

**Thought for Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021**  
**Pastor Gordon Hamilton**

**Hebrews 10:1-39**

The whole of this letter to the Hebrews, so far, is talking about Jesus role compared to the high priests of the time, and the role that the high priests have, and the jobs that they do, in offering sacrifices, which do not take away people's sins, see verse 11, *'which can never take away sins,'* these were sacrifices made because they were required by the law. We have already said, over the past few weeks, laws don't make us right with anybody, just because there is a law, even us keeping the law, only gives us peace of mind. I remember the story of someone visiting a prison and asking a group of prisoners why they were in prison? They responded, because we got caught! There are far more people outside of prison who haven't been caught, than are in prison because they have been caught. If we don't break the law, then we have nothing to worry about, BUT, yes, capital letters, BUT if you are a Jew and you are trying to keep the Jewish laws, then you have failed. All the sacrifices that the priests and high priests offer *'Can never take away sins,'* thankfully verse 12 onwards tells us there is a way that our sins can be washed away. It is called 'justification', someone once said it is 'just as if I never sinned.' *'when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.'* That was Jesus, verse 14; *'because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.'* - Just as if I never sinned. Of course there are some people who don't think they have ever sinned, but we have to remember the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:28; *'anyone who ever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'* Jesus is not only talking about a man looking lustfully at a woman, Jesus is talking about anything that goes against God's will, whether that is in a male's mind or a female's mind. If you are a Christian or even just a church goer, you will know God's will, maybe not everything that God has planned for you, but you will know what God expects from you. I hope that you can sing the words of a Robin Mark song; *'All is well with my soul, He is God in control. I know not all His plans, but I know I'm in His hands.'* And if we are in His hands and are forgiven, then we can say; *'All is well with my soul.'* In verse 16 the writer to the Hebrews refers again to Jeremiah 31:33-34; *'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.'* That is brilliant, the Lord says, I will remember their sins no more. As it says in verse 18; *'where these sins have been forgiven, there is no longer any (need for) any sacrifice for sin.'* My words in brackets. The writer to the Hebrews wants us to have complete confidence in Jesus and to encourage us to encourage each other to keep on keeping on. One of the problems we have had over the past fifteen months or so, is meeting together, or not meeting together. Many churches are now meeting on a Sunday, some via Zoom, but home groups and bible studies have not been easy, although again some have met via zoom or similar. We have been doing what we can, and I hope that I have been doing my small part in writing and distributing these 'Thoughts for Sunday's.' I am sure that like all of us, we miss the personal contact, we miss singing hymns and songs, with passion and even having a chat after the service or bible study, and a friendly cup of tea or coffee. As we are

coming to the end of this lockdown, we pray, I believe that verse 25 is vitally important; *'let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.'* It could be very easy to 'not' return to our churches or chapels, but we need to meet together, so that we can learn together and grow together. Two weeks ago I commented on the words of Romans 6 and 7 about how easy it is to sin without thinking, but as we meet together we are aware that others around us don't want to hear if we have fallen by the wayside, but they do want to know that we have made it through this pandemic, and that we are continuing to grow in Jesus Christ our Lord. verse 28; *'anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.'* We need to be there to encourage those who are struggling, and to know that Christ died for our sins, once for all. I am not going to dwell on the last part of our reading, because if we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, then we don't have to worry about the Lord judging his people. Where sins have been forgiven there is nothing to hide, and we can have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus (v19). *'Are you washed in the blood. In the soul-cleansing blood of the lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?'* We do not know when Jesus is coming again, verse 37 says; *'He who is coming will come and will not delay.'* We are now 2,000 years later, and still we wait. Let us not fall away but let us hold on to the confidence we have in God's promises. Amen.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness!*  
*Great is Thy faithfulness!*  
*Morning by morning new mercies I see;*  
*All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,*  
*Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!