

Baggage!

by David Daniel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming the baggage of unforgiveness, prejudice, and fear by forgiving others, trusting in God's power, and learning contentment and being at peace with God.

Duration: 35:31

Scripture: Joshua 7:16

Topics: "Possessions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of the Israelites' conquest of the city of Jericho and their subsequent defeat at the city of Ai. The speaker highlights the role of a man named Achan, who took forbidden items from Jericho and hid them in his tent. This act of disobedience resulted in the loss of 36 lives in the battle against Ai. The speaker then transitions to discussing the importance of stewardship and laying up treasures in heaven rather than accumulating worldly possessions. The sermon concludes with a call to release personal baggage and burdens to the Lord, using the example of a handicapped girl named Abby who finds joy in singing in the choir despite her physical limitations.

Transcript

Well, just so that you know that you can feel confident if you're going through Hawaii, they will check your baggage and leave you a note that they've been in there. Now, we haven't missed anything yet, but it does kind of make you kind of wonder because when you read this, it says, During the inspection, your bag and its contents may have been searched for prohibited items. At the completion of the inspection, the contents were returned to your bag.

That's nice. It's always good to hear that what they take, they put back. Anyway, baggage.

What's the definition of baggage? Well, you look it up in the dictionary, and it says, What you use to carry personal items in while you travel. That's definition number one. Definition number two, past experiences or long-held ideas regarded as burdens and impediments.

Let me read that second one again. The first one, you know, that's just we imagine and are convinced, yeah, that is the definition. But the second one, past experiences or long-held ideas regarded as burdens and impediments.

Regardless of our age or sex or our life, we have the potential to have baggage. And baggage is very inconvenient. You know, you travel, you've got baggage that you are concerned about and did it get handled correctly, etc.

But I want us to think about the reality that Christ came to help deal with our problem of baggage. Isaiah 61 verse 1 says, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach the gospel or good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Said it, liberty to captives, the opening of the prison to those that are bound. People can be captives of baggage. They can have issues dealing with baggage that keeps them in prison.

In John 8 verse 32, You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free. And yet in spite of the truth of that passage, the reality is some people still have baggage. And that baggage may come from childhood, it may come from middle age, it can come from any number of possible situations.

And I've listed some and I want to just kind of walk us through that. It is what you pick up and accumulate, either your own or someone else's. It's what others dump on you.

First example, rumors. When we hear or accept as truth information that is false and presented for the purpose of involving us in some reaction, we can end up with some excess baggage. One of the challenges along that line to think about is if somebody begins to want to involve you in something, you need to ask yourself the question, Am I able to be part of the resolution of this problem? Am I supposed to be involved in what is going on? If not, why do I need this information? Rumors can quickly turn into gossip.

And the gossip then becomes that we are participants in taking some baggage that somebody else dropped upon us and passing it on by means of gossip to another person. In Proverbs 18.8 and also says the same thing in Proverbs 26.22, the words of a tail bearer or a gossip are as wounds and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Gossip, you've heard it said in kindergarten and on.

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me. How many people carry baggage that are words that they heard, words that were spoken along the way. Unkind words, cruel words.

Sometimes they were words that whoever said them may have been talking about someone else and yet it seemed like it stuck to us and now we carry that baggage on and on and on. Hurts of any number of kinds can come upon us. We've all been hurt at one time or the other in different ways by different people.

And friends, God will give us grace to handle those hurts that come into our life provided, provided that we humble ourselves before God and we do not allow those things to become baggage in our life. Scripture says in Proverbs 8.14, the spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear a wounded spirit. When we look at baggage, quite, quite often the baggage a person carries in their life is a wounded spirit.

Something that was said or done in their life. Some events that transpired in their life that instead of them saying, okay, God, you've allowed this in my life for a purpose. That purpose ultimately is for you to be glorified by conforming me more and more to the image of Jesus Christ, by refining me, by purifying me, by calling me to dig deeper in the Scripture, to avail myself of your grace and strength to deal with this issue.

