

***Do You Want to Be Well?***

John 5:1-18

Peter Hiatt @ The Sanctuary Downtown

March 5-6, 2010

**[Song: "Fly Away" – Lenny Kravitz]**

(Prayer)

We sing that we want to be free.

We say that we want to be free.

So help us know what freedom is.

Help us preach Your Gospel.

**Movie Clip – *Life of Brian***

The *Life of Brian* follows the life of a man named Brian, who just so happened to be born on the same day as Jesus. Throughout the movie, he attempts to get rid of his followers, but can't seem to.

[The clip opens on a medieval scene of a Brian's mother and Brian walking along a street in Jerusalem among a bunch of beggars reaching out to them for alms.]

Leper 1: A fish sir? . . .

Brian's mother: Nope.

Leper 2: Alms for a leper? (He stretches out his hand and the man keeps walking by without reply.)

Leper 3: Alms for a leper?

Ex-Leper: (Shirtless and holding up a rough pottery bowl.) Alms for an ex-leper?

[Brian's mother and Brian continue on through the gates, going by crippled beggars while other beggars follow along behind them.]

Ex-leper: Bloody donkey owners, all the same, ain't they? Oh, here they . . . touch! (Leaping to step in front of Brian's mother.) Can you spare a talent for an old ex-leper?

Brian's mother: Buzz off!

Ex-Leper: (Jumping in front of Brian, who is following his mother.) Spare a talent for an old ex-leper? (He hops up and down as Brian passes him. Then he continues to follow, holding out his bowl.)

Brian's mother: Talent? That's more than he earns in a month!

Ex-Leper: Half a talent, then? . . . . .

Ex-leper: Okay, sir. My final offer: half a shekel for an old ex-leper?

Brian: Did you say 'ex-leper'?

Ex-Leper: That's right, sir, sixteen years behind a veil and proud of it, sir.

Brian: Well, what happened?

Ex-leper: Oh. Cured, sir.

Brian: Cured?

Ex-leper: Yes, sir, bloody miracle, sir. Bless you!

Brian: Oh, who cured you?

Ex-leper: Jesus did, sir. I was hopping along, minding my own business, all of a sudden, up he comes, cures me! One minute I'm a leper with a trade, next minute my livelihood's gone! Not so much as a by-your-leave! "You're cured, mate." Bloody Do-Gooder.

Brian: Tough. Why don't you go and tell him that you want to be a leper again?

Ex-leper: Aah, could do that, sir, yeah. Yeah, I could do that, I suppose. Well, what the thing was, I was going to ask him is if he could make me a bit lame in one leg during the middle of the week, you know something beggable, but not leprosy, you know? Which is a pain in the ass, if you'll bloody excuse my French, sir? But . . .

## Continued Movie Clip–*Life of Brian*

Brian's mother: Brian!

[They look up from their conversation in the street to see Brian's mother up on a balcony above waving her arm for Brian to come. Come and clean your room up! The scene shifts back to the ex-leper hopping up and down in front of Brian, holding his cup up and begging.]

Brian: (dropping a coin in the beggar's cup.) There you are.

Ex-leper: (Bowing.) Thank you, sir, thank you. (He reaches and takes the coin out of his cup and looks at it as Brian passes.) Half a denarii? For me bloody life's story? (He tosses the coin back in his cup as Brian turns and looks on.)

Brian: (Turning back to go on.) There's no pleasing some people!

Ex-Leper: That's just what Jesus said, sir! (He jumps up and down a few times, turns and hops off down the lane.)

I love that clip. That man is an “ex-leper” who is mad at Jesus.

He says:

“I was hopping along, minding my own business. All of a sudden, up he comes ... **cures me!** One minute, I'm a leper with a trade, next minute, my livelihood's gone! Bloody do-gooder.”

So Brian suggests a solution, and the man says, “Well, I was gonna ask him if he could make me a bit lame in one leg, during the middle of the week. Ya know, something beggable.”

See, Jesus healed him, but he didn't want to be well. So he's gonna ask Jesus to make him lame ... a little bit ... in one leg.

