

**BAGGAGE**  
**Baggage Claim**  
Heb 12:1-3

Play video.....

We've got a lot of bags in your lives.

Things that kind of weight us down that we know that we just gotta kind of deal with.

**(Put on a backpack & try to hold a lot of bags)** - Can you imagine trying to go through life like this?

Going through life weighted down, burdened?

But, the physical bags that I'm holding represent a lot of our emotional baggage, our relationship baggage, our work baggage.

Now, your wife is not a bag, alright?

But it's all of these cares and burdens and issues in life that, you know, weight us down.

And so we're going to take a journey over the next several weeks and I double-dog dare you to not miss a Sunday, okay?

Don't ... I'm going to ask you to be an abnormal Christian.

Because today, today, normal Christianity is, "You know, if we're there once every three or four weeks, we're good. It's good."

Can you imagine if I was going to teach you algebra and you showed up once every four days to class for algebra? Just come!

And we're going to take a journey that's going to grow you and help you get free of some baggage.

And help you develop in your walk in your life to grow free and to walk in the freedom and liberty that Christ has paid for you.

We tend to live in **baggage denial**

**First, for some their baggage has become part of their identity.** It's who you are.

Some of you are known as grumpy. Now, no one told me that but I'm just saying.

Some of you are known as angry and short-tempered.

Some of you are known for ... you always carry around that wound and that hurt, and it's part of who you are.

Some of you teenagers, you know how to push your parents' button.

It's just like, "Here's the code." Boop, boop, boop, boop ... You know?

And you know what gets after them.

You were not born to fail.

You were not born to carry baggage.

Jesus came so that you wouldn't have to carry the bags of life.

**Secondly, for others they can't imagine life without their baggage.**

You just can't imagine life without it.

And some of you are like, "Well, I don't need this stress, it's just part of the job!

But you can do your job and not carry the baggage of stress.

You can go through life carefree, baggage-free.

But we've gotta make sure that we're not hanging onto it ... to that pain, to that burden, to that stress.

And some of you remind me of a fence in a tree....

**A barbed-wire fence ... look at this tree.**

The barbed-wire was stretched around the tree and the tree continued to grow.

And now the barbed-wire is a part of the tree.

And some of you look and go, "It's a part of me. It's just who I am.

I've gotta learn to live with it. I've gotta learn to deal with it."

**!!!!No! Let's learn to let Jesus deal with it!!!!**

Let's learn to let Christ do His work in us and walk in victory over that.

**Thirdly, many don't even realize that they're carrying the extra weight.**

"I kinda like this backpack on my back." It's been there and it becomes comfortable.

And you don't even realize you're carrying it.

And one of the things that I realize when I get away on vacation - I realize, "Whoa,... you've been carrying some things.

You've got some things there that you need to dial in."

It's kind of like this weight.

Lisa, come here. You might want to have both hands free! Lisa ... that's 25 pounds. You got it? Do you have it? "No! Not very well." Huh?  
Well Lisa, here's your goal. I want you to carry that around for the next seven days!  
Okay? Now ... if I gave this 25 pounds to you and strapped it to your back ... it would weight you down.  
But some of you are carrying not a physical weight, but emotional weights.  
Hurts and wounds from the past.  
Something your Dad said or your Mom didn't do or an absentee father or something that maybe happened to you as a child.  
And you're carrying those burdens and weights and that's not the plan that God has for you.

Jesus said in **(Lk 4:18)**

It says Jesus is going to declare his mission here on this Earth.  
Jesus came to set us free from our baggage.

\*\*\*So we don't have to wear this stuff. (take off backpack and throw it down)

\*\*\*We don't have to go through life with this stuff

\*\*\*We can get rid of it and live the free life that Christ came and died for us to live in.

The goal is that when we get to the end of this journey, "Whew! I can breathe! I'm free in Jesus' name!"

What does it say in **Luke 19:10**?

John 8:36: *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

**Galatians 5:1** ... "*Plant your feet firmly therefore. Within the freedom that Christ has won for us. And do not let yourselves be caught again in the shackles of slavery.*"

And see ... that's freedom!

