

**Romans 6:15-23**  
**For the week of February 5, 2023**

**Reflection**

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

**Paul now turns to a second metaphor, that of slavery. In verses 1–14 he used the image of the two realms of sin/the law and grace; here he uses that of emancipation from slavery, but with a twist. The great Christian paradox is that we are freed from the slavery of sin to become slaves to God. The difference is the hostility of the old master versus the love and grace of the new. The first ends in death, the second in eternal life. This section begins with another rhetorical question (compare v. 1) on the issue of sin and then offers four responses. Paul begins with (1) a general statement that everyone is enslaved to something (v. 16) and then (2) reminds them that they have been emancipated from slavery to sin (vv. 17–18) and so should become slaves to righteousness, leading to holiness (v. 19). He concludes by reminding them (3) that sin results in death (vv. 20–22) and (4) that following God results in holiness and eternal life (vv. 22–23).<sup>1</sup>**

**Observation** (vs. 15-16)

3. Although seemingly repetitious, what is Paul saying in these verses?

**Interpretation**

4. The Greek word *doulos* means slave, servant, and/or bondservant. How do you define *doulos*/slave?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. In verse 16, Paul uses the word “present” in the same way he does in Romans 12:1. What does the word “present” mean and/or imply?

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<sup>1</sup> Grant R. Osborne, [\*Romans\*](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 160.

**Application**

6. How does your life show to whom you are a slave?

**Observation** (vs. 17-18)

7. What is being said in these verses?

**Interpretation**

8. How do you reconcile the juxtaposed phrases “set free from sin” and “become slaves of righteousness”?

**Application**

9. How are you finding freedom in Christ through living as you were designed?

**Observation** (vs. 19)

10. Summarize this verse.

**Interpretation**

11. What is sanctification?

**Application**

12. How is God sanctifying you?

**Observation** (vs. 20-22)

13. Write these verses in your own words.

**Interpretation**

14. Compare the fruit of “which you are now ashamed” and the fruit that leads to sanctification and eternal life. (See Gal 5:16-25)

**Application**

15. What kind of fruit are you revealing in your life? Why?

**Interpretation** (vs. 23)

16. Write this verse out.

Paul concludes the chapter as well as verses 20–22 in verse 23, the justly well-known *for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*. With the image of wages, Paul adds another metaphor to those he has already used—baptism, the transfer from one kingdom to another, the old self, rendering a force powerless, joining an army, slavery, and harvest imagery. This is close to the harvest theme, for it denotes payment for services rendered. In fact, we again have a military image (Käsemann 1980; Schreiner 1998) denoting the wages paid soldiers for serving their country. So sin is a ruler giving to his army what they have earned, namely eternal death (as in v. 21). This is certainly the worst wages ever paid anyone, but it is also true that this is earned by a lifetime of rejecting God and deliberately choosing sin. As Dunn says (1988a:349), death is “sin’s final payoff” (shame, 6:21, could be called an earlier payoff). In fact, *death* here is both the physical death that ends this earthly life and the eternal death that follows, though the latter is primary. While death is typified as wages, eternal life is seen as a *gift*. The contrast is deliberate (see also 5:21). One is judged by works (Rev 20:12–14) but cannot earn eternal life on the basis of works (see 3:20, 27–28; 4:2–5, 14; Eph 2:8–9; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5). Eternal life is God’s gracious gift. Moreover, this is all possible only *in Christ Jesus our Lord*, a formal title stressing his lordship that appears also in 1:4, 7; 5:1, 11, 21; 7:25; 8:39; 13:14; 15:6, 30. Here it says that the gift of eternal life is only possible *in Christ* and his lordship over salvation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 166.