

*world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.'* Four times Jesus uses the word 'World' and also says 'Whoever believes.' Jesus didn't come just for a few thousand, he came to save the world, that includes you and me; '*whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*' So whether you are living in Cophthorne, Sussex, Surrey, England, Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, or wherever, God loves you and gave his one and only son to save you through him. All you have to do is to believe, and ask God to forgive you for things you have done wrong, knowingly or unknowingly. I pray that if you have never done that before you will do it now. Amen.

How can I be free from sin? Lead me to the cross of Jesus.  
From the guilt, the power, the pain? Lead me to the cross of Jesus.  
There's no other way, no price that I could pay;  
Simply to the cross I cling. This is all I need,  
This is all I plead, that His blood was shed for me.

How can I know peace within? Lead me to the cross of Jesus.  
Sing a song of joy again! Lead me to the cross of Jesus.  
Flowing from above, all-forgiving love  
From the Father's heart to me! What a gift of grace –  
His own righteousness clothing me in purity!

How can I live day by day? Lead me to the cross of Jesus.  
Following His narrow way? Lead me to the cross of Jesus.

*Graham Kendrick & Steve Thompson.  
Copyright © 1991 Make Way Music.*

## **Thought for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Pastor Gordon Hamilton**

### **Read John 6:2-14**

The story of the feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle that you can read in all four gospels, Matthew 14:15-21, Mark 6:35-44, Luke 9:12-17 and the passage we have just read. All four accounts pretty well agree but as we have been looking at John's gospel I decided to continue with his account. We are told that a great crowd of people followed him, why? Because '*they had seen the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.*' You will remember last week when the royal official begged Jesus to go and heal his son, Jesus replied; '*unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.*' In a way you cannot blame the people, who of us can honestly say we wouldn't want to see the kind of miraculous sign that Jesus performed, on a daily basis. Whether that is changing water into wine, healing children, giving sight to the blind or the like, how many of us have prayed and haven't had the miraculous answer that we were expecting? His ways are not our ways, and all too often our eyes are blinded to the truth of what God does. We are not told that this vast crowd, according to verse 10, of about five thousand men, who had come to hear Jesus speak, had come prepared to spend so long and then find they have nothing to eat. If he had been able to suddenly produce enough wine to satisfy a wedding, then would he, somehow, produce food to feed the five thousand men. In fact Matthew 14:21 says; '*about five thousand men, besides women and children.*' We are not told they were asking for food, just that Jesus recognised they needed food, so he says to Philip; '*where shall we buy bread for these people to*

eat?’ I’m sure that many of us would have responded in the same way as Philip did; *‘eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one of us to have a bite!’* Then Andrew, in verse 9 says; *‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will that go among so many?’* Strangely it is only John who says; *‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish.’* I am sure we have all been to church ‘teas’ where so much food is laid out and some wag will usually say, when are the five thousand coming? Jesus is again, like the changing of the water into wine, very matter of fact in the way he deals with the situation. At the wedding Jesus just said to the servants; *‘Fill the jars with water;’ so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, ‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.’* The servants did as they were told. In this story Jesus says to his disciples; *‘Have the people sit down.’ There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.’* Jesus didn’t make a great show of what he did, for him, this was what needed to be done, he needed to satisfy the needs of those there. They were hungry, although we are not told that any of them complained, or moaned that they were hungry. When Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt, away from the slavery they had lived in for many years, we read in Exodus 16:2; *‘In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this*

*desert to starve this entire assembly to death.’* If you carry on reading Exodus you will see that the Lord provided Manna and the quails, and they still weren’t happy. Here in John’s gospel we see the people were perfectly happy with what they had been given. How many of them saw the miracle that had occurred, we don’t know. But to sit five thousand plus people only a few would have been close enough to have seen the events. When I went to the Queen’s garden party a couple of years ago, there were about eight thousand people in attendance, and they couldn’t hide the food to feed all the people. I’m sure some people in our reading would have queried where all the food came from. At the end of this huge picnic, Jesus sends his disciples out to pick up what was left over. From five small barley loaves and two small fish, they collected enough bits left over to fill twelve large baskets. These were baskets that they would have carried on their backs. Now word must have got around because we are told in John 6:14; *‘After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, ‘Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.’* At the beginning of the chapter we read; *‘they had seen the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.’* Two weeks ago Jesus challenged the people of Cana; *‘Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders you will never believe.’* We are still in the early stages of Jesus’ ministry. Before he changed the water into wine, Jesus said to his mother, *‘My time has not yet come.’* Jesus still had a lot to do, and yes, people were beginning to realise who he was but they wanted to make him a king like they had David many years before. Jesus knew his kingdom was not just for that locality, but was for all the world. If we go back three chapters, when Jesus meets with Nicodemus, Jesus says; *‘God so loved the*