

Baggage: Cast Your Cares

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

- [0 : 0 0] So welcome to each of you this morning, whether you are joining us in person or as you know, people listen online or listen on the phone line in the days ahead. So welcome to you, however you're connecting with us.
- And good morning. My name is Kent Dixon, and it's my pleasure to be the lead pastor here. Last week, we started, two weeks ago, I'm losing track of time, a sermon series called Baggage.
- And we've been recognizing the start of a new year is the perfect time to make positive change in our habits, to maybe break out of some of the ruts that we've developed in our lives.
- But even more than seeking to create new habits, I believe we need to recognize the old habits, recognize the other things that we carry with us in our lives.
- I was talking to my mother-in-law yesterday. I call her mom now because I'm supposed to. So I was talking to her yesterday, and she said, thanks for your sermon last Sunday on letting go of things and leaving them in the past.
- [1 : 0 7] Because she said, this past year has been hard. As many of you know, Michelle's dad passed last year. And so she said, I'm recognizing that I need to leave the past in the past.
- And I said, but wait. I said, the past is also shaping your future. So I said, don't be in a hurry to leave it behind.
- So welcome to the final week of our baggage sermon series. Sorry. Get all choked up. And I'll share a brief sentence with you as a recap of the past two weeks.
- Are you ready? Let go of the baggage in your life and travel freely into a life of expectation and anticipation for all that God can do in and through you.
- Sounds pretty encouraging, right?
- [2 : 1 6] Sounds like a greeting card kind of a sentence. Almost like a marketing email, right? You all know I have a marketing background. Is that the kind of headline that makes you want to click and read further?
- Well, does that message pique your interest? Or does it make you feel anxious? Does it make you feel fearful? We talked about this last week.
- We can become stuck in the past when we become afraid of the unknown of the future. So hold on to those feelings for a minute. Because we're concluding this series this morning.
- And I've got, Vern said to me this morning, he said, Oh no, all the slides that you built for this week. And I said, yep. Gone. So that's okay though.
- Because again, as I said to someone else, First Century Church, no projectors. No hymnals. They did okay. And so will we. This week's sermon is called Cast Your Cares.
- [3 : 2 0] So let's be honest about something for a moment. Some of us who are here today or listening online have heard this message before. Right?

Haven't we? That there are greener pastures ahead. That things in our lives are just about to turn the corner. And maybe you're also fairly tired of hearing that.

Or you've expected that and then it hasn't come to be in your life. We want to believe. We know that God is good.

But we're not sure how to begin. We're not sure where to start on that journey of awareness and moving forward. And if that sounds like you today, I'm glad you're here.

I'm glad you're here anyway. So I have a few scriptures to share with you and we'll read them together. Now we would have read them off the screen. So if you have a Bible with you, Psalm 55 verse 22.

[4 : 24] If you want to flip there, I'll give us a minute. There's four different passages we'll look at here and they're short but sweet. Psalm 55 verse 22 says, and you probably know this, Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you.

He will never let the righteous fall. Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you. He will never let the righteous fall. Psalm 55 verse 22.

Turn to Matthew 6 verse 25. This will also be familiar. So these are not necessarily, these verses are not necessarily for you to suddenly say, I've never read that verse before.

But these are key reminders of this message. Matthew 6, 25. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, Jesus says.

What you will eat or drink. Or about your body, what you will wear. Is life not more important than food? And the body more important than clothes.

[5 : 31] Matthew 6, 25. Turn just a few verses later to Matthew 11, 28. Matthew 11 verse 28. Where Jesus again says, Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you, what does he say?

Rest. Turn to 1 Peter 5 verse 7. This is a life verse for me. 1 Peter 5, 7.

And we're going to focus on it a bit more this morning as well. 1 Peter 5, 7. Where we read, Cast all your anxiety, some translations say cares, on him because he cares for you.

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. My friends, do those four verses that we read impact you? Do they bring you comfort?

Are you able to think about throwing? Now, here's the image. We read there, cast your cares. What did they cast in those days?

[6 : 44] Fishing nets. You've seen Bible pictures or other pictures of the size and weight and capacity of those nets.

They would have weighed 100 pounds perhaps, maybe more. So when we talk about casting, we're not talking about a rod and reel type of casting.

We're talking about something heavy and throwing it onto Jesus, for example, in this case. So he wants us to cast, to throw our worries and cares on him.

Why? Because as we just read there, he cares for you. He cares for me. He cares for us. So let's keep those truths in mind that we've looked at just now as we talk more about casting our cares on the creator of the cosmos.

Humility. As we identify the baggage in our lives and begin to seek to intentionally let it go and trust God with our future, there's something else, an absolutely vital perspective that we cannot miss.

[8 : 00] And that special and critical perspective is humility. You need to be willing to ask for help. You need to be willing to ask for people to help you seek out your blind spots, as we've talked about.

You need to be able to ask God to help you get untangled from the sin that is at work in your life and be able to be free to move forward. And in fact, before the passage we read from 1 Peter 5, there's an identification, and we're going to back up in a second, of the importance of being humble before we cast our cares on Jesus.

