary and bad real people can be. But, in the midst of the conflict, she calls out her dream, and the whole room changes.

Video Clip: Walt Disney Tangled - I've Got a Dream

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXIJUDuinng>

3:48 minutes

I showed that whole song simply because it's my favorite.

PP#15: A clip from the “I have a dream” sequence.

But the point here is that we all have a dream, a dream for more out of life. A dream for more than who we have become, or where we find ourselves right now. And throughout the rest of the movie, all the outlaws start to listen to their inner calling, and begin to change.

I’ve got a dream. I’ve got a dream for my life to have real purpose. I’ve got a dream for my influence to be to bring good and make a difference. I’ve got a dream for that aching in my heart to be replaced with real joy. I’ve got a dream for a different future than where my path is headed right now. I’ve got a dream to be who I am supposed to be.

One more clip. Rapunzel goes to see the lanterns. She falls in love with Flynn, and vice versa...come on, it’s Disney. But Mother Gothel tricks her again, and she ends up back in the tower, resigned and defeated.

Then, as she is processing it all, it clicks. She puts it all together. *She* is the lost princess. Gothel had been *using* her. It was all a farce. And she comes to realize her true identity.

Video Clip: Tangled - Realization

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpUUa--sQG4>

2:57 minutes (starting at 1:18 and playing through the end)

Rapunzel, learning her true identity, determines to never live in that false life again. She makes a willful choice to refuse her captor. Her realized identity sets her future.

PP#16: “I’ve Got a Dream”

1. Stuck in our good life
2. Tangled between old and new self
3. Your true identity uncovers the lie

That’s our last takeaway. Listen to that inner dream. It’s singing down deep inside. Remember your true identity as a child of the one true God. And make a willful choice against the lie. It comes not just from yourself, but from your identity as God’s child. That’s who you are.

You have a new future. Yes, your life may be a tangled mess, and the tower keeps calling you back. But you have within you an identity given by God, an identity for a different life, an identity for a new future.

Now, there’s more to the movie. The climax comes when both Rapunzel and Flynn choose to give themselves up for the other, and through that, amazingly, everything works out. Shocked?

PP#17: “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” -Romans 6:14

But for you, there is a word of hope, too. Romans 6:14, “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” Say it with me. “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

One more time: “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

That’s our dream!

Amen.