

Romans 6:23

Your Wages or His Gift?

Fair Wages ...

I. Paid

- A. Death
- B. Death
- C. Second Death

II. Purchased

- A. Redemption
- B. Death
- C. Resurrection Power

III. Gifted

- A. Life
- B. "Sleep"
- C. Eternal Life

... fully withheld.

Children, Listen ...

1. What is the payment for sin?
2. What is the gift of God in Christ Jesus?
3. What did Jesus have to do to provide this gift?
4. When people believe in Jesus, where do they go when they die?
5. Have you trusted in Jesus to give you life now and forever?

Between the Lines and the Bookends

Death bloodies the pages of Scripture from the time of the fall to nearly the last pages of the Apocalypse of John. The grim reality of spiritual death, physical death and the horrors of the second death are as unavoidable in life as they are in Holy Scripture. The Gospel proper itself is set in the context of the ravages of the three deaths. But God is the God of life, and though creation labors under the burden of death, God brings life. Our simple text – a classic “Gospel text” – starts with the dreadful wages paid to slaves of sin – then quickly states the gift of life that God gives in Christ Jesus, what a stark contrast! But you have to read between the lines that the context of Romans and actually the full scope of Scripture provides – a death had to take place and resurrection power had to be exerted. The line between death and life might read something like this “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” or perhaps even more powerfully the words of our Savior on the cross “it is finished!” It is the blood of Christ that changes everything for the sinner – He took the deadly wages owed to us – and then rose up in glorious power - and now the merits of His work and the power of His resurrection are gifted to us by the life-giving God. Scripture begins with life – deals with death – and then ends on the wonderful note of eternal life with the inhabitants of God's eternal city eating from the tree of life and drinking deeply the free gift of the water of life. The Word may be sprinkled with the blood of death – but the blood of Christ brings life, so much so that the Gospel teems with life, and that life is for all who believe now and forevermore.