

One Small Step Part 5

Drop Those Bags

Hebrews 12:1

Memory Verses: Hebrews 12:1

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

No one likes small steps. What's one small step in a marathon? It's nothing. We like to dream big dreams but we don't like to take small steps. That marathon sounds awesome. I'd love to be the guy to put the 26.2 magnet on my Jeep bumper, but... that means I'd have to take the small step to start walking every day and getting in shape... and, well, that's no fun is it!

But, if our destinies are determined by our day to day decisions and one small step after small step, then we have to pay attention to the next small step don't we? Especially if our destiny is eternal glory in Christ. Listen, we haven't made it there yet... but that doesn't mean we stop trying to get there. Even if you've made just a couple of steps... that's something to celebrate. I may not be where I want to be, but thank God I'm not where I used to be. Amen?

One small step matters, whether you are beginning the journey or finishing it. Let's look again at our main passage for this series; **Psalm 37:23-24. "the steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall no be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand."** God celebrates the small steps, he helps us make each small step, and though we may fall back down a step or two he will catch us and help us back up. This verse is extremely encouraging to those of us trying to make each step towards Christ count. As we saw last week, he establishes our steps. As we saw a couple weeks ago, even though in our past we've made mistakes, God is always there to pick us back up and help us continue on the journey. If we are going to take the next step, we need to depend on the strength of Christ to help us.

So we continue to walk after Christ. We take step after step after step following our Lord wherever he goes. But as we follow in his steps... as we try to follow his lead, Satan isn't going to make it easy. He's going to do whatever he can do to get us off track. Satan is working overtime to derail us, isn't he? Look with me at **Hebrews 12:1. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."** We run after Christ, while all of Heaven cheers us on. But sometimes as we run, one small step after one small step, we pick up all kinds of baggage along the way, and it

begins weighing us down. If we have too much baggage we will fall behind and fall out of step with Christ. And who's handing us the bags... Satan. Jesus says, leave all that behind... Satan says... hey, you need to hold onto this. Listen, you need to drop the baggage that Satan is trying to get you to keep to keep you from following Christ. When you take the first step in following Christ, which as we saw last week was trusting in Christ through faith and repentance, Satan will do everything he can to wreck you. He knows he can't take away your salvation so he tries to wreck your sanctification by weighing you down with all kinds of baggage. Today, we need to drop those bags. Or, as I was going to name this sermon "drop it like it's hot," but 1996 wanted their phrase back so. Listen, it's imperative that we understand this today... **If We Want To Run After Christ We Need To Leave Satan's Baggage In The Dust.** Today I want us to see 4 types of baggage that Satan wants us to hold onto and Jesus wants us to leave in the dust.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first baggage I want us to look at is excuses. **Satan Will Give You Excuses To Derail You**. So, I'm saved and I'm ready to take the next step towards Christ and so I determine to start reading the Bible. I pick a book, John. I download the Bible app, I set my alarm so I can get up early and read, and I even buy a notebook to keep notes and jot down verses to memorize. But Satan knows that if I start reading the word then I will grow strong in my faith so he can't let that slide. So he hands me the **bag** of laziness. I'm tired. I'll do it later. In fact, I don't really need to read it... I'll just do what I think is good, I'll guess, or I'll do what the preacher says. Snooze.

Same thing with prayer. I know I need to pray, it will make me grow strong in my walk with Christ. It's a good step. But Satan can't have that so; laziness, apathy. Doesn't God already know what I need... so maybe I don't need to pray. Snooze. Don't raise your hand, but how many of you has Satan handed you this bag? It's not good is it? You can see where this is going can't you?

What about serving. You know what, I saw that there was a need to go and serve at the jail downtown with Good News Jail ministry. I think I'll help out. Or Claire Parker Foundation needs some pillow cases, I can sew some of those. Or some guys from the SBCV disaster relief are going over to a neighboring town that just got flooded and are going to help clean it up.. I'm going to tag along. These are great small steps, but Satan can't let you get all excited about serving people in the name of Jesus. So he hands you the **bag** of busyness. You know what.. on second thought, I'm just too busy. Yeah, I got stuff to do!

Or what about giving. I know there are people in our community that

need a helping hand with their rent or buying some medicine. The next time the benevolence offering is passed I think I'll help out. But Satan can't have you giving money in the name of Jesus. That's some seriously effective ministry. So he hands you the **bag** of greed. You know what, on second thought... I really wanted to buy that new purse I saw yesterday on Amazon. I'm sure someone else will give to those poor people.