Now ... on January 1, 1863 ... our president, Abraham Lincoln, signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed all slaves in the United States ... that they were freed from the bondage of slavery. They were all declared free.

Now, there were some plantation owners that didn't tell their slaves of the news.

It wasn't like modern media. "Hey! Hey! Hey! It says on CNN, on Fox, we're free!"

It was slow in trickling out and getting the message out.

Other plantation owners came to their slaves and they said, "Hey, by law, you are free."

But surprisingly, a high percentage of the slaves stayed in their bondage.

Stayed in their shackles because of their fear of what was on the outside. "Could I make it?"

They were so beat down ... they were so belittled ... they were so demoralized, that they had nothing in them to walk into the freedom that Christ had paid for them.

And what I think is sad is when we see Christians ... who Jesus gave His life so they could have freedom ... and they still are walking around holding baggage and going, "It's okay. I got it. I got it."

It's like we're doin' Jesus a favor, okay?

\*\*\*\*No. Let go of it and let Him carry it and let Him carry those burdens.

It says in **2 Corinthians 3:17**: *Now the Lord is the spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There is freedom.*

Heb 12:1-3

The Living Bible puts it this way ... it says, "*Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back; especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up.*"

**Living Free**

The first step in walking and living in the freedom that Christ wants for us is **the fulfillment of God's plan for our lives is based upon our ability or our inability to run.**

You're in a race

And if you're going to race ... if any of you have run track or triathlons, you basically want to wear the least amount of clothing possible to run this marathon

You don't want anything that's going to hind your progress.

But when we grab onto the bags of life and we hang on to these things and I'm going to carry this, and I should pick this up, and I carry these various things ... then what happens is, we end up not attaining to where God wants us to go.

And people say, "Well, why didn't God do it? I don't understand!"

You see, it's up to us to do our part. It's not 'God or nothing.' 'Cause if that's your attitude, 'God or nothing,' you'll get nothing!

Let me help you process that. If you take the attitude it's God or nothing ... you'll end up with nothing! Why?

Because God expects us to operate in faith.  
Without faith, it's impossible to please Him.  
Faith is saying this: "I'm going to act upon my beliefs.  
And so God wants us to act upon our belief system according to the Word of God.

The children of Israel ... it was God's perfect ordained will for them to go into the Promised Land.  
But every one that was in the original batch ... they had to wander in the desert for 40 years until those doubters died off. Because why?

\*They believed their circumstances more than they believed the Word of God.

They believed what the world was telling them ... "You can't do it.

You're grasshoppers in their sight. You're not big enough."

And they were afraid. They carried the baggage of fear.

And I don't know about you, but fear has stopped me many of times from doing what I know I was supposed to do.

I held onto that it and it became an anchor to me and it began to sink me.

\*\*If you're sinking, let go!!! Let go of the anchor!

\*\*Don't jump into the water hanging onto the anchor! It's going to do one thing! It's going down.

\*\*And that's what your baggage will do.

Things that hinder us:

poor self image, defeatist attitude, fear of rejection, fear of failure, perfectionism, procrastination, lack of self control, negative attitude, indecision.

Don't know. What's your baggage?

What are the things that hinder you? What's the sin that entangles you?

\*\*I want you to take a journey to freedom.

\*\*I want you to take a journey to freedom and in about six weeks ... when we get done ... you're going to be living, running, and fulfilling God's purpose in your life like never before.

There is a race that is set out for you. There is a race that has been marked for you.

Now, you say, "But you don't know what I've gone through. I can't do it ... what God's called me to do.

You just don't know what I'm bearing ... you don't know what I'm going through."

Well, you think your story is bad? Let me see if you can top this one.

