

## Which Will You Receive?

Romans 6: 23

The Bible is filled with contrasts. We find joy and pain, victory and defeat, abundance and famine, righteousness and sin, happiness and sorrow, freedom and captivity, obedience and rebellion, life and death, etc.

The lives we live are no different. Each of our lives is faced with contrasts. We live in a time far removed from the days when the Bible was penned and its characters walked and lived among the world, but time has not changed the fact that life deals with contrast.

Much of the contrast in life is affected by individual choices. We have a choice today of whether we will serve the Lord and live for Him. We can choose a life of joy, peace, happiness, freedom of sin, obedience to God, and abundant life or we can choose a life filled with sorrow, grief, captivity, rebellion, and ultimately death. We serve a sovereign God, but He allows each of us to make our choices in life. I am certain that the Lord did not force a one of us to be here this morning. We chose to come to church.

The verse I read today is a very familiar verse. It deals with the contrasts of life. We find there are wages and there are gifts, two totally different resources in life. There is sin and there is righteousness through Christ our Lord, two totally different walks of life. There is also life and there is death, two totally different outcomes for each of us. We are somebody going somewhere. The choices made in this life will decide where we end up.

I am particularly interested in the wages of sin and the gift of God. Both of these are something men receive. Every person here today, as well as all who ever lived, will receive one or the other, the wages of sin or the gift of God. I want to examine the [contrast](#) of wages and gifts as we consider the question: [Which Will You Receive?](#)

**I. The Wages of Sin (6a)** – [For the wages of sin is death.](#) There are some characteristics of wages that are generally true in every circumstance. Consider:

**A. Wages are Earned** – This is actually a military term that speaks of “*a soldier’s pay, his hire, his allowance.*” It refers to the money or supplies he has earned for his service. The soldier has been faithful to his duty and he has earned his wages. This is not a gift, but something he is due.

- Most of us are familiar with wages. We have worked a job or performed a service, earning our pay. The money or benefits we received were earned. It wasn’t given or received as a gift.

- The same is true in regard to the wages of sin. For those who choose to deny God and live a life of sin and rebellion, they are earning their wages. [The wages of sin is death](#) and there are many who are earning their pay. In fact, each of us is born in sin and apart from God we are earning death.
- Countless people live their lives as they please and never stop to think about the consequences. They never consider the wages that will be paid for the life they live. Death is sure for all who reject God and that death is reserved for all who earn it. (Jesus is the only means of escape. Apart from Him we would all earn eternal death.)

**B. Wages are Deserved** – You would agree with me that wages are deserved. An employee looks for his paycheck at the end of the week because he has worked for it, he earned it and he deserves to receive his pay.

- There is no difference when it comes to the wages of sin. Many die in their sin and receive the wages they deserve. They have lived their lives according to the lusts of the flesh. They have not regarded the Lord or repented of their sin and they simply receive what they deserve.
- I know that we don't like to think in those terms, but it is true nonetheless. We like to think of ourselves as "good" people. We try to obey the law, we work for what we have, we are good to others, but that is not enough. [Rom.3:23 – For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;](#) [Rom.3:10 – As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:](#) Apart from God we are all condemned. We are all sinners and deserving of death.
- We live in a day where many reject the idea that God would send men to hell. The truth is He doesn't; they made their own choice and God just gave them what they have earned and what they deserve. He is just paying the wages they sought to receive.
- I am not being self-righteous. If I got what I deserved, I too would be in hell today. I was born in sin; I lived a life of sin and came short of the glory of God. The saving grace of God is the only way to escape the wages of sin.

**C. Wages are Paid** – Many people work a job and on payday they receive their wages. For the most part, wages that are earned and deserved are usually paid.