Who would ask to be lame?! That's crazy. Scripture says, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your own wants.”

Maybe what we want is lame?

Well, that's ridiculous ... right?

Who would ever want their own destruction?

Who would ever want a self-imposed prison of disease?

Excuse me.

**[Peter lights up and begins smoking a cigarette]**

Excuse me. I've been through a lot in the last few years, and now preaching really stresses me out. So a smoke calms me down.

Like I was saying, that movie clip was ridiculous, and so obviously it has nothing to do with us. So, let's look at our text for the day:

### **[John 5:1]**

*After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

... For a feast, like a Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

*Now, there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.*

*In these lay a multitude of invalids – blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>2</sup>*

This is a horrid scene: They would wait for an angel to stir the water, for they believed the first into that water would be healed. That was their “health care system”: The first were first, and the last were last.

Imagine that.

But Love is the **first** serving the **last**.

So, if you did get in first, it demonstrated you were last at Love. So your body might be saved, but your heart would sink ever deeper into hell.

Well, it was “survival of the fittest” under the 5 roofed colonnades. And just desiring to be the “fittest” demonstrated that your heart was least fit – least worthy – to survive. It was at the edge of hell, and who would want that?

### **[ verse 5 ]**

*One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” And Jesus did say unto him, “I’m so sorry. Excuse me. For those are very valid excuses. It’s obvious that you are a victim of a repressive health care system, and I apologize for my insensitive question.” So Jesus left the man under the 5 roofed colonnades.*

Actually, Jesus didn’t do that or say that (the last part, at least) ... but what a question: “Do you want to be healed?”

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<sup>1</sup> Once, I calculated that there were 80 days of commanded feasting in old Israel, and one day of commanded fasting called Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement – which we now celebrate with a feast called Easter. Every Sabbath was a feast day, plus 28 more = 80 days of feasting. You see? God wants good things for us.

<sup>2</sup> Paralyzed is “xeros” in Greek. Literally, “dried up,” like an empty well. Verse 4 is missing in many translations, for it’s missing in most reliable ancient texts. It explains the practice of waiting for the angel to trouble the water.

Who would not **WANT** to be healed?

Me.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I wanted to be sick... probably prayed to be sick ... cause if I was sick, mom would write me an excuse, and then I wouldn't have to deal with the bullies at the bus stop. Oh, I could say, "I wanted to, but I couldn't! I was a victim of the flu, so I had to stay home and watch Gilligan's Island!"

It wasn't just 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Sometimes I still pray that way: "God, I've been hurt, so don't expect me to walk again. Don't make me hope again, try again, love again, get vulnerable again. Just let me lie here and die ... a bitter old man. For surely I have an excuse. I'm a victim.

Maybe this guy wanted to be a victim. If you're a victim then nothing is your fault, and everybody owes you.<sup>3</sup>

And yet, you can't really be fixed, for you did nothing wrong.

Well, if you're a Christian, you're not a victim. "The day you eat of it, you will surely die," said God. See, if you're a Christian, you confess your guilt, and you believe none is innocent ... well, except one. And that one is this One ... talking to the invalid.

He was innocent, but chose to be a victim (that's a strange victim).  
He was first, but chose to be last, so the last could be first.  
He was first to the side of the pool, but chose to let everyone else go first.  
He chose to bear our infirmity that we might be made whole.

And that's how he conquered the world. That's Love.

So now, if I find myself suffering, I'm not a victim. I'm a disciple enrolled in my Lord's school of Love, learning the eternal song of Mercy.

So, no Christian is a victim. But maybe this fellow wanted to be a victim. Maybe he wanted to be excused. Jesus said, "Do you want to be healed?" and immediately, he starts making excuses. (Now, excuses have their place. Not **everything** is your fault.) But perhaps this man has excused himself to death.

Do you want to be well? "Actually, I'd rather be excused."

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<sup>3</sup> Someone once said, "Once you're a victim, you can justify anything."

They were talking about the middle east.

Germany was a victim at the treaty of Versailles, at the end of World War I.

The Jews were a victim of German resentment and shame.

The Palestinians and Arabs claim to be victims of Israel.