Here's the thing, for every step I want to take in following Christ, Satan is going to try to hand me some type of excuse to weigh me down and stop me. Because he knows that... **When your excuses outweigh your expectations you'll quit.** He knows that if he can give you enough excuses you'll eventually stop trying to follow Christ, because eventually it will just be to inconvenient. Well, here's the hard truth. Following Jesus is going to be inconvenient at times. That is why **Hebrews 12:1** says "let us run with endurance." And, the only way to run with endurance is to drop the excuses, drop the baggage. **If We Want To Run After Christ We Need To Leave Satan's Baggage In The Dust.**

So, Satan will hand you every excuse in the book to keep you from following Christ, but if that doesn't work then he'll hand you baggage to distract you. **Satan Will Give You Distractions To Dissuade You.** You gonna go to that next class and learn what it means to take the next step as a part of Stone Creek Church? Check this **bag** out, the Nascar Race is on. You going to meet with a friend to study the Bible? Nope. You know why? **(Bag) The dog of the half brother of the cousin of an uncle of a kid in your kid's kindergarten finger painting class is having a birthday party and you just have to go.** You know it's true. You guys go to more birthday parties than Chucky Cheese himself. I'm amazed at how many birthday parties happen on Sundays during small group time. You enjoying church and fellowship and growing in small groups? Well have I got a super nice **bag** for you. The beach. Now, don't get me wrong. If you have been blessed with a vacation home, that's awesome. But you do need to ask yourself... is this blessing drawing me closer to God and my faith family or further away. At some point your God and you faith family need to be more attractive to you than that other stuff.

Listen, Satan is a master of distraction. **Satan knows he can't destroy... so he'll just distract you.** In fact, he knows that he doesn't have to destroy you to win... he just needs to derail you. Don't let him distract you from following in Christ's steps, not matter how nice the bag is? **If We Want To Run After Christ We Need To Leave Satan's Baggage In The Dust**

And so, if the baggage of excuses doesn't work to derail you and the baggage of distraction doesn't work to dissuade you, then **Satan Will**

Give You Temptation To Disenfranchise You. You know how it is. You are trying to walk after Christ, and perhaps you are doing well, and your light is shining, and people are taking notice. But Satan can't have that can he? So he puts temptation in your path hoping you'll take the bait. How'd this ad get on my computer... Satan says, "just click it;" **(bag)** Porn. I can't believe my kids broke this... Satan says, "do something about it;" **(bag)** Rage. My job just gave me two checks this month by accident... Satan says, "keep it;" **(bag)** Theft. The more sin, the more your heart grows callous towards the things of Christ. Look at **Hebrews 3:12-13**. The more we give into sin the more hardened we become towards our spiritual walk, and eventually we become disenfranchised and walk away. You've been there, you know this to be true.

But you don't have to take those bags. You can escape all of Satan's temptations. **1 Cor 10:13** tells us that there is no temptation that has control over us... we always have a way to escape any temptation by turning to Christ.

Some of us have sinned and because of that sin we think that God can't use us now, we think we are phonies, we think we aren't worthy of the mission any more. But this isn't so. This thinking comes from our misconception that God is just waiting for us to mess up and toss us into the waste pile, but that's not the case. Our God is a God of grace, mercy, and love and **with each new mistake we make, God is making new mercy.** Remember one of our passages from a couple weeks ago, **Lamentations 3:22-23**. His mercy is new every morning and great is his faithfulness. Stop walking away from God every time you sin. **God isn't disappointed in you for sinning, he's disappointed when your sin stops you from following him. If We Want To Run After Christ We Need To Leave Satan's Baggage In The Dust.**

And lastly, if he can't get us with these he'll get us with our **(bags)** past won't he. **Satan Will Remind You of Your Past To Deflate You.** We talked about this a couple of weeks ago. Satan will remind us of our pain and our failures and he'll cause it to paralyze us. But we don't have to get stuck or stall out because of our past. When Satan reminds us of our past we must remember that Jesus meets our afflictions with love, he meets our wanderings with mercy, and he meets our bitterness with faithfulness.

Application

So we have all this **baggage**; excuses, distractions, sin, the past, and we definitely can't follow Jesus up the **steps** with all of this on us... there is no way! Maybe there's an elevator? No? Okay. So what do we have to do? We have to lay it aside... I've got to drop it... all of it. I've got my excuses here, but Jesus is more important than my excuses. I've got my distractions here, but following after Jesus is more important than these trivial

things. I've got my sin, but Jesus has forgiven me of that and has given me mercy and grace in my time of need. I've got my past, but instead of letting it paralyze me i'm going to use it to propel me forward. And now, having shed all of that baggage, I can follow in the steps of Christ! Now I can go forward without being hindered by Satan's baggage.

Listen, you can do it. You can lay that crap down and follow Christ. You can lay down everything that Satan is using to hinder you from walking in Christ's steps and then you will be able to run the race with endurance. **If We Want To Run After Christ We Need To Leave Satan's Baggage In The Dust**

Conclusion

What baggage are you carrying? What baggage do you need to leave in the dust this morning? Is it the baggage of excuses? Satan would love nothing more than for you to have this desire to live for Christ but constantly turn away from him because you are too tired, too busy, too self focused. A non-christian who looks away doesn't do anything to dampen the cause of Christ. But someone who calls themselves a Christ follower and looks away can pour cold water on a movement.

Or perhaps its the baggage of distractions? The Christian thing is cool, and all but, out there, in this world, i've got all kinds of pleasures and things to make me happy. I don't need the supernatural... cause I'm satisfied with the natural.

Or perhaps it's the baggage of sin and the past? Just playing a religious game. Jesus forgives so I'll keep on sinning. I'll look the religious part but when it's time to do my thing Imma do it. My past has paralyzed me. I can't take another chance. I can't give it all.

What baggage are you carrying?

Are you willing to lay it down this morning to run after Jesus Christ? When Jesus left the cross he left all of his baggage behind. Would you, for his sake, leave yours?