- Payday is coming in a spiritual sense as well. For those who reject the Lord and die in their sin, the wages of eternal death will be paid. There will be no escape. There will be no way to deny or refuse payment. The wages we earn in this life will be paid in the life to come. [Gal.6:7-8 – Be not](#)

deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. <sup>[8]</sup> For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

- The wages of death will be paid in full. This is something all need to consider. I know there are those who believe hell doesn't exist. There are those who believe, even if it does, those who go there will just burn up and be consumed, but that is not found in Scripture.
- The word **death** in the text deals with separation from God. It reveals the misery of the soul lost in sin and condemned to eternal torments. Death never means annihilation, non-existence, or inactivity. **Luke 16:23-24 – And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>[24]</sup> And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.**
- The wages a man earns will be paid: **Rev.20:11-15 – And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. <sup>[12]</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. <sup>[13]</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. <sup>[14]</sup> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>[15]</sup> And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

**II. The Gift of God** – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. I am glad there is a contrast to the wages of sin and that is the gift of God. There is an alternative to death that sin brings.

**A. The Source of this Gift** – We find this is the **gift of God**. The gift spoken of is the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son upon the cross for our sins. God is holy and demands that we be made holy. This is impossible within ourselves; we are all sinful and come short of His righteous demands. But God has offered a gift to make us acceptable to Him.

- Isn't that amazing? The God of heaven is mindful of sinful men and has offered a gift that promises eternal life. I may not be known and appreciated by the elite of this world, but I am known and loved of God!

**B. The Significance of this Gift** – As I pondered the gift of God I was reminded of some of the attributes of gifts. Consider this:

➤ Gifts by their very nature are free. They are not earned or given with the expectation of something in return. After all, we had nothing to give in return. What could we possibly offer God in exchange for our redemption?

➤ Gifts are given on a voluntary basis. God provided for our salvation by sending His Son because He loved us and wanted to redeem us from sin. Christ Himself willingly became our sacrifice. He chose to do that for us!

➤ Gifts are given without restraint. They aren't given to be used and enjoyed for a while and then returned. Gifts are given to keep. Salvation has been given to those who receive it for all of time and eternity. I have not been given something that my Lord is going to ask me to return.

▪ The gift of God could never be earned and it could never be deserved. It is much different than the wages of sin. We have been given the gift of salvation and eternal life by the merciful hand of God. It is impossible to work out our salvation or even live good enough to deserve it. [Ephes.2:8-9 – For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.](#)

**C. The Sacrifice of this Gift** – [but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.](#) This gift is free, by its very nature, but it is not cheap. It did not come without a price.

▪ As I consider all that mankind has done I stand amazed that Jesus would give Himself to redeem us. Man was created in the image of God, for His glory, and yet man rebelled and sinned against the Lord. Down through the ages God was rejected by men as they turned to false gods, worshipped idols, and fulfilled the lusts of the flesh. Jesus was even despised and rejected.

▪ God knew all of this as He sent Jesus to become our sacrifice. Take just a moment to consider the sacrifice Jesus made. He is the second person of the Godhead. He has always been and ever shall be. He dwelt with God in heaven in eternity past. As He looked down upon the sins of humanity, a fallen race who cared nothing for Him or His ways, He willingly came to die for those who had no desire to know Him. The holy, sinless, perfect Son of God came to earth to die on the cross. The just died for the unjust. The giver of life tasted death so that we might live.

▪ Yes, gifts are free, but this one came at a price. Jesus gave His life's blood so that we might be forgiven of sin and adopted into the family of God.

**D. The Supply of this Gift** – The gift of God is **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

- Many are earning the wages of sin today, but God has offered a gift of eternal life through His Son. Sin will only result in eternal death; eternal separation from God in torments, but the gift of God affords eternal life.
  
- Rev. 21:2-4 – And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Rev. 21:27 – And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.
  
- Those who have received the gift of eternal life will enjoy the splendor of heaven in the presence of our Lord for all eternity. I can't begin to imagine just how long that will be, but I know it is a long time.

**Conclusion:** I wonder how it is with you today. Each of us will receive something. We will either receive the wages of sin, eternal death, or the gift of God, eternal life. The choice is up to you. Have you received Christ as Savior of your soul? He doesn't want you to die in sin and receive those dreadful wages.

Eternity will be a reality for all who ever lived. The only difference will be where we spend it. The deciding factor rests in what we have received. I'm glad I have received the gift of God and will not receive the wages that I deserve. If you die in your sin, you will receive the wages of sin. If you are not saved and the Lord has spoken to your heart, please come today.