When we do not handle that correctly, the result is we can end up with a wounded spirit. And the problem with a wounded spirit is how to heal it. Once you allow that wound to fester in there and bitterness begins to work itself out in your life and you begin to become defiled and others become so as well.

Proverbs 18:19 says a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. Now as we think in terms of that, a brother offended. How many ways are there to be offended? Unlimited.

Unlimited. Sometimes you're offended by someone on purpose. They mean to hurt you.

Right? Sometimes you're offended by something that a stranger says. Sometimes you're offended by something that somebody in your family says. And sometimes it can be someone in your church family.

Someone that's a Christian. Someone that should know better says something. And when that happens in our life, a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.

And let me explain what happens. Having been offended, having a wounded spirit, there's a consequence that happens. And I want you to go back with me if you would to medieval times.

And I want you to think of a castle. And this castle has high walls. It has a moat around the outside.

It has a plank that they let down to let people come in. And they can raise it up to keep people from getting in. And when someone is offended, oft times what happens in their spirit and in their life is they move inside a castle somewhat like that.

And efforts that someone makes, even someone who knows that they have offended them, when they come and they see them coming at a distance, perhaps for the very purpose of reconciliation, immediately the response within the castle is up goes the gate. Guards run to each part of the wall. Everything is at full attention.

And when somebody gets close enough, then they start firing shots at them. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city. The defenses are up.

And even when somebody is trying to overcome the evil that they've done in your life, that you might be freed of the baggage that you're carrying, if you don't let them in, if you will not allow them to, the consequence is you just continue to be barricaded in there and it gets worse and worse. But let me explain something to you. And it's, you know, well, duh, kind of a statement.

But as long as that's the case, you're a captive inside. You say, I'm protecting myself from out there. But what are you? You're a prisoner.

You're a prisoner because you allow yourself to stay in there with the barricades up rather than to resolve the issue and move forward and not have that baggage problem ongoing. Their contentions are like the bars of the castle. Every effort to resolve seems only to be an attack.

And that leads us to the next item, and that is unforgiveness. Luke 17, 1 says, Then said he unto his disciples, It is impossible, but that offenses will come. But woe unto him to whom they come.

It's impossible that what offenses will come. Why? Because we live among sinners. Offenses will come.

But reality is, when something like that happens, our command from the Word of God is to forgive. Our command is to overcome evil with good. Our command is to pray for those who do such a thing.

And we are ultimately responsible to forgive them whether they ever come and ask forgiveness of us or not. The reason we can forgive them and extend that love and forgiveness to them is because Christ died for that sin as well as all your sins. You can forgive them because Christ paid for the sins that they committed against you.

Our tendency, and this is our human nature, our tendency is, if they don't get things right, if they don't come and acknowledge their wrong, if they don't ask for forgiveness, then I'm not going to forgive them. But you're violating everything that you're commanded to do. Be kind, tender-hearted, one toward another, forgiving one another.

How? Even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. Because we've been forgiven, we must forgive. And to not forgive means that we stuff more baggage in our bag.

And we're going to be carrying that going forward. It will interfere with our spiritual growth. It will continue to just have a way of dragging us down and dragging us back.

Another thought that I had about baggage that we collect along the way is a matter of prejudice. We can carry the baggage of prejudice our whole life. Prejudice is to prejudge according to previous baggage.

I invented that definition. But prejudice is to prejudge according to previous baggage. Let me ask you a question.

How many of you have had prejudices imposed upon you by your family when you were growing up? We all did. We all did. You know why? Our parents had baggage.

How many are agreeing with me this morning? Your parents had baggage. And one of those things would include prejudices that they had. And they passed those on.

And so we carry that baggage too. I was glad we only had two checked bags. When I see some people traveling, I can't believe it.

