

Sermon Growth Guide

Author: Rev. Dr. John Goodale

Freedom's Gift | Romans 6:12-23

April 5, 2026

Key Verse: Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Big Idea: As servants of Jesus, we’ve been given a tremendous gift that lasts forever: eternal life.



Foundations

Paul refers to us as slaves nine times in this week’s passage. This description would have resonated with many of his readers, for an estimated quarter of the workforce at that time were slaves.

Today, we balk at the idea of being slaves to anything or anyone. After all, we live in a country where we celebrate our freedom and independence! But Paul uses this image of slavery to set the stage for his message of freedom that we experience by serving Jesus.

Years ago, Bob Dylan wrote a song titled, “Gotta Serve Somebody.” The song was a declaration of faith, challenging listeners to ponder the consequences of their choices. It prompted a response from John Lennon with his own song, “Serve Yourself.”

Paul’s point is that serving ourselves will result in receiving what we deserve: death and separation from God. But serving God results in receiving what we don’t deserve: the gift not only of relationship with Jesus and the freedom He offers, but also of life forever with him.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read Romans 6:12-23. Paul describes us in 6:22 as “slaves to God.” How do you feel about that phrase, and is it consistent with how you view your relationship with God? Paul exhorts us in 6:19 to “offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.” What is he instructing us to do?

Applying God’s Word

When you think of eternal life, what comes to mind? What do you think shapes that perception?

Four characteristics of eternal life were suggested in the sermon: 1) The experience will be better than we can even imagine; 2) We’ll enjoy relationships more fully than we ever have; 3) It will feel like home; and 4) Jesus Christ will be front and center. Which of these do you find most reassuring, and why?

Witnessing God’s Word

How can your hope of God’s gift of life forever even more glorious than our current experience shape how you live today—and how can others see this hope in you in ways that might draw them to Jesus?