

12 Rewards of FAITHFULNESS

25 Mar. 23



Ice-Breaker: *What reward would you prefer: a medal, or something else?*

Romans 6:15-23 cev ¹⁵⁻¹⁸What does all this mean? Does it mean we are free to sin, because we are ruled by God's wonderful kindness and not by the Law? Certainly not! Don't you know that you are slaves of anyone you obey? You can be slaves of sin and die, or you can be obedient slaves of God and be acceptable to him. You used to be slaves of sin. But I thank God that with all your heart you obeyed the teaching you received from me. Now you are set free from sin and are slaves who please God. ¹⁹I am using these everyday examples, because in some ways you are still weak. You used to let the different parts of your body be slaves of your evil thoughts. But now you must make every part of your body serve God, so that you will belong completely to him. ²⁰⁻²³When you were slaves of sin, you didn't have to please God. But what good did you receive from the things you did? All you have to show for them is your shame, and they lead to death. Now you have been set free from sin, and you are God's slaves. This will make you holy and will lead you to eternal life. The reward for sin is death. But God's gift is eternal life given by Jesus Christ our Lord.

- *What does it mean to be a slave of someone or something?*
- *Which type of slavery is the Apostle Paul most concerned about here & why?*
- *How are we to receive the reward Paul is desiring us to have?*

Revelations 21:1-12 cev ¹⁻²I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband. ³⁻⁴I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone for ever. ⁵⁻⁷Then the one sitting on the throne said: I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted. Everything is finished! I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give water from the life-giving fountain to

everyone who is thirsty. All who win the victory will be given these blessings. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ⁸But I will tell you what will happen to cowards and to everyone who is unfaithful or dirty-minded or who murders or is sexually immoral or uses witchcraft or worships idols or tells lies. They will be thrown into that lake of fire and burning sulphur. This is the second death. ⁹⁻¹⁰I saw one of the seven angels who had the bowls filled with the seven last terrible troubles. The angel came to me and said, "Come on! I will show you the one who will be the bride and wife of the Lamb." Then with the help of the Spirit, he took me to the top of a very high mountain. There he showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven. ¹¹⁻¹²The glory of God made the city bright. It was dazzling and crystal clear like a precious jasper stone. The city had a high and thick wall with twelve gates, and each one of them was guarded by an angel. On each of the gates was written the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

- *Which of the pictures of the New Earth, shown here, appeals most to you?*
- *Verse 8 describes one type of reward. Who will receive it & why?*
- *How will it feel to have God as your neighbour?*
- *Why do you think this passage has been given to us in the Bible?*

Romans 8:12-23 cev ¹²⁻¹⁷My dear friends, we must not live to satisfy our desires. If you do, you will die. But you will live, if by the help of God's Spirit you say "No" to your desires. Only those people who are led by God's Spirit are his children. God's Spirit doesn't make us slaves who are afraid of him. Instead, we become his children and call him our Father. God's Spirit makes us sure that we are his children. His Spirit lets us know that together with Christ we will be given what God has promised. We will also share in the glory of Christ, because we have suffered with him. ¹⁸⁻²²I am sure that what we are suffering now cannot compare with the glory that will be shown to us. In fact, all creation is eagerly waiting for God to show who his children are. Meanwhile, creation is confused, but not because it wants to be confused. God made it this way in the hope that creation would be set free from decay and would share in the glorious freedom of his children. We know that all creation is still groaning and is in pain, like a woman about to give birth. ²³The Spirit makes us sure about what we will be in the future. But now we groan silently, while we wait for God to show that we are his children. This means that our bodies will also be set free.

- *What kinds of relationships are being shown in these verses?*
- *Why would children be eagerly awaiting the return of their father?*
- *Why is all creation awaiting the return of Jesus?*
- *What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this passage?*
- *Where does freedom fit into this picture? Freedom from what & freedom to be what?*
- *What are you most looking forward to when Jesus returns?*
- *Have you some good news to share with friends and loved ones? What?*