I joked about it. But we got to Hawaii on the way over, standing there waiting for our baggage to come off. And I looked and I looked again.

And there was some luggage that came off about the size of this communion table. It was black and yellow. And it said DEWALT on it.

Now I don't know whether that guy is into construction or what the deal was. But I jokingly said to Shelly and then I told the girls, I found out what you're going to be able to give me for Christmas. DEWALT box full of tools.

You say, but you're not using the ones you got. But you never know. Right? You never know.

But I thought, man, that's a lot of baggage to have to tote around. And I see some other baggage that comes across there. You know, when you travel over in that part of the world, and Pam explained this to us, you see a lot of coolers.

And people from the outer islands fill those with fish and put them on and they have them all taped up in insulated ice chests and so forth. And I mean there's enough tape on to do it, I guess. I hope we'll do it.

When we pre-checked our luggage over there in Guam, you can do that the night before, and I love it. But here were some people, they were packing up, and they were using United's tape, and they were taping, taping, taping, taping, taping, taping this cooler, and I thought, there's fish in there. I hope their luggage doesn't get lost.

That could really be a serious thing somewhere down the line. But my point is that we all have problems with baggage, and prejudice is one of those things of baggage. Fears.

I heard a definition that I appreciate for fear, using F-E-A-R, false evidence appearing real. I believe that there are many, many people that have baggage of fear. Fear that something could happen.

Something might happen again. Paul told Timothy, God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind. If you look through and do a study, you'll find over and over and over and over again, many times repeated, God gave instructions.

He gave it to Joshua. He gave it, David gave it to Solomon. Be strong and of good courage.

But you know, there are people who have the baggage of fear, because of something that happened in their past, or something that they saw happen to someone else, and the baggage of fear literally has them tied up. They can't go here, they can't do that, they can't interact with others, because of fear. Because of fear.

Overcoming fear is something that is very easy. God has a resolution for us, if we will trust Him and turn to Him. But when we do not do that, then that fear becomes baggage that we're carrying along.

As we think in terms of that, there's another point that I want to dwell on for just a second. When we refuse to get rid of that which God has called us to get rid of, then we, in the Song of Solomon, says something that is worth our consideration. Chapter 2, verse 15, says it's the little foxes that spoil the vines.

It's the little foxes that spoil the vines. Those little foxes will burrow into the vineyard and destroy the roots and destroy the crop. I want to suggest to you that baggage does the same thing in our lives.

It's those little things that we've talked about. You say, well, it's no big deal. But that little fox that ruins a whole vineyard is a big deal.

Whatever baggage that we might be carrying that is destroying our spiritual growth needs to be addressed. Maybe the baggage in our life is what we want to fix up or dress up so that we can keep it and keep on being satisfied that it's okay if I hang on to that baggage. It's what others are doing and maybe we think it's cool.

It's becoming guilty of coveting other people's baggage, because fads can become baggage when we begin to gather them up. I never cease to be amazed at fads. Why do we participate in a fad? To be cool.

Why else? Because we want to be individuals. Right? I mean, I need to be uniquely myself. So the choice of tattoos that I use need to be uniquely me.

Don't go to Hawaii if you don't want to see tattoos. I'm just saying. Two verses are very important if we're going to fight against this matter of baggage.

First one is in Psalm 55, verse 22. We're told, Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

There, the word burden actually is in a positive sense the providence of God, what He allows within your life. But you know what? We can turn that which God has providentially allowed in our life into baggage when we do not receive it with grace. And this says, Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.

Lord, you have allowed this stain in my life, and now, Lord, I give it back to you, and I ask that you would sustain me, and that you would allow me to own this as a mark of your ownership in my life rather than baggage that says somehow you have failed me. Bill Gothard does a powerful teaching on the subject of how some people in regard to birthmarks have allowed their lives to be destroyed because of the birthmark that they had upon their bodies. And he illustrates how valuable it is for someone like that to understand that that birthmark could be a mark of ownership that God has placed upon them to make them unique and special.