**Abraham Lincoln.** You've heard it in history class. Let me refresh you! At age 9, his Mom dies. He attended one year of formal school in education because his family needed him to work. At age 20 he was fired from his job as a store clerk. In 1832 he ran for State Legislature and was defeated ... he came in 8th out of 13 people that were running. Loser! One year later, his business failed after his partner died. He spent the next 17 years paying off that debt. 1834 ... a year later he was elected to the Illinois State Legislature ... there's a win! And then the following year his sweetheart, his fiancée of four years, dies. He had a nervous breakdown and spent six months in bed. A year after that he was defeated for the Illinois House Speaker. He was married and had four children ... his four-year old died. He was defeated for nomination to Congress. Finally he was elected to Congress in 1846. Two years later he lost reelection. In 1849 he was rejected for the position of the U.S. Land Officer. In 1854 he was defeated in his attempt for the U.S. Senate. Two years later he was defeated for the nomination as Vice President. And two years after that he was defeated again for the U.S. Senate. Finally at age 51 he was elected as the 16th President of the United States.

You think your life is bad? He fulfilled his destiny! He transformed the United States of America.

You say, "Well, he didn't live very long."

He fulfilled his purpose and his destiny, I believe, on this Earth.

And he's hailed as one of the greatest presidents ever in our short, brief history as a nation.

we must let go of our baggage in order to grab hold of God's promises. You can't get what God wants you to have if you're hanging onto this other stuff. You've got to let go to say, "God I want to let You give me whatever it is You want me to have." [Amen!] Okay?

If you want a good marriage, you're going to have to let go of pornography. You want a good marriage? You're going to have to let go of those offenses and those hurts. And your husband's not perfect ... your wife isn't perfect. You've got to forgive them and you've got to move forward. You want the blessings and favor of God? "I want to live blessed!" Then you've gotta let go of that buying/spending habit which just drives you into debt. You want to be healthy and you want to be in shape? Then you've got to let go of that wound, that pain, that you eat not because you're hungry, but you're eating to try and mask that baggage, that pain that's on the inside. God wants you to be free.

**Philippians 3:13** *“Brothers I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it, but one thing I do, forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me Heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

**Now, here’s the effects of baggage:** If you hang on to these bags and you grab onto these things and issues in life ... here’s what’s going to happen.

**Number one – baggage distracts us.** It distracts us.

We’re so busy about taking care of the baggage we forget to fulfill the will of God.

How many times have you and I missed an opportunity to share Christ because we’re in a hurry?

“We got this bag. And we’ve gotta take care of it.

And we’ve gotta get our kids to soccer. We’ve got to get this other one to dance.”

And we’re so in a hurry and, “Oh, there’s a person in need.” “I’ll come back.”

**It diminishes our pace,** slows us down

**It depresses our mind**

It’s a weight, it’s a burden we carry.

**It divides our focus**

We get distracted in this world.

**It drains our energy.**

How much emotional, mental, spiritual energy would we have if we weren’t carrying the weight of this world on our shoulders?

**It dilutes our faith.** It dilutes our faith.

It waters us down.

We start to believe more of what the world says than what The Word says.

**It derails our plans.**

**It damages our relationships.**

**It destroys our lives.**

**It depletes our walk with God** and it detours us from the course of life.

So let’s talk about *Baggage Claim*.

**The first thing we have to do is we must identify our bags.**

When you’re at the airport and the carousel is going around and around ... God bless you who buy black bags. Everyone has a black bag!!!!!!

But a pink polka dot bag - Very rarely you might think it’s odd, ... I don’t care.

Nobody else picks up this bag. They go, “That’s not my bag!”

“This bag right here ... this one right here ... this bag is my bag.”

Nobody else is going to pick up a pink Polka dot bag.

What you people with black bags have to do is you have to look at the tag ... “Is this mine?”

Oops, that’s not mine. That’s mine. Oh, that’s mine!” And then, whoop, let it go around again!

What’s your baggage? I dare you to ask the Holy Spirit.

I dare you to humble yourself in God’s presence and go, “God? What is my baggage? What is the sin?”

What are the things that hinder me? What are the things that entangle me?”

Now I think, well ... if you don’t know ... ask your spouse or a family member!

They’ll help you get the list going! I’m sure they can help you out there.