Now we claim to be victims of them.

Judaism and Islam are both religions of Law, and what are we?

You know, if you're excused, you can't be forgiven; for if you're excused, there's nothing to be forgiven for. Only the inexcusable are forgivable.

When you excuse a person, you say: "I thought you did wrong, but you didn't."  
When you forgive a person, you say: "You did wrong, for which there is no excuse ... but I will suffer the wrong and refuse to retaliate."

To be a Christian is to admit you're not a victim, which is to admit you are inexcusable, which is to likewise admit you are forgivable.

Now, you might say: "What on earth would this man need to be forgiven for? He's an invalid, for gosh sakes!"

Well, I don't know, but in verse 14, Jesus finds him in the temple and says, "Sin no more that nothing worse befall you." Now, that kind of troubles us, and yet we know we all deserve death, and are all dying or dead already.

All sickness, calamity, infirmity, and disease is the result of sin. The real shock is that anyone is well, or thinks they're well. As Jesus will soon reveal (John 9, Luke 5), it's those who think they're well that are the most sick, and those who know that they are sick that are the closest to being well. The seeing are blind, and the blind see.

In John 9, Jesus reveals that particular infirmities are not necessarily the result of particular sins. Yet Jesus did say to this man, "Stop sinning," and the verb tense implies that this man has been sinning until now. For thirty-eight years he's been an invalid. What sin could he possibly be committing?

Well, maybe sickness isn't a punishment for sin, so much as sin is its own sickness.  
So, sin is choosing to not be well.  
Sin is its own punishment.

Perhaps sin itself is the greatest suffering, the very worst disease ... and if we weren't so sick already, we'd know it.

Sin is to want what God does not want.  
Sin is to will what God does not will.  
Sin is to walk out of God's will and into nowhere and nothingness.

So to choose sin is to choose sickness... is to choose hell. (Hades; no where and nothingness ... The Abyss.)

Well perhaps this man wanted to be excused rather than forgiven.  
For when you excuse sin, you keep the sin and call it something else.  
When you forgive sin, you name it and kill it.

When you claim to be a victim, and you want to be excused, you call a lawyer and lust for law. When you want to be forgiven you long for Mercy.

In Hebrew "*Khesed*" – Steadfast Love, Grace, Mercy.

Most scholars argue that *Bethesda* comes from two Hebrew words. "Beth" and "Khesed" – *Bethesda* ... meaning "House of Mercy."

Well, perhaps he didn't want it – the pool of Mercy ... God's ocean of Mercy.

Perhaps he had learned to be content in hell.

Perhaps he had no Faith in Mercy.

Perhaps he had no Hope. He was afraid to Hope. Hope is like a hole in your heart. It hurts. No faith, hope, or love (that is, mercy.)

Perhaps he couldn't even conceive of anything beyond the survival of the fittest, under the 5 roofed colonnades.

Perhaps he couldn't even conceive of a world of Mercy ... that is, a world of freedom. For Mercy is necessarily free ... it's Grace.

Thirty-eight years. He knew how to navigate his prison of shame and despair. But freedom ... perhaps that was too terrifying.

In the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, there's an old prisoner who threatens to kill a man, just so he can avoid the freedom of parole, and stay in prison. His name is Brooks. A young prisoner, named Andy, doesn't get it. So another old Prisoner, named Red, explains:

**[Movie Clip – *Shawshank Redemption* #1]**

[Several prisoners are having a conversation about one of their inmates.]

Andy: I just don't understand what happened in there, that's all.

Heywood: Old man's crazy as a rat in a tin house, is what.

Red: Heywood, that's enough out of you. Brooks ain't no bug. He's just...he's just institutionalized.

Heywood: Institutionalized, my ass .

Red: The man's been in here fifty years. Heywood, fifty years! This is all he knows. In here, he's an important man. He's an educated man. Outside, he's nothing but a used-up con with arthritis in both hands. Probably couldn't get a library card if he tried. You know what I'm trying to say?

Floyd: Red, I do believe you're talking out of your ass .

Red: You believe whatever you want, Floyd. But I'm telling you these walls are funny. First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on 'em. That's "institutionalized".

