

What do you carry? What are you dragging? What do you leave behind?

Baggage Check

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Baggage of Guilt (Week 3)

OPENING: Share one thing you did when you were younger that you still feel embarrassed or sorry for?

INTRODUCTION:

We have learned that unnecessary baggage weigh us down, but God invites us to be free. Read Matthew 11:28, Psalm 38:4, Galatians 5:1. What do these verses want to convey to us? Why is our *freedom* so important to God?

The Reality of Guilt.

Guilt is that terrible feeling that hits us when we realize we have done wrong, and we'll do almost anything to get rid of it. In the story of Adam and Eve, our first parents, we find a pattern of guilt that continues to this day (Read Genesis 3:7-11). First comes the **cover-up**. Then we play the **blame game** as we try to justify or rationalize our actions. We think that the more we can blame someone else, the less guilty we will feel.

Some people try to escape from guilt through activities, alcohol, or drugs. Or run to psychiatrists—but psychiatry has tried to solve the problem of guilt by justifying actions for certain reasons. We are told to ignore that guilty feeling, we're told, because it has no basis in reality. The guilt remains and we can't escape these feelings by ignoring them because God built into our nature knowledge of right and wrong—a moral code. God's Word speaks of the moral conscience, which exists even within those who are not aware of His laws, and the only way to deal with guilt is God's way.

Paul's Journey from Guilt.

- Like Paul, we all have things in the past we regret doing or take part of.

Read part of his story in Acts 7:54-58.

What was the Apostle Paul involved in? Why was he a part of it?

THROUGH CHRIST, SIN IS GONE FOREVER

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's eternal remedy for human sin. When we trust Him, He not only forgives our sins, but He also cleanses our conscience of guilt. What happens to our sins? Once God has forgiven them, they are:

- Out of sight: Isaiah 38:17.
- Out of mind: Jeremiah 31:34.
- Out of reach: Micah 7:19.
- Out of existence: Isaiah 43:25.

- Like Paul, we must embrace the truth of God's forgiveness. Read Romans 8:1 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. God has already dealt with our guilt through Jesus, but it is up to us to embrace that reality. What do these verses say about our past mistakes and our present condition?

- Thoughts of regret will remain in our minds, but let God's grace help you leave your guilt behind.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. What should we do when our mind or memory plays a trick on us, or when the enemy reminds us of our guilt?

Read Romans 8:15-17. How can we continue to live victoriously over guilt?

- Satan wants us to be immobilized by guilt.

We have an enemy whose main purpose is to keep us from serving the Lord (1 Peter 5:8). In Scripture he is called the "accuser" of believers (Revelation 12:10). If you continue to feel guilty for forgiven sins, you are hearing the voice of the enemy, not the Holy Spirit. Satan is a liar. Reject the fiery darts he shoots at your mind by holding up the shield of faith in the finished work of your Savior, and the devil will flee from you (James 4:4).

- God wants to use us for His purpose.

Through Jesus, God can turn our awful past and use it for good to make us more effective in our work for Him (Hebrews 9:14 NIV). Only when we refuse God's provision for forgiveness and for a new beginning are we disabled by our past sins. Never let your past define you, instead let God's present and future for you, help you serve Him better.

God continues to invite us to put our Bags Down

1. When we do, it changes how we relate to people. How does freedom in Christ help us relate with people better?

2. When we do, it changes how we relate to God. How can we train ourselves to keep looking to Jesus in every situation?

3. When we do, it changes how we are used by God. Why is our *freedom* so important to God?

Closing song: AMAZING GRACE (MY CHAINS ARE GONE)

ANNOUNCEMENT:

SUMMER BAPTISM BASH – July 17.

If you have received Jesus as Lord and Savior and you want to take your next step of faith, SIGN UP FOR BAPTISM!