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THE SCRIPTURE
Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’”

THE MESSAGE
“Then Sings My Soul: Bag Lady”
Adonica Coleman
Director of Community Engagement

[Editor’s Note: It would be helpful to watch/listen to “Bag Lady by Erykah Badu. Follow this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13JTjUqbPvm9p3x0KYMiSQa-6v0UHVU0y/view>]

Pack light....

As I was scrolling through social media a few weeks ago, I ran across this. How many people here can relate to this? Why oh why do we pack so much stuff when we travel? I, like this person apparently, only rotate through about three different daily outfits, so I’m not sure why when I travel I always overpack.

About six weeks ago I had the opportunity to take a spontaneous short trip to Iowa to see the Des Moines Opera production of *Porgy and Bess*. Our good friends Dr. Ellis

and Pam Ingram’s son Michael is a conductor, who lives in Germany, but was in Iowa for a limited time to conduct this opera. We got to see the opera on Friday evening and spend the next day hanging out with the Ingram family and Maestro Michael. In the midst of our conversations, we drifted to airplane travel, maybe talking about his flight from Germany over to America. This is when Maestro Michael stunned me speechless. He said he traveled with one backpack. One. Did I mention that the opera was playing for an entire month? And that they had to be there weeks prior to that month in order to rehearse. He travelled with one backpack. We have long heard stories from Pam and Ellis about the Maestro’s minimalist lifestyle, but I have to say this was the epitome of “pack light.”



Normal life: "I've been wearing the same shirt for a week."
Packing for vacation: "I'll probably change 3x a day so 32 outfits should work."

But this life as we know it, this life can be heavy. From one day to the next we deal with situations, environments, relationships,

and people that can add to that feeling of heaviness. And sometimes we internalize those things, and it adds to the proverbial baggage we carry.

There was a movie in 2009 called *Up in the Air* starring George Clooney. In the movie his character is speaking to a large group of people and asks them a question. The question was, “How much does your life weigh?”

I’m asking that same question to us listening today. How much do our lives weigh? Imagine, for a second, that you're carrying a backpack. I want you to feel the straps on your shoulders. Now, I want you to fill it with people. Start with casual acquaintances, friends of friends, folks around the office, and then you move into the people that you trust with your most intimate secrets. Your cousins, your aunts, your uncles, your brothers, your sisters, your parents, and finally your husband, your wife, your boyfriend, or your girlfriend. You get them into that backpack. Feel the weight of that bag. Make no mistake — your relationships are the heaviest components in your life. And what can make them even heavier is when we choose to add the bags of the people closest to us to our already heavy load.

I want to pause here and acknowledge the Scripture in Galatians 6:2 that says to “*Bear one another’s burdens so you fulfill the law of Christ.*” And I believe we should do that with everything in me. I believe we should try to bring some form of relief or comfort to someone else’s challenging situation as we hope others would do for us during our times of burden. But I do not believe that we should sign up to be saddled down with unnecessary baggage. There is a difference.

Now let’s get back to that proverbial backpack.... you feel the straps cutting into your shoulders? All those negotiations and arguments, and secrets and compromises. You don't need to carry all that weight. Why don't you set that bag down?”

Pack Light....

In the passage, Jesus tells them to take neither sandals, or bag, or purse, and greet no one along the way. Why was he so adamant that they take nothing with them? Do we believe Jesus to be a hater of bags, or sandals, or owning more than one shirt? Nope, however, for that particular period, it seemed it was imperative for them to Pack light. But why? First, for these initial activities, Christ did not want his disciples to be concerned about physical preparations. He wanted them to focus on the job that he had given them to do—preach the gospel and report back to him—rather than on worrying about obtaining extra clothing or footwear. *His* emphasis was on the mission he was sending them on, but he knew human nature's tendency to worry about the details of its own comfort and existence. He did not want the disciples caught up in any preparations that would delay or distract them from his work through them.

Pack Light....

The song “*Bag Lady*” came out in the year 2000. Anybody recall what was going on in their life in that year? I remember. I was 25/26 years old. I was a single mom of a 7-year-old daughter, and by that time I had accumulated quite a bit of baggage of my own and can certainly recall some bags from some others that I had foolishly added to my own load. I won't go into details here, but I will say that by that time I had begun to recognize the weight and had begun the process of letting some of it go. That was no easy feat, I had spent years carrying those bags and the weight of them had become...not comfortable, but at least familiar. So, I was intentionally working on myself, and when this song came out it resonated with me instantly. I didn't have to hear it more than a couple of times for me to bookmark it as one of “my jams.” It was so simplistic, yet so true.

*Bag lady you gon hurt your back, dragging all them bags like that
I guess nobody ever told you, all you must hold on to, is you is you is you
One day all them bags, gon get in your way
One day all them bags gon get in your way
One day all them bags gon get in your way so*

Pack Light...

You gon hurt your back. That speaks to me of the residual pain that comes from carrying too heavy a load.

My daughter Camryn last year came home from high school complaining of back pain in the top part of her back. I asked her all the questions you ask your kids when trying to isolate an ache, pain, or illness...you know, the list of questions you ask when you are trying to decide if this is go to the doctor pain or just take some ibuprofen and lay down pain? During my interrogation I looked on the floor where she had dropped her backpack. Then I go pick it up. This thing weighs no less than 10-12 pounds. We have immediately found the culprit. The backpack was too weighed down with the books, and the laptop, and God only knows whatever else was in there. Carrying a bag that heavy was causing her residual back pain. And while a lot of the baggage we carry is emotional and mental, it weighs us down and causes pain just the same. Mental baggage is the tendency to ruminate or think negatively about past or current issues that have not been resolved. Mental health professionals have heard clients describe feeling physically weighted down by feelings. There is a tension in the body that shows up in tight shoulders or necks, upset stomachs and headaches, “Emotional baggage does feel like you are wearing or carrying a bag filled with emotions.”

Pack Light....



What kinds of things do we carry? I asked some people and added some of my some of my own, and because we are visual people.

We asked the person who submitted this song for consideration for this series, why? Part of the answer was this:

“All of the baggage - the hurt, the shame, the anger, the internal oppression...all of it was manifesting in my heart and my body. I suffered high blood pressure, headaches, just an overall unhappiness. I was definitely the bag lady - hurting my back and more! I was hurting myself, blocking my blessing, and repelling those that had the potential to be blessings in my life. I was a hot mess!

“So many things had to come together to get me to the point of letting it go, trusting God and realizing that He was no ordinary man. The ordinary wasn't going to do. I had to let go...take my hand off of things, quit looking for a human to have the answers, and quit allowing my bags to get in the way. I had to let it all go, and TRUST GOD!

“Bag lady is my forever reminder to pack light!”

When you have a task to complete, a life to live, a family to raise, a job to perform...or simply a bus to catch remember the words of this song, “you can’t hurry up, cause you got too much stuff.” God has an assignment for each and every one of us under the sound of my voice, let us not be so bogged down with stuff, that we can’t get to it.

You’ll see a quick scene when the end of the video plays of a group of adorable babies, wearing the same colors as the chakra ladies in the video. You’ll see them being handed down the bags that their moms were carrying. Just something to consider as we close. Where do we think that baggage goes when we are raising, or mentoring kids? Let it go, let it go, let it go. Let it go.

This is my encouragement to you today to Pack Light....

[Editor’s Note - It would be helpful to watch/listen to the remainder of “Bag Lady” by going to this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Gw3Rvda_qR2fuxCbpZ7L0AiWpw49Emdv/view]

BROAD HEARTS BROAD MINDS BROAD REACH