Maybe that invalid had become “institutionalized.”

Maybe we’re “institutionalized” by the principalities and powers, the world rulers of this present darkness.

Maybe we’re born into prison, and it’s all we know.

According to Scripture, this world (even our hearts) are like a prison: A dark bubble of death floating in a sea of life, called the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven is Faith, Hope, and Love. Heaven is the song of Grace that never ends. Sin is choosing to shut our ears to that music.

In *The Shawshank Redemption*, there’s only one prisoner who is innocent. He is a victim, but chooses not to live like one (a strange victim). He refuses to give up Faith, Hope, and Love. He refuses to be “institutionalized.”

One day, he locks a guard in the toilet, so that he can play music over the loudspeakers – if only for a moment, to set the prisoners free. His name is Andy.

### **Movie Clip – *Shawshank Redemption* #2**

[Opera music majestically in the background. There is a visual of an old record playing on a desk. The camera pans up to show Andy comfortably relaxing in a chair, with a smile on his face and breathing in the beautiful music.]

Red: I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singin' about. Truth is, I don't want to know. Some things are best left unsaid. [There is a visual of the prisoners all stopping to enjoy the music.] I like to think they were singin' about something so beautiful it can't be expressed in words, and makes your heart ache because of it.

Red (V.O.) I tell you, those voices soared. Higher and farther than anybody in a gray place dares to dream. It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away...and for the briefest of moments - every last man at Shawshank felt free. It pissed the warden off something awful. Andy got two weeks in the hole for that little stunt.

Hadley: On your feet. [Andy is released from getting in the hole.]

[The scene changes to the prison cafeteria. Andy enters.]

Con: Hey, look who's here.

Con: Maestro.

Heywood: You, you couldn't play somethin' good, huh? Like Hank Williams?

Andy: They broke the door down before I could take requests.

Floyd: Was it worth two weeks in the hole?

Andy: Easiest time I ever did.

Heywood: Oh, shit. No such thing as easy time in the hole. A week in the hole is like a year.

Snooze: Damn straight.

Andy: I had Mr. Mozart to keep me company.

Red: So they let you tote that record player down there, huh?

Andy: It was in here...in here. That's the beauty of music. They can't get that from you. Haven't you ever felt that way about music?

Red: Well I played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost my interest in it, though. Didn't make much sense in here.

Andy: Here's where it makes most sense. You need it so you don't forget.

Red: Forget?

## Movie Clip Continued – *Shawshank Redemption*

Andy: Forget that there are places in the world that aren't made out of stone, that there's... there's something inside that they can't get to and they can't touch. That's yours.

Red: What are you talking about?

Andy: Hope.

Red: Hope. Let me tell you something, my friend. Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It's got no use on the inside. You'd better get used to the idea.

Andy: Like Brooks did?

You see, when the old man Brooks was released, He got a job bagging groceries; but he was so afraid of freedom that he hung himself in his room. He didn't want to be well. He didn't want to be free. Because bondage was all he knew.

And so maybe the old man under the 5 roofed colonnades really didn't want to be well, because bondage was all he knew ... and he couldn't even conceive of "well," when and where everything is good. So maybe he really was a victim – a victim of wanting to be a victim.

I mean, he had a lame "wanter," a lame "chooser" – like a stone heart. He didn't want to be well, and couldn't simply decide to want to be well. He didn't want to be well, and not wanting to be well is sin. And sin is a prison.

Ever since Adam and Eve, we are born into this prison, and choose this prison. So maybe all we can choose is sin.

"Do you want to be well?" And I can only choose to not be well. I can only choose the prison of myself. I have a lame heart: "*Astheneia*" in Greek. Literally "weak." Yet when I am weak, he is strong. When I am *invalid*, he is valid.

Jesus doesn't wait for the man's answer. He chooses for him.

### [verse 8]

*Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.*

The obedience of Faith:

It may look like the man's choice,

It may feel like his choice,

But it's God's choice.

Faith, Hope, and Love – the music of Heaven.

It's God's choice – Jesus: His life ... in the lame man.