So let's look back there. Go back to 1 Peter 5. And back up one verse. So we're going to look at 6 and 7 together now.

And it says there, 1 Peter 5, verse 6, That's the verse that comes before we're told to cast our anxiety on him.

We need to humble ourselves first. We need to be willing to ask him for help. Have you ever tried to work with or even communicate with someone who is prideful?

[9 : 25] It's not very fun, right? People who are prideful, people who are known to be full of pride, tend to be, I believe, the first kind of people.

People who are more interested in their own accomplishments, their own what do I get out of this type of sense, than the needs and perspectives of other people.

Do you think that perspective would be any different in your relationship with God? Well, of course, I hope for you the answer is no, because it's not.

All of this, including the life of discipleship, takes an important, a huge amount of humility. And this is something that Jesus himself knew, something that he modeled for us in becoming human and sacrificing himself for us.

And you've heard me use this quote before. Humility doesn't mean thinking less of yourself. It means thinking of yourself less.

[10 : 31] Does that make sense? Humility is not about thinking less of yourself. It's about thinking of yourself less. That's a powerful perspective. I wish I had this list on the screen, but just furiously take notes.

Because there'll be a test at the end. No, there won't. According to an article on success.com, there are six attributes, here's the stuff to write down, I guess, six attributes of healthy humility for you to think about.

Number one, acknowledge that you don't have it all together. Does that make sense? Acknowledge that you do not have it all together.

Number two, you know the difference between self-confidence and pride. I think we get those confused. And I think even, particularly as Christians, I think we tend to begin to feel uncomfortable with being self-confident.

There's nothing wrong with being self-confident. There's nothing wrong with saying, yep, I've got this. I have the skill, the experience, the whatever it is, to tackle this situation. It's very different to say, oh yeah, I'm the best person for the job.

[11 : 50] Just get out of the way, I've got it. And then to look for praise when we've accomplished something. So know the difference between self-confidence and pride. Number three, you seek to add value to others.

Put other people first. Seek to make someone else's day. Seek to make something better, someone else's circumstances better. Add value to others.

Number four, you take responsibility, tough one, for your actions. And as I read it, I thought, and words. That's what it means to be humble.

Take responsibility for your actions or your words when you have screwed up, when you have hurt someone. Take responsibility for it. Number five, you understand the shadow side or the dark side of success.

What do I mean there? What does it mean there? Well, success, it's only a short journey from success to pride and other issues that can really complicate our lives.

[12 : 56] Success is okay. You want to succeed. You want to be successful in things that you do. You want to do a good job. It's good to be self-confident, as I said. But don't wallow in it and seek that as a self-fulfilling prophecy in your life that you need that affirmation.

Number six, you are filled with gratitude for what you have. Does that make sense? You're filled with gratitude for what you have.

Not what you wish you had, but there's a sense of peace in that. So six different suggestions to measure healthy humility.

Do you recognize yourself in that list at all? Where do you feel like you could personally grow in being a more humble person? It's a good thing to consider.

It's a good thing to constantly be reviewing in your mind. So this morning we're talking about casting. We're talking about throwing it all on Jesus.

[14 : 01] So once you've begun to recognize the ways in which you could be more humble, you know you need help in dealing with your baggage and you're willing to ask for help, here's the next step.

Give it all to Jesus. Do you think, oh, there's a Sunday morning thing. Now I feel guilty. Now I feel like, oh, sense of responsibility.

Be free of that. This is talking about giving those things away, not carrying them as baggage, not adding them to what you're carrying. Friends, pick it up and throw it on him, as I said.

Oh, that seems highly heretical, highly inappropriate. This is Jesus, our Lord and Savior we're talking about. He can handle it and he's asked us to do it.

Why did he die for us? Because he wanted to take it all. So it seems simple enough, right? I say throw it all on Jesus. And that's what scripture is telling us to do.

[15 : 10] So what does that look like? How do we do it? Well, I believe a great example of this can be found in the Gospel of Luke. So turn in your Bibles to Luke 10, beginning at verse 38.

And we'll go 38 to 42. Luke 10, 38 to 42. And we read there, as Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

She had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and said, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left all the work for me to do, sorry, has left me to do the work for myself?

Tell her to help me. Does that sound familiar? Tell her to help me. Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed.

Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her. When I read, the reason I choked as I read that, there we go again.

[16 : 41] Do you hear that message Jesus saying to you personally? Because he's saying it to me. You are worried and upset about a great many things.

Do you hear that message he's giving to you? What I want us to recognize most from this passage is this example set by Mary. While her sister is worried and bothered by things, Mary is seated at the feet of Christ.

What a beautiful image. Now, maybe not for Martha, right? But what a powerful lesson for us. What we see here is the importance of making time for Jesus.

Pray. Journal. If you're a writing kind of person, if you need to record your thoughts and feelings, do it. Read.