What's the difference between whether it's baggage or it makes an ownership that you can be so genuinely identified with God? We are fearfully and wonderfully made. There's a young lady who is handicapped over there in the church in Guam. The first Wednesday night as I went to Bible study, Abby locked in on me.

And she is precious, very precious. She sings in the choir. Pam's testimony is she can't sing a lick, but she sings in the choir.

And when she sings in the choir, she's got a smile this wide. When I met her, and Pam had told me about her previously, I met her and she said, I'm Abby. I said, yeah, I know.

I said, I've seen you on TV. She said, what do you mean? I said, yeah, when I watch the TV and see the service on TV, I see you singing in the choir, and you're so pretty as you sing there in the choir. You keep that up.

And then she says, you know what, Pastor? We're going to sing three songs tonight. And she says, there's going to be a number. And she read off the three numbers.

Then she said, Pastor, what's your favorite song? And I said, my favorite song is Victory in Jesus. And she says, oh, that's on page 287. And I said, no, it's not on page 287.

It's on page 290. She looked at me. I said, well, that's on my hymnal at home.

But my favorite song is Victory in Jesus. Then she said this, Pastor, you know, I've memorized all the names of all the songs in this hymnal. You tell me the title of the song.

I'll tell you the page number. You tell me the page number. I'll tell you the title of the song.

Then she said, Pastor, I've memorized Psalm 139. How many of you know that Psalm 139 says, I am fearful and wonderfully mad. I praise God for that godly family that has ministered in that young lady's life, that what she has that some would say is baggage and a burden is just the opposite.

It's a sign of glory to God. Cast your burden upon the Lord. Well, I'm too tall.

I'm too short. I'm too fast. I'm too thin.

Cast it upon the Lord. Don't carry that baggage. That young lady's happy.

Pam told me a little bit further. She said, did you ask you what you're going to eat in the cafeteria tomorrow? Her favorite thing is what's going to be the next item on the menu. She loves to eat.

That's OK, too. But you know, 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 7 says, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Luke 21, 34.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life. And so that they come upon you unaware. Luke 12, 15.

And he said unto them, take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Friends, God has told us that we can cast those things that are otherwise going to be baggage.

We can cast them upon him. And he can take care of them. And he can turn it from baggage to blessing, if we're willing.

Now, he can take it away. And he can replace it. Turn with me to the text in 1 Timothy 6. And as we think in terms of what is communicated here within the scripture, we find that it's really about the fact of learning contentment and being at peace with God and what is going on.

And contentment with godliness is what? Great gain. Great gain. Contentment is not baggage.

Contentment is blessing. And we are told in Hebrews chapter 12, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

You can't carry your baggage and run the race well that is set before you. You've got to get rid of it. Look with me, if you would, to verse 7. For we brought nothing into this world.

And what's a sure deal? You're not going to take it out. You can carry nothing out. Having food and raiment, let us be there with content.

And they that will be rich fall into what? Temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. Striving to be rich becomes baggage when we place things in the place of relationship with our Lord. God has given us richly all things to enjoy.

We have a stewardship over the things that God has given to us. But we should not allow those things to become baggage within our lives. Let me give you an illustration now of the Old Testament.

I'm just going to summarize it rather than read it to you. But I'll give you the reference, Joshua chapter 7, verse 16 through 26. When the children of Israel were to go and to take Jericho, one of the instructions that God gave very, very, very clearly was that since Jericho was the first city that was going to be attacked, that all of the things, all the treasured, valuable things would be considered firstfruits unto the Lord.

And because they were firstfruits unto the Lord, no one was to take any of that. Well, you recall how they marched around and how God gave the deliverance. And you also recall that it says that when they got ready to go against the city of Ai, they thought with the fall of Jericho, the city of Ai, which was smaller, would be a piece of cake.