That man didn't get to the Mercy, but Mercy got to him... and made him His house ... *Bethesda* ... House of Mercy.



**[verse 9]**

*Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."*

You see, carrying your bed on the Sabbath was against the law. Not God's law, but Jewish law. In Scripture, God commands that we do no work on the Sabbath. So the Jews set out to define "work."

They came up with 39 different classifications for "work," one of which consisted of carrying a "burden." But then they had to define a "burden," and so they produced reams of laws defining "burdens." That law became the *Mishnah*.

Most people think my job is to write *Mishnah*. They think my job is to take the Word of God, and turn it into rules and practical application points for you to follow. That is exactly what the scribes and Pharisees did.

So, if you say: "Preacher, tell us exactly what we have to do... and be practical!" ... you are saying, "Be more of a Pharisee, and give us some *Mishnah*."

*Mishnah*, like:

- Memorize 5 verses a day
- Keep a journal
- Pray for 20 minutes each morning
- Give 10% to the church **before taxes**
- Write your mother
- Don't drink, and **definitely** don't smoke
- You can say "pee-pee," "poo-poo," "bottom," and "fornication," but not the words I edit out of the movie clips ... words I edit out for your very own protection!

That's *Mishnah*.

And Jesus seems to almost go out of his way to break *Mishnah*... as if he were breaking down a prison wall. He violates *Mishnah* and commands this invalid to do the same: "Pick up your bed (don't leave it 'till later) ... Pick up your bed **and walk!**"

And now, I ought to tell you: this is the first cigarette I ever smoked in my life.

Now, I've chewed quite a bit of tobacco, and I've eaten lots of donuts at church ... donuts that can kill you quicker than tobacco... but I've never smoked a cigarette. Why? Because it violates God's Law? No! Because it violates 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Evangelical, Protestant *Mishnah*. So I thought I oughta break some *Mishna* right here at church this morning.

But now, please don't miss my point:

#1. Don't smoke. (except perhaps for sermon illustrations) Don't smoke. Not because it's against some law... Don't smoke because it's choosing to not be well. It's choosing to make yourself an invalid. And yet there's something far more dangerous.

#2. Don't make laws about smoking, and then live by those laws, judging yourself and others with those laws, for then you're not only a physical invalid, you are a spiritual invalid.

The entire law is fulfilled in one word: Love. (Galatians 5:14) So whenever we seek law (even God's law, which is perfect), we admit that we don't know Love or don't want to love. We admit that we need the constraint of law, because we are not constrained by Love. You see, an addiction to law is ignorance of Love, or even hatred of Love: *Bethesda*, the house of Mercy.

And please hear me, law has its place in a society short of Love... just like prisons have their place when hearts are hard. But the Sabbath is not a prison, and no one worries about laws in Heaven, for no one there ever wants to break one.

Hey, do you remember the original sin? It was lust ... lust for law: the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And then with that law, they built themselves a prison: covered themselves in fig leaves and hid in the trees. See? They didn't want out, for their hearts were already dead.

**[verse 10]**

*So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk'." They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.*

*Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."*

"My Father is working and He hasn't stopped working."

The Sabbath is to stop working. So, if the Father is still working, the true Sabbath hasn't happened "until now," says Jesus. That is, the 7<sup>th</sup> day isn't here and now in your reality. God's 7<sup>th</sup> day, when and where everything is good, and it is finished.

In other words, every Sabbath anticipates the true Sabbath. But these Jews have not yet even seen the true Sabbath. Indeed, they can't even conceive of God's Sabbath.

They can't even conceive of being well. So now they judge the Lord of the Sabbath with this law about Sabbath, and seek to put him to death... That's **SIN**.

**[verse 18]**

*This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

So now we need to ask ourselves: Who was the real invalid? The Invalid, or the religious folks?

The invalids all lay under the 5 roofed colonnades. John mentions numbers on purpose. There are 5 books in Moses' Law – The Pentateuch. And please understand, the Law is important: it protects invalids. But it can't make them well, or want to be well.

The invalid had been there 38 years. The Jews were in the wilderness for 40 years, but they wandered 38 years from the time they chose not to enter. They chose not to enter the Promised Land due to fear.

