

Thanksgiving

November 22/23, 2023 at St. Matthew, Port Washington, WI

Luke 12:7

Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Thank God for your Hair

My wife and I enjoyed reading “The Hair Book,” to our children when they were little. “HAIR! HAIR! It’s everywhere! Some have a little. Some have lots. ... Plain or dyed, loose or tied, curly or straight ... hair is great!” The variety of hair on our heads is absolutely amazing, varying in color and style. When is the last time you gave thanks to the Lord for your hair? It covers our skin and we comb or brush it every day, but we somehow overlook the fact that hair is a tremendous blessing to us.

A strand a hair seems so simple. But the closer you look at it, the more complex and amazing it is. On your skin – which was our focus last Thanksgiving – there our hairs sticking up. Implanted just below the surface of the skin is the hair bulb, or root. From that, grows the hair follicle. Veins and arteries are connected to each hair to keep all the cells connected to it alive. That alone is amazing. Each hair has its own vein and artery running to it! Wow! The hair follicle keeps growing until it gets above the surface of the skin. Each shaft of hair has a medulla in the middle (which consists of a soft, thin core of transparent cells and air spaces), surrounded by a cortex (which consists of long keratin filaments and determines the color of the hair. As you grow older, you produce less keratin so your hair slowly turns grey and finally white.), surrounded by the cuticle (which is made up of dead, overlapping cells which protects the hair). The cuticle itself has 5 layers. It is also the exact same chemical composition as your finger nails. Once the hair shaft grows above the skin, only the cuticle is left. In other words, the hair you see is made up of dead cells. Beneath the skin, each hair has a gland next to it which provides an oily solution that protects the hair and repels water. There is also a little muscle connected to each hair which can make the hair stand up straight if you happen to be super scared or cold.

Life would be uncomfortable if you did not have any hair. Hair regulates our body temperature. If you’ll recall, there was an accident on Apollo 13 on their journey to the moon. In order to preserve enough power to get back to earth, they had to shut down nearly everything on the space ship, including the heater. The temperature in the space capsule got down to the 30’s, the same temperature as inside your refrigerator. The hairs of the astronauts stood on end and served as insulation. There was no gravity in space and so there were no air currents in the space capsule. As long as the astronauts stayed still, their hair held their body heat next to their skin and made life a

bit more tolerable. When the temperature is very warm, like on a summer day, the muscles around each hair relax so that the hair lies flat and your sweat is able to evaporate quicker and helps to cool you down.

Hair also extends our sense of touch. In ways that you can not even feel, as your hair touches something, it sends signals about temperature and pain to the rest of your body so that you can respond even quicker to changing circumstances. One doctor called every hair “a unique mechanosensory organ.”

Hair also protects our bodies. Hair on our heads provides cover from the heat of the sun. Our eyebrows also help to shield our eyes from the sun as well as to keep sweat from dripping into our eyes. Eyelashes keep dust and allergens from getting into our eyes. There are even hairs inside your nose which serve as filters keeping dust and other foreign matters out of your lungs.

Hair also identifies you. By examining only one strand of hair, scientists can determine if the hair came from you or someone else as well as run a paternity test. And, of course, the different colors and styles of hair are not only identifiers of you, the way you keep your hair can give insights into your personality. If your hair is always the same, you might be a boring person, or shall we say a person who is dependable and trustworthy? If you change styles or dye your hair different colors, you might be more adventurous or expressive.

Evolutionists have a problem with hair. They can’t figure out how it developed. They suggest that our hair came from the fur that monkeys and other animals have. But human hair and animal hair is much different. And even if it was not different, evolutionists would still be stumped to answer how it started growing in the first place. They have to assume that the veins and arteries just happened to extend themselves to an area where a hair follicle would be. At the same time, the three parts of each hair – the medulla, the cortex and the cuticle – as well as the oil sack and little muscle which are dependent on each other – would have all had to evolve independently at the same time in the exact place and just magically connect. Humans are the only mammals that have essentially hairless bodies, but very hair scalps. The evolutionists’ best guess is that when humans started walking on two legs instead of four, we needed more hair on the top of our heads to protect us from the sun and other things. But then why don’t other mammals, like dogs and chimpanzees, have extra hair on their heads to protect them since their heads are exposed to as much sun as ours? Finally, scientists have to admit, “For now, the mystery of hair’s evolution remains unsolved.”