Read the Bible. Read other works by Christian authors. And maybe most important of all, tell him, well, you're going to say, well, he already knows.

[17 : 50] Tell him the things that you are worried about. Jesus knows all these things, but he wants to hear you say it. He wants you to ask him for help.

Tell him the things that you're anxious about, the things that are occupying your brain and causing you weight, causing you worry. Or like Martha, the things that you are worried and bothered by.

I've told you before, I'm an over-thinker. I am worried and bothered more than I'd like to admit in my little brain. So I recognize this message is as much for me as it is for you.

This discipline was modeled by Jesus himself. Can you recognize that? We often read in the Gospels that Jesus would take time by himself to be alone with the Father, with his Father.

And he made that a priority over everything else. I've been thinking the last little while, what is the first thing to drop off our list of priorities in our lives?

[19 : 03] Besides exercise. Does exercise drop off fast? Two weeks ago, I came home after the service, and Michelle said, I think you need a walk.

And I said, I've been a good boy. Haven't I been a, you know, like a dog. But I said, I think you're right. So I took a 40-minute walk and just listened to music, and I'm a fast walker for a little guy.

But since that day, I've walked 40 minutes a day every day since. I'm sleeping better. My thoughts are more calm.

I spend time talking to Jesus. It's time well spent. So does our time with God drop off? Is that the next thing that drops off?

It's important to consider. I was saying to poor Michelle and Connor when we drive to church or from church on Sundays, sometimes I just free think.

[20 : 05] And I said, isn't it sad or ironic or however you want to phrase it, that the most important thing in our lives, our relationship with God, our relationship with other Christians, is usually the first thing that we will drop when we get busy.

The investment in our lives that is the most, without question, the most important, is often the first to go.

It's worth thinking about. So here are my challenges for each of you, and for me. And I want you to give them some serious thought. What can you do this week or even today, while you're already in church, that's a good start.

But what can you do this week or today to spend more intentional time with Jesus? Also, I want you to consider the areas of concern or baggage in your life that you're carrying right now.

It'll probably take you, it should take you, five seconds to figure out what is gnawing at you, causes the gnaw in your stomach, gnaws in the back of your mind when you're trying to sleep at night.

[21 : 19] Would you like to give those things to him? Would you like to not have to carry that weight anymore? Trust him with those things.

We ended last week's sermon with a similar point, and we talked about trust in the first week of this series as well. So it shouldn't come as a surprise then that I'm talking about trust being a huge factor in this process.

And I definitely recognize that trust can take time. I think I've said to you before over the years, it's years now by the way, over the years that I am a trusting person.

I will default to trust first. Michelle is less trusting. Not that you can't get there with her, but she's a little bit more guarded.

But we've learned from each other in those things. For some of us, trust may not come easy, some of you. And that could be because you recognize you have trusted and been hurt or betrayed in the past.

[22 : 27] And that is fair. You may know the author Stephen Covey. He's very well known, and he is a kind of a business author. In his book titled The Speed of Trust, Covey says, Low trust causes friction.

Low trust is the greatest cost in life and in organizations, including families. Low trust creates hidden agendas, politics, interpersonal conflict, win-lose thinking, defensive and protective communication, communication, all which reduce the speed of trust.

Low trust, Covey says, slows everything, every decision, every communication, and every relationship.

Low trust. Isn't that insightful? Have you ever recognized for yourself how low trust can affect you, your level of trust? Have you experienced that in your life?

Low trust in certain situations. Have you seen the damage that it has done, perhaps, that it has caused in relationships by you not being able to trust?

[23 : 48] Covey goes on to say, simply put, hear this, trust means confidence. And the opposite of trust, distrust, is suspicion.

It's a great perspective, isn't it? Trust means confidence. To trust someone you are confident that they have your back. To trust God, we need to be confident that he is who he says he is.

He will do what he says he will do. Friends, scripture is full of God being trustworthy, being worthy of our confidence.

So, think this morning, are you perhaps suspicious of God? Let me clarify. Are you just waiting for him to drop the hammer on you?

Are you just waiting for him to scold you or punish you? Are you waiting for him to take everything good away from you? Are you suspicious of God?

[24 : 53] So, I know this may sound way too much like pastor speak, and it is to some extent, but I can 150% guarantee you that God has a plan and a purpose for your life.

And, I can also guarantee that you will experience trouble. You will experience adversity and frustration in your life.

Because none of us can avoid those things. things but the promise we get to enjoy as sons and daughters of the Most High King is the words of Romans 8, 28.

And you can look it up or you can just listen. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Jesus, my friends, trust Jesus today. Cast your cares on Jesus today. Toss your baggage onto him and walk a little lighter, I hope, today.

[26 : 07] Because he also cares for you today. So, think about this for a moment. If God didn't care, would he have shared his son with you?

If Jesus didn't care, would he have humbled himself to the point of death for you? My friends, let go of your suspicion and your doubt.

Let go of the baggage in your life. And trust Jesus with your life today and every day ahead. from now on.

Amen.