

“Baggage: Discouragement/Defeat”  
Isaiah, 41: 10, 13, 2 Corinthians 4:7-10  
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Well, for the last 4 weeks we have been in this sermon series called Baggage. Today is the last of our sermon series. Next week the sermon series, “Questions Jesus Asked” begins. You know we have talked about how hard it is to get rid of baggage we have. Yes we know and we talked about “we all have some.” Sometimes it is difficult to get rid of it. We can try to throw it down, drop it, or just let it go....or even tell ourselves to “Stop it!” It sounds easy, but it’s not.

I don’t know about you, but I’m tired of the Baggage. Are you with me? Xxxxxx What do you say we make a commitment today to clear ourselves of the baggage. Are you ready to do that? Xxxx We have the Baggage of STRESS. Let’s get rid of it....what do you say? We have the baggage of BUSYNESS. Let’s Stop It! and clear our schedule so we don’t have that Baggage. Many of us perhaps have the Baggage of REGRETS. Let’s make a commitment today to get rid of those regrets. And yes last we week we talked about DOUBTS. Take away doubt and let’s s have faith. We may have FEAR. But it was clear that the Bible says fear not. So fear get out of here.

Phewwww....I feel better now. Oh no....we still have baggage. The baggage of DISCOURAGEMENT and DEFEAT. Open each one of those bags up, let me look inside of them. Yuk...so many times through my life I have felt discouragement and defeat. Let’s look at scripture and see if there is a way that we can deal with this baggage of Discouragement and Defeat.

Now before we begin talking about that I would like to ask you to do something. In front of you will see a luggage tag **(Image)** I would like each one of you to take one of these baggage claims. Oh, we have talked about the baggage of stress, busyness, regrets, and now today the baggage of discouragement and defeat. If you have been dealing with one of those as baggage I want you to write it down on that Baggage tag. Do that right now. Xxxxx In fact I want you to be as specific as you care to. No one is going to be looking at these. There may be some baggage in your life that we may have not specifically talked about---write it down on that tag. To be honest you may be carrying more than one piece of baggage. You can write more than one down on the same tag. Write that one, or two even 3 pieces of baggage that your life is dealing with and put them on that tag. I am going to wait until we have all had the opportunity to do that.

Now here is what I would ask for you to do. During the remainder of the sermon I want you to hold on to that luggage tag with both hands. Not one hand, but both hands. Kind of limits what you can do and where you can move doesn’t it? Stay with me here...and please with both hands hold on to that baggage claim through the end of the sermon.

Let’s kind of pick up with that baggage from last week. Fears. Let’s look again at the scripture that was read for us from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. We will look at the first part of the verse and then examine the second part. **Isaiah 40:10 Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God....**

According to this scripture why should we fear not? Because God says, “I am with you.” Now did you hear that? God the creator of the universe. The One who created the galaxies and the planets. The one who literally gave us the air to breath. He with you.

Be not dismayed...or maybe we can say...be not discouraged for God says He is your God. El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty), Adonai (Lord, Master), Yahweh (Lord, Jehovah), Jehovah Rapha (The Lord That Heals), Elohim (God), Jehovah Jireh (The Lord Will Provide), Jehovah Shalom (The Lord Is Peace). This is the One that is with each of you. Look down at the Baggage claim....and know that whatever the pieces of baggage that you have God is with you.

Do be discouraged....now notice the second part of the verse: **Isaiah 40:10 “I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”**

Notice the verb in this sentence. The verb is WILL. Not maybe, not possibly, not I’ll think about it, but God says He will.

He will what?

**God will:**

**Strengthen you.**

**Help you.**

**Uphold you.**

This baggage of discouragement can really limit what we do for God. Let’s not have discouragement, but encouragement.

It is easy to let things we don’t understand discourage us. Sometimes it seems we just don’t “get it.” But hold on...with our mixed up world and mixed up life sometimes the end result shines forth with a message of encouragement.

One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of his Lay Leaders to lead in the opening prayer. The Lay Leader stood up, bowed his head and said, “Lord, I hate buttermilk.”

The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going. The Lay Leader continued his prayer, “Lord, I hate lard.” Now the pastor was totally perplexed. But the Lay Leader continued, “Lord, I ain’t too crazy about plain flour. But after you mix ‘em all together and bake ‘em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits.”