David said in **Psalms 139:23-24** *“Search me O God and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

**First, You can’t be healed or set free from what you acknowledge doesn’t exist.**

You have to acknowledge that it exists.

**Secondly, we take responsibility for the baggage regardless of where it came from.**

I don’t care where it came from.

You say, “Well my Dad gave it to me.

My teacher in third grade. She did it. She made me!”

And you hang onto that wound and that offense.

Now, what happened to you, there’s nothing you can change.

But what you do with what happened to you will either keep you in bondage or bring you into freedom and liberty.

We’ve got to own it. We’ve got to own our decision that we took ... if someone gave it to us ... and yes it was a bad piece of baggage.

But we have to own it that we hung onto it and we have to decide to let go of it.

**Thirdly, we must make a decision to deal with it.**

We've got to cast off those things that weight us down and entangle us.  
A horticulturist was asked, "When is the best time to plant a tree?" You know the person asking was thinking 'summer,' 'winter', 'fall', 'spring'?  
When is the best time to plant a tree? His reply? "Twenty years ago!"  
That's the best time!  
Some of you have said, "Tomorrow, I'm going to deal with my baggage.  
Tomorrow, I'm ... tomorrow is a new day."  
No. Make today your new day.  
Or maybe you're trying to quit smoking or something and you say, "Well, I already had a cigarette this morning, so today ..."  
No.  
Make today ... this is my new starting line. "I'm starting over. I'm starting fresh. I'm going to deal with those things."

**Fourthly, we ask for God's strength in laying it aside.**

If you try and run this race on your own in your own ability and your own strength ... the prayer every morning should be, "Dear God ... you see this bag. Help me to lay it down.  
God, I need Your strength and Your help and I need Your grace.  
God, I'm going to leave it here today, okay? Help me not to go pick it back up." [Amen!]  
What's wrong with praying and saying, "God, I struggle with anger.  
God I struggle with a negative attitude.  
People say things and I go, 'Well the plane's going to fall out of the sky.' 'Look the sun's out ... it's going to snow later.'" And you're just Nellie Negative.  
And "God, help me to not be negative today. Help ... Let the Holy Spirit assist me in life."

**1Peter 5:6-7**, Amplified Version: *Casting the whole of your care; all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all, on Him. For He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.*

**Psalms 116:1-7** *"I love the Lord for He heard my voice. He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned His ear to me I will call on Him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me. The anguish of the grave came upon me. **I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.** Then I called on the name of the Lord. Oh Lord, save me. And the Lord was gracious and righteous. Our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the simple-hearted. When I was in great need, **He saved me.** Be at rest once more oh my soul for the Lord has been good to you!"*

\*\*\*\*\***Rest in that!** Spend time with Him.

And lastly, **we trust God to restore what was lost.** We trust God to restore what was lost.

It says in **Psalms 71:20**: *"Though you made me see troubles many and bitter You will restore my life again from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up."*

Whatever you are facing, whatever you are going through, it might seem like months and years of heartache, but God will redeem the time! God will make up that time.

I look at Abraham Lincoln. He was 51 when he finally stepped into his destination that God had for him.

And I challenge you to step into your destination and run the race and the course that God has for you.

And don't let anything limit or hinder you. Amen?

**God never replaces with something less but always better!**

Will you stand to your feet? Let me pray for you. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I pray and I thank you for each and every person here. Lord, show each of us the areas, the weights, the burdens, the things that we've carried that have held us down, that have hindered us in our walk and our run in this life. Lord, whatever it is, Holy Spirit would you just gently speak unto our hearts today, tonight, throughout this week. And Lord help us each to begin to deal with our bags, our issues, and our burdens. And God we ask for Your Help. And I pray for each and every person here ... that they'd walk in the freedom and the liberty that Jesus Christ has bought and paid for them. And I declare freedom in their lives. Freedom in their thought life. Freedom in their heart. Freedom in their relationships. Freedom in their emotions. I declare ... proclaim healing, and victory, and freedom ... in Jesus' name. Amen!