

DEAD MAN'S ROPE

(2Peter 2:17-19)

- Ed Sheeran's song, *The A Team* portrays the life—and death—of a young girl, once full of life and promise. She becomes addicted to crack cocaine and dies far too young from her addiction
- We're accustomed to think of addiction as occurring in cities—crime-infested urban areas. But,
 - Lancaster County faces a struggle of heroin and opioid prescription addiction. The epidemic affects rural areas outside the city rather than the inner-city
 - Addiction and overdoses affect every geographical location, every race, and every socioeconomic classification. Many users come from kind, loving, supportive families
 - The county coroner has noticed an alarming trend in the type of overdose victims he attends. They are young. Several who died were high-school-aged teenagers
 - Many young people here were raised in religious homes. They went through drug abstinence education programs, but upbringing and education are only a minor deterrent. Many experiment with a friend's oxycodone, then try heroin
 - Lancaster County had 127 drug overdose hospitalizations last year, topped only by Pittsburgh and Philadelphia counties
 - Lancaster, York, and Dauphin counties have 10% of the state's population; they had 20% of deaths from heroin overdoses
- We think of addiction as something that occurs to "others," not "us," not "our own"
- Scripture broadens our definition of *addiction* in 2Peter 2:17-19 (NASB):

*These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for **by what people are overcome, by this they are enslaved.***
- We are "addicted" to many things we don't necessarily classify as "addictions"
- Scripture teaches that our primary addiction is to our old, sinful nature (see Romans 7:15-25)
- Only through a personal relationship with Jesus can we journey from addiction to redemption
- This journey is illustrated in a song by Sting, *Dead Man's Rope*

A JOURNEY FROM ADDICTION TO REDEMPTION

The journey of life...

...can be continuous and
unfulfilling

...since we cannot escape from a
universal addiction: we're
"addicted" to our sinful nature

...and following that way of life
leads to death.

However, we are haunted by the
memory that forgiveness and
freedom are possible.

The man in this song is typical of
all people. He comes to a crisis
and recognizes he has been
running from God.

He knows if he continues, his
path will lead to more sadness,
emptiness, anger, and pain.

He must decide. Do I continue
running from God or turn back?

**That's when he encounters God,
who has been pursuing him!**

**He is converted, redeemed, and
experiences the cleansing rain
of forgiveness and grace and
begins to "walk" with God!**

THIS is what now defines his life:

He walks away from the anger,
pain, and anguish of the past
into continual forgiveness.

DEAD MAN'S ROPE (Sting)

A million footsteps, this left foot drags behind my right
But I keep walking, from daybreak 'til the falling night
As days turn into weeks and years and years turn into lifetimes
I just keep walking, like I've been walking for a thousand years

Walk away in emptiness, walk away in sorrow
Walk away from yesterday, walk away tomorrow

If you're walking to escape, escape from your affliction
You'd be walking in a great circle, in a circle of addiction
Did you ever wonder what you'd been carrying since the world was black?
You see yourself in a looking glass with a tombstone on your back

Walk away in emptiness, walk away in sorrow
Walk away from yesterday, walk away tomorrow
Walk away in anger, walk away in pain
Walk away from life itself, walk into the rain

All this wandering has led me to this place
Inside the well of my memory, sweet rain of forgiveness
I'm just hanging here in space

Now I'm suspended between my darkest fears and dearest hope
Cause I've been walking, now I'm hanging from a dead man's rope
With Hell below me, and Heaven in the sky above
I've been walking, I've been walking away from Jesus' love

Walk away in emptiness, walk away in sorrow
Walk away from yesterday, walk away tomorrow
Walk away in anger, walk away in pain
Walk away from life itself, walk into the rain

All this wandering has led me to this place
Inside the well of my memory, sweet rain of forgiveness
I'm just hanging here in space

**The shadows fall around my bed
When the hand of an angel, the hand of an angel
Is reaching down above my head**

**(All this wandering) has led me to this place
Inside the well of my memory, sweet rain of forgiveness
Now I'm walking in his grace
Now I'm walking in his grace
Walking in his footsteps, walking in his footsteps
Walking in his footsteps**

All the days of my life I will walk with you
All the days of my life I will talk with you
All the days of my life I will share with you
All the days of my life I will bear with you

Walk away from anger, walk away from pain
Walk away from anguish, walk into the rain