“Lord help us to realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don’t like, whenever we don’t understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what you are making. After you through mixing and baking, it’ll probably be something even better than biscuits. Amen.

Fear not the prophet Isaiah says....God will strengthen you, help you, and uphold you. Don't be discouraged, be encouraged.

How you doing holding on to those baggage tags? Kind of annoying isn't it?

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah seems to tell us not to be dismayed/discouraged but to take heart and be encouraged for God is with you. Now let's go to the New Testament and see what the Apostle Paul has to say about being defeated.

Now I have mentioned this before I believe that Satan, the Evil One, the Prince of this World, the deceiver wants to have you in a place where you not only just keep holding your baggage, but that you feel discouraged and defeated.

Paul says this in the 2 Corinthians 4 passage:

**We are afflicted...but not crushed.**

Beloved I don't have to look around that much to know that afflictions and issues happen to each of us. But we do not have to be crushed. We ARE not crushed.

**We are perplexed...but not driven to despair.**

Sometimes confusing, unexplainable, un-understandable things take place...but we do not have to be driven to despair.

**We are persecuted...but not forsaken.**

Let me mention a reality that I'm sure you already know. We are going to be persecuted. Afflicted and in a sense 'persecuted' physically. Emotionally going to be attacked. And spiritually we are going to have to fight the battle. But, but....we are not forsaken. Look down at your baggage claim, and say with me, "We are not forsaken."

**We are struck down...but not destroyed.**

We just finished with a theme with our K through 5<sup>th</sup> graders of Perseverance. Our Elementary Chapel at our Westlake Christian School, led by Robin McFerrin had the same theme. We preserve. We keep going. We don't give up. We do not have to be destroyed.

Now I went back to my childhood and thought of something that reminded me of this phrase that Paul is writing. Struck down...but not destroyed. We get knocked down, but we get back up. Some of you remember these bop-bags from the 1960's. **(Image)** You punch them. But the secret was they had a weight in the bottom...so when you hit them...what did they do...they bounced back up. Ah, struck down....we get back up...we are not destroyed.

You were created by God and God cares about you. You are of value, God loves you and will not forsake you. He does not want you to be discouraged; He certainly does not want to you be defeated.

You may have heard me say this before...but it is fitting here. A story that reminds us of Whose we are. A teacher pulled out a \$20 bill from his desk and waves it in the air, and asks if anyone wants twenty bucks. Pretty much everyone raises their hand, and a few brave ones start shouting or waving their hands in the air to get it.

The teacher takes the \$20, crumples it into a ball, throw it on the ground, stomp on it a few times, and says something silly along the lines of “This is a dumb, good for nothing, worthless \$20 bill!” The teacher uncrumples it, holds it up again, and asks the same question. “Does anyone still want this \$20 bill?” And every kid raises their hand.

They are asked why they still want this \$20 bill when so much has been done to it, when it’s dirty and torn and so many mean things have been said about it and done to it. A few quick ones raise their hand and say something about how a \$20 bill is a \$20 bill, and no matter how dirty it is or what you say about it, it’s still worth \$20. And this is where the kids start to get quiet.

The teacher responds: “You are so right. A \$20 bill is made with a certain value. It is always worth \$20, no matter how many times it is stepped on, crumpled up, or thrown on the floor. No matter what anyone says about it or does to it, it is always worth \$20 because it was MADE with that value. And the same thing is true about you.”

God made you. You are of value. He doesn’t want you lugging around Baggage. He doesn’t want you beating yourself up. He knows you may be afflicted, perplexed, persecuted and struck down....but you don’t have to be defeated.

**Verse 10: “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.**

We should be carrying around with us not baggage, but the realization of what Jesus has done for us. He died for us. He took the baggage. Why did He do that....says in our scripture...so that....the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies....so that His life can be seen in us.

If God could close the mouth of the lions for Daniel, part the Red Sea for Moses, make the sun stand still for Joshua, open the prison for Peter, put a baby in the arms of Sarah, and raise Lazarus from the dead THEN He can certainly take care of you! NOTHING you are facing is too hard for Him to handle.

Let’s drop the baggage and give it to Jesus.

Baggage claim still in both hands? Let’s figure out what to do with it.

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/56319/baggage>