

## 42<sup>ND</sup> THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Dear friends, welcome to my 42<sup>nd</sup> thought for the week during lockdown. The word bread is mentioned 138 in the Bible.

However do we realise the significance of bread in our daily lives, it is after all very familiar to us. It's an important part of the food we eat. It is an essential part of our diet, one of our staple foods. It is one of the basic things we eat and hardly a day goes by without most of us eating bread in one way or another.

It remains one of the UK's favourite foods, with around 99% of households buying bread and the equivalent of nearly 12 million loaves are sold each day.

In John Ch6 not long after the feeding of the five thousand a crowd had caught up with Jesus on the other side of the lake and asked "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Jesus knew it would not be long before He would be betrayed, then arrested and be put on trial, and finally be crucified by these same people who had followed Him and been fed by Him in their time of need.

He was very anxious to have one last meal with His disciples. So he had made arrangements for a room to be prepared for them so they could have dinner together.

It was rather an elaborate meal, with several courses, a typical Passover meal and at one point Jesus did something very special. He took bread – probably the size of a small bread roll but unleavened. He gave thanks to God and then said that this bread was like His body. He then broke it and said just as the bread had been broken so His own body was going to be broken. And He shared the broken bread with His disciples.

Jesus took a loaf of bread and gave it a new and special meaning. From then onwards, taking and breaking a small loaf was to be a reminder of the life of Jesus. It was to be a way of remembering all that Jesus was, all that He said and all that He did.

And so ever since, Christian people have used bread (and wine) in this special way. Each time we celebrate communion we give thanks to God for all His goodness; for the ways in which He provides for us and cares for us, and for giving us food to eat. In the breaking of bread we bring to mind the life of Jesus (perhaps remembering how He fed that large crowd of people with bread and fish or how Cleopas and his companion recognised him when He broke bread when they encountered Jesus during the Road to Emmaus appearance in Luke 24:13-32.).

As we eat the bread together our friendship with Jesus is renewed and we know we have eaten the bread which He gives. So we thank God because He gives us bread to fill our hungry stomachs. We thank Him too because God gives us the Bread of Life to nourish our Christian Faith and remind us that we cannot live by bread alone.

*Let us pray,*

*May God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit*

*strengthen, sustain and empower us in our hearts,*

*in our homes and in our community, today and always.*

*And may the God of Seed and Harvest, provider of our daily bread,*

*bless each one of us.*

*May the beauty of this world and the love that created it be expressed through our lives*

*And be a blessing to others*

*Now and always. **Amen.***

This week why not hold a small communion service with those in your bubble or your family and remember again the sacrifice Jesus made for you, yes you!

Until next, keep well and keep safe,

Shalom my friends, Shalom.