They were a nation of slaves, and scared to be free. The Promised Land was across the water of the Jordan. It was to be a House of Mercy, and a Sabbath rest. Joshua finally leads them there. Joshua is a Hebrew name ... in Greek, it's pronounced *Jesus*. He leads them there, and He leads you there.

He leads you from the prison of law to the House of Mercy;  
From human religion to the kingdom of Heaven;  
From this world to the New Creation – God's Sabbath Rest.

But first, he asks you a question: "Do you want to be well?"

If you lust after laws, and freedom makes you nervous, you're probably telling him, "No, I don't want to be well. I'm a victim, and I want to excuse myself, pay for myself, justify myself, and protect myself."

You see, that's why we make laws and hire lawyers – we want to protect our **self** from sin. But our self **is** sin.

So really, we want to protect our self from our self. That is, we try to repress ourselves with ourselves. That is, we turn ourselves into our own prison. And that's why most folks go to church: "Pastor, I'm scaring myself. Give me some rules, and help me repress myself. Build a prison for my invalid self. Cause you see, I really don't want to Love. I really don't want to be well."

Do you want to be well? No ... I don't think so.

But that's why Jesus came: To reveal that you don't want to be well. It's called sin. He came to reveal that you don't want to be well, **and** He came to give you a new "wanter" – a new heart.

He came to write the law on your heart.

He came to give you His heart.

He came to fill you with Faith, Hope, and Love – His Life.

He came to make you want to be well.

He descended into your prison to make you want to leave.

Andy Dufresne was the only innocent man in Shawshank Prison, and he wouldn't give up hope. He dreamed of a place by the water in Sewateneo, Mexico. He told Red and made Red promise to join him if he ever got out. One day, because of his innocence, Andy was beaten to within an inch of his life. Soon after, he escaped ... the only man ever to do so.

Much later, Red was paroled, just like old Brooks (who hung himself). Red even went to the same halfway house as Brooks, stayed in the same room, and got the same job bagging groceries ... just like Brooks.

### **Movie clip – *Shawshank Redemption* #3**

[Red is bagging groceries at a grocery store.]

Red: Bathroom break boss?

[His boss motions for Red to come over.]

Boss: You don't need to ask permission every time you need to take a piss. Just go. Understand  
Yes sir. [Red is in the restroom and looks in the mirror.]

Red (V.O.): Forty years I been asking permission to piss. I can't squeeze a drop without say-so. There is a harsh truth to face. No way I'm gonna make it on the outside. All I do anymore is think of ways to break my parole, terrible thing to live in fear. Brooks Hatlen knew it. Knew it all too well. All I want is to be back where things make sense. Where I won't have to be afraid all the time. Only one thing stops me. A promise I made to Andy.

[Red is opening a letter that was left for him by Andy, which was buried under a tree.]

Andy: [in letter to Red] Dear Red, If you're reading this you've gotten out, and if you've come this far maybe you're willing to come a little further. You remember the name of the town don't you. [Red states the name of the town.] Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies. I will be hoping that this letter finds you, and find you well. Your friend, Andy.

Red: [narrating] I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to find my friend and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams. I hope!

[Red is walking along a beach with the blue Pacific at his side. Andy is working on his boat. The camera pans out on the open sea and beach.]

And so, Jesus came to your prison... the only innocent man that ever walked the face of this earth. He came to give you His Faith, Hope, and Love. So when you come to church, don't come looking for a bunch of rules... that's death. Come looking for Jesus. He is life.

### **Communion**

And so, He took bread and broke it, saying, "This is my Body, broken (made lame) for you. This is my blood of the Covenant."

Do you want to be well?

Pray, "Jesus, come to my prison, and set me free." Now, get up and come to the table.

### **Benediction**

This sermon could very easily be misunderstood. So, having listened to it, if you think, "Hey, I should sin, that Grace may abound!" ... then I want you to forget the sermon. For you didn't really hear it. And you don't love Love. So you need the Law. You need some more time in prison.

But if you're sick of this prison, believe the Gospel. Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*