And they didn't even send as many warriors up against it. But they lost 36 lives in the process. You know why? There was a man by the name of Achan.

And Achan saw the stuff that was there and decided he would like to have some of that stuff. So he took it and he hid it in his home, in his tent. And as he stashed it away in his tent, he thought, now no one will know.

Go ahead and have a seat, sir. No one will know. Problem was, God was watching and God knew.

And the scripture says, because of what Achan did, the whole nation of Israel experienced now a problem. There's sin in the camp. And you recall, as you reflect back upon that passage, that they began to examine.

So they began to bring them through by groups. And when they finally whittled it down, they came down to Achan and his household. And when it came to Achan and his household, there's a very important statement that was made by Joshua.

Joshua said to Achan, give God glory and confess your sin. And he did. He acknowledged what he had done.

God announced the judgment, and the judgment was that Achan and his family, all the stuff that he'd taken, all of that was buried under a pile of rocks after they stoned him to death. So as we think in terms of what is the warning here, it says, those that would be rich fall into temptation and many hurtful lusts. How much did it cost Achan? Everything.

It cost Israel as well. It can cost in our life as well. Look at verses 11.

But thou, O man of God, there's specific instructions given to us. Number one, flee what? Okay. Flee these things.

Flee unnecessary baggage. Flee those things that are going to hold you down. Flee those things that are going to keep you back.

Instead, follow after these things. Righteousness. Godliness.

Faith. Love. Patience.

Meekness. Pursue those things. Those are not baggage.

Those are blessings. Verse 12. Fight the good fight of faith.

Lay hold on eternal life. Wherein thou art also called and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. Paul is commending the past walk of Timothy and calling him to renew that fight.

Jude kind of gives a review of what we're supposed to do. And that's to earnestly contend for the faith as we purpose to lay hold and fight the good fight of faith that God calls us to. And we're to lay hold of eternal

life.

Literally, the things that we need to keep are the things that are eternal. Lay up for yourself treasures where? In heaven. Moth, rust, thieves can't get to it there.

But we accumulate the baggage here and we find that that's what we leave behind. Can't take it with us. But we're to be stewards of it and invested in the kingdom of God.

In closing, how about your baggage? Can you honestly release your baggage into the hands of the Lord? Whatever that baggage might be, however long you might have kept it. Can you cast that burden, that baggage, that care upon the Lord? Lord, I don't need this baggage. Take it away from me.

That wound in the past, that unforgiveness, you name it, whatever it is, what someone has done to you or failed to do to you, can you cast that baggage over to the Lord, releasing it? If you can, you'll travel much lighter. We need to acknowledge that if we keep that baggage, friends listen to me, it becomes sin in our life. So calling it what it is makes it easier to forsake it.

Thirdly, as we hand that baggage over to the Lord and let Him deal with it, He's very, very able to handle and use it for the purpose that can ultimately bring glory to Him, whether He buries it, whether He puts it somewhere else or whatever He might choose to do. Refuse to pick it back up and begin to carry it again. Psalm 139, verse 23 and 24, the psalmist says, Search me, O Lord, and know my heart.

Try me, O Lord, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me. I'm going to change that just a little bit.

And see if there's any baggage in me. And if there's baggage, it's time to get rid of it. Don't let another day go by but once you dump it.

You'll travel lighter, you'll travel freer, and you'll travel in God's blessing by getting rid of that baggage. Now I want to give you some warnings. You cast it down today and the devil will be daring you to pick it up later today or tomorrow.

That's how the dirty devil works. But when he challenges you, why don't you pick that up again? No, you don't. No, I've given that over to the Lord.

That's not my baggage to keep. That's not my baggage to carry. I'm done with it.

And when you say that again and again and again, you'll find it amazingly freeing. This morning, Jesus said you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free. The truth is none of that baggage is yours to carry.

Christ will set you free from it. Heavenly Father, this morning as you examine our hearts and lives,

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