

BAGGAGE

The Bags of Cold Love

Matt 24:10-12

Part 7

Hello everyone and thanks to you all for joining us either in person or by live streaming as we look at Part 7 of pastor Don's series on baggage. Today's message he's entitled Cold Love and I'm excited to share it with you as he ministers at our first ever Marriage retreat today in Shiphewana! So if you look around and see lots of empty chairs that's one of the reasons the other reason is that I do my best to make Pastor Don look good cause I'm not nearly as good at bringing the word as he is, but I still enjoy filling the pulpit when no one else can because God has been so good to us that I just can't help but tell you how he can help you all to be all he wants you to be!! I trust today's message will be another one of those oh boy moments for all of you listening! So having said that our focus in the scripture today will be Matt. 24:10-12 but I'd like to go back and set the stage for this scripture by starting at verse 3. Jesus and the disciples

If I were to ask you about the love in your heart how would you describe it?

Growing, becoming softer, brighter, more daring, and more visible

Or more discriminating, calculating, less vulnerable, less available

Why is that important? Because OUR Christianity is only as real as our love

If there is a decrease in our ability to love, it could be evidence that you are carrying around the baggage of cold love!!! Can anyone else say Amen???

Guard Against Unforgiveness

(Mat 24:12)

A major area of baggage is in the area of church relationships

Satan knows a church divided against itself cannot be effective in Kingdom building!

The Church may have small victories but to win our city, county, nation or the world Jesus is looking to raise up a united church!! Can anyone say Amen?

The proof of this kind of church will be its commitment to love

And because of that, true Christian love, is under Satanic attack!!!

There is no spiritual unity and no lasting victory without love

Love is a passion for oneness – Bitterness and self-centeredness is characterized by a lack of love

Cold love is a demonic stronghold – and today it is increasingly more common

It shuts down the power of prayer

It disables the flow of healing

It cripples any outreach

Catch this and you can message this out; Where there is the baggage of hardened unforgiveness in a person or church the demonic world has unhindered access

The Scriptures warns that a root of bitterness will defile many

(Heb 12:15)

Do you know what bitterness is? Bitterness is unfulfilled revenge....

In this broken world filled with broken people we all will, at some point, be hurt by someone

But if we fail to react in love and forgiveness it will rob our hearts of the capacity to love

Bitterness is the most visible symptom of the baggage of cold love – we must repent of it and forgive those who have hurt us

What if God allows painful experiences in our life to teach us how to love our enemies.....

You can't really love an enemy until they have violated you

So many people are swept away in bitterness with no hope

But you and I, as Christians, have been given the answer to our pain – **love!!!!**

As we embrace God's love and begin to walk in Christlike forgiveness we are actually laying down the baggage of cold love

And because of that we will possess more of the love of Christ than before

Testimonials about cold love!! Austin and Tia Brooks.

Love Without Commitment is Not Love

(Matt 24:10-12)

Understand this – there is no such thing as love without commitment

The measure of someone's love is always found in the depth of their commitment to others

How many times have I heard some one say "I loved once but I got hurt?"

Or "I loved the church once but they used me"

When a person withdraws their commitment from a relationship they are also withdrawing their love

Its not someone's commitment that grows cold – its their love

When commitment is shallow love is shallow

When commitment is shallow you will be easily offended

(Mat 18:7)

Stumbling blocks in life are inevitable

In your walk there will be times when even the best of people will have bad days
People never stumble over boulders – it's the little stones that trip us up
Have you ever stumbled over someone else's weakness or sin?
If so did you get back up and continue to love them as you did before
Or did that fall cause you to withdraw from walking in love
To keep the quality of love in your heart you have to forgive those who cause you to fall
Every time you don't your heart hardens toward them and towards God.
You may think you are still open to God but the Bible is clear (1 Jn 4:20)

You may not like what someone has done but you do not have the option to stop loving
Them - Love is our only choice

I love pastor Don's commitment to this principle. Whenever he gets into it with ones of us elders he's quick to point out that neither one of us is going anywhere, like none of us is gonna walk away from what God has called us to do here at FFM so we just as well work through whatever we're upset about and move on!! Cause unforgiveness and pouting isn't allowed!! Lets just deal with it and move on!! That's a great principal for the church as a whole!! If we as leaders could impart just one gift to each of you I think this concept would serve us all VERY well!! Amen????

What do we mean by love?

By love I mean compassion that is empowered by faith

When I love someone I have made a decision to stand with them no matter what
Love can be tough but it must also be gentle, sensitive, open and persistent
God will be tough when He needs to be, but beneath His firmness is a river of love waiting to spring into action
If we really love we must be committed

We need people who love us, who are committed to us in spite of our imperfections!!

Is there anyone here who has arrived?? If so you're reading a different bible than I am cause my bible says we ALL fall short at times!!

The fullness of Christ will not come without Christians standing with each other in love
How frail are the excuses people use to justify withdrawing from each other
We need to overcome our hang ups about our commitment to each other – it's the devil's play ground
We say "Well as soon as I find a church that believes like I do then I will be committed"
If you think the kingdom is built on how you believe you are wrong

The kingdom is built on relationships

Doctrines help define those relationships

I am not anti-doctrine, but I am against empty doctrine that seem like virtues but are simply excuses that justify the baggage of cold love

The Greatest Commandment (Mk 12:30-31)

When you love God, your love for others will actually be like your love for God

The more we love God with no conditions, the more we will love others with no conditions
If we want to be like Christ we have to be as committed to His people as He is

The Kingdom of God is most perfectly revealed in our relationships with one another

If Christ accepts us while we are imperfect we have to accept others
People who really possess the kingdom of God are those who overcome the obstacles of each other's faults

They help each other become what God has called them to be – the living body of Jesus Christ

Remember the goal of putting down the baggage of cold love is to see the oneness of Christ's body revealed

We all will be challenged in this

But if we stay the course we will discover the height and depth, the length and breadth of Christ's love

We will become a body filled and flooded with God Himself