We feel sorry for the evolutionists, not just because they don't know where hair came from, but because they don't know the true and saving God. For you and me who, by God's grace, believe what the Bible tells us, hair is evidence of an intelligent designer who we call God. God not only created the world and everything in it, but God also knows about everything in the world. Jesus told us (Luke 12:7), "**Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.**" God knows how many hairs came out when you combed or brushed your hair before coming to church. According to answersingenesis.org, on average, one human scalp contains between 80,000 and 100,000 hairs, and we shed an average of 100 hairs per day.

If God knows such details about our hair, then he also knows everything else in the world. Which means that he also knows everything about us. He knows everything we have done. He knows every sin. He knows every time we have complained that our hair was not the kind of hair we wanted. He knows every time a dirty or selfish thought raced through our minds. He knows every unkind or unloving word we have ever spoken. He knows how we have used our amazing bodies in ways that we should not have. He knows when we have not taken good care of the bodies God gave us. He knows when we had the opportunity to do good, but did nothing. He knows that we are sinners through and through. He knows that we and our hair should be experiencing an eternal fire that never goes out. Yikes!

But let's look closer at Luke 12:7. The passages before and after it are all about comfort and trust. When Jesus told us that God knows how many hairs are on our head, he did not say it as a threat as in, "I even know how many hairs you have so I know everything about you, so you'd better watch out!" No. Jesus told us that to explain to you how much God cares about you. He even knows such silly trivia as the numbers of hair of our heads. And if he cares about such trivia, then he also cares about the bigger things in your life. He knows that your thinning and greying hair is daily reminder that you are growing older and getting closer to death. He cares about your health and your hurting heart. He cares about the pains and struggles you endure. He cares about the problems and fears you face. He cares about your stress which often causes grey hair. He cares about your physical and emotional health issues. He especially cares about your eternal destiny. And because he cares, he did something about it.

Here's a trick question. Does God have hair? God is a spirit, a being without a body, so he does not have hair. And yet he does have hair in the person of Christ. God cared about you so much, that he not only counts your hairs each day, he also sent Jesus into this world to take on human flesh along with hair, just like you and me.

A few months ago, a elementary school student in Maryland was walking home. There was a crossing guard who walked into the middle of the street and stopped traffic for her to cross safely. Unfortunately, one driver was not paying attention and did not come to a stop. At the last second the crossing guard pushed the student to the side so that she did not get hit. The student was safe, but the crossing guard got hit. Although he was hurt pretty bad, thankfully, he did survive. Clearly that crossing guard was willing to give up his life in order to save that student.

So was Jesus. He was willing to die in order to save, not just that student in Maryland, but everyone in the whole world, including you. He let himself be abused and falsely accused. As they tormented Jesus, even his hair was involved in your salvation. 700 years before he was born, Jesus spoke through the pen of Isaiah (50:6), "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting." Jesus did not even resist when they pulled out hairs from his beard. His hair was covered with blood, sweat and spit. And they did not clean up his hair or beard before they nailed him to the cross. As he hung on the cross, he got between you and God's righteous anger over every sin just like that crossing guard got between the student and the car. Jesus let himself get hit with the blast of hell that we deserved. Since Jesus was already punished for every sin, you do not need to fear God's punishment. Your sins are already paid for you. You are forgiven. And God is watching over you – guarding, guiding, helping, encouraging – on your journey through life on this earth to eternal life in heaven. On that journey, he even keeps track of your hairs.

The gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the greatest reason to give thanks to God every day of our lives. It's good that we have a Thanksgiving Day on our calendar to remind us to ponder and praise God for all of the blessings we enjoy. And as you give thanks to God for salvation, as well as a special dinner with family and friends and a day of rest, maybe also say a prayer of thanks for your hair. Amen.