

MESSAGE NOTES

Carry-On: The Bags We Don't Notice

Psalm 139:23–24

Introduction: Baggage Claim

Baggage claim is a picture of life. People stand waiting, hoping the right bag shows up, feeling anxious about what may have been misplaced.

Some travelers wait with heavy suitcases. Others glide past with a carry on.

Life is the same. Some of us drag weight we picked up years ago.

We often do not notice the baggage because we have carried it so long that heaviness feels normal.

Concept: Hidden Baggage

We all carry emotional, mental, and spiritual weight that shapes how we walk through life.

We can appear fine on the outside while carrying weight on the inside.

Cognitive Load

Cognitive load is the mental weight placed on the brain when it juggles information, decisions, and responsibilities.

The human brain has limited working memory.

Too many mental tabs open creates slow processing, glitches, and eventually a crash.

Hidden baggage does the same thing to the soul. Drains energy. Affects attitude. Touches relationships.

Symptoms of Invisible Baggage

You may be carrying baggage when:

Small things feel big.

You are exhausted even when you have not done much.

You feel stuck in repeated patterns.

Relationships feel heavier than they should.

Research Study: The Weighted Clipboard

University experiment: people were given clipboards. Some clipboards were normal, others were secretly weighted.

Those holding heavier clipboards judged issues as more important and more serious.

Same task, different weight. The difference was the hidden load.

Life works the same. What feels overwhelming is often not the task, but the baggage we are holding.

Why We Do Not Notice Our Baggage

We normalize it.

We assume everyone is tired, irritated, burned out, so we accept heaviness as normal.

Baggage disguises itself.

Control looks like responsibility.

Fear looks like caution.

Resentment looks like wisdom.

We adapt to it.

Humans are experts at adjusting.

We learn to live with heaviness and stop noticing the weight.

Just because you have learned to live with it does not mean God intends you to keep it.

Spiritual Reality

We often confuse heaviness with holiness.

We assume exhaustion equals faithfulness.

But Jesus said His burden is light.

The Prayer of Psalm 139

David prays four movements:

Search me. God sees what we ignore. He looks beneath motives and desires.

Know me. God exposes blind spots. We cannot see ourselves clearly.

Test my anxious thoughts. Anxiety distorts. Worry can steer us more than faith.

See if there is a painful way in me. Painful patterns repeat when unexamined. God identifies the roads that keep leading to harm.

Then the shift:

Lead me. Not just exposure but direction. God shows a new path toward freedom.

Closing Story: Appalachian Trail

Hikers start with packs overloaded with items they think they need.

Along the trail, they drop the weight piece by piece.

The only way to finish is to travel light.

Final Invitation

Jesus does not expose baggage to shame us.

He shows us so He can carry what we were not designed to carry.

Today we can leave the weight behind and follow the way everlasting.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What baggage have I learned to carry that God never asked me to?

Where am I mistaking exhaustion for faithfulness?

Which disguised baggage do I recognize: control, fear, or resentment?

What would it look like for me to surrender this weight to Jesus this week?

Who might experience freedom if I stop carrying what is not mine?