

**May 3 & 4, 2008**  
**1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11**  
**Hand It Over**  
**Rev. Susan Bresser**

*The chancel area is scattered with suitcases*

**Singing: "I cast all my cares upon you ..."**

How good are you at packing? I don't know about you, but I always pack too much. You don't know what the weather's going to be like. You're not sure what activities are planned when you reach your destination. I just might need that cocktail dress when we go camping in the north woods. You never know.

I always pack too much. I have too much baggage ... just way too much. Most of us have too much baggage. You know exactly what I mean. In my experience, there are very few people in this world who don't have a lot of baggage.

For example, here are a few things we carry with us (*found on the luggage tags on the suitcases*):

Anxiety  
Discontent  
Anger  
Guilt  
Dissatisfaction

Selfishness  
Uncertainty  
Skepticism  
Fear  
Criticism

The Past (stuff that happened in the past and cannot be changed no matter how much I dwell on it)

Health Care Crises  
The Poor Among Us  
Pollution & Global Warming  
Intolerance & Discrimination

We're so loaded down (*grab a suitcase*). For some strange reason, some of us feel more secure when we can hang on to our baggage. We've told ourselves its okay to have an overabundance of baggage when making a journey. We hang on because it's gives us a sense of control.

We have a magnet on our refrigerator that says "Let Go and Let God." I looked for it this week just to help remind me to stay focused on my sermon topic, but I couldn't find it. We have lots of magnets and photos on our fridge, so sometimes the important ones get lost in the clutter. Ummmm, how interesting ... the concept of "let go and let God" sometimes gets lost in the clutter of life. Sometimes the concept of simply letting go gets lost in the clutter of all our baggage.

Let go (drop the suitcase). When you let go, you risk losing control. Can you do that?

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke we hear this direction from Jesus in calling his disciples to action:

Jesus called together his twelve apostles and gave them complete power over all demons and diseases. Then he sent them to tell about God's kingdom and to heal the sick. He told them, "Don't take anything with you! Don't take a walking stick or a traveling bag or food

or money or even a change of clothes. The apostles left and went from village to village, telling the good news and healing people everywhere.

Jesus said, "Don't load yourselves up with baggage, because you already have what you need to make it. You already have what you need to get by. I've given you all the control you need. You can heal. You can minister. You can be my representative. Don't load up on the baggage. It will only be a burden." Commissioned by Jesus, the disciples left and traveled from town to town sharing the good news and offering healing everywhere they went.

In our reading from the scripture today, Peter is writing to Christians who are being persecuted. Peter simply offers words of encouragement: God cares for you so turn all your worries over to God.

Literally this means that we are to throw every care and every concern that we have to God. And why, why do we want to do this? Because God cares enough about us to send us a savior ... a savior that died for us ... a savior that defeats even death and promises that we, too, will have new life, every day, even beyond death. God can take of our baggage. God is able to care for every single area of our lives and more often than not, we still trust ourselves more than we trust God.

Someone sent this to me via email. It's a good reminder:

**Good morning, this is God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If the devil happens to deliver a situation that you cannot handle, DO NOT attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box.**

**It will be addressed in MY time, not yours. Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold on to it. Holding on will delay the resolution of your problem. If it is a situation that you think you are capable of handling, please consult me in prayer to be sure that it is the proper resolution. Because I do not sleep, nor do I slumber, there is no need for you to lose any sleep. Rest my child. If you need to contact me, I am only a prayer away.**

Turn all your worries over to God. Index card. You'll need something to write with. Put on the card your #1 worry. What is it that you're facing right now ... anxiety, anger, fear, disappointment? Put it on the card. When you're done, fold it in half. In just a few minutes, you're going to be invited to come forward to receive God's love and forgiveness in this time of Holy Communion. When you come forward, bring your card with you and drop it in one of the suitcases that will be open and available. Let us cast all our cares unto God. Let us lay all of our burdens at the feet of Jesus.

## **WRITE ON CARDS**

Imagine you're at the airport and you want to check your baggage. The person behind the counter says, "That's a lot of baggage. You wanna take that all with you? You're going to have to pay extra. But I have better idea. See that counter over there? The one that says 'baggage handler'? Take your stuff over there and he'll help you." On your way over the other counter, you hear your flight number being called. Your plane is ready to board. The baggage handler is motioning you to come over and saying,

“Hand it over. Hand it over! You’re gonna miss your flight. Trust me ... you packed too much. I’ll take care of it for you, just hand it over.”

What are you going to do? Miss out because you can’t risk that kind of trust? You can’t risk possibly losing some of your control? Will you choose to check your baggage or do you want to continue to miss out on the amazing things that God has in store for you because you are too stubborn, too rigid, too fearful, too skeptical?

Wouldn’t you like to check your baggage today? Hand it over.