

Thanksgiving

November 23/24, 2022 at St. Matthew, Port Washington, WI

Thank God for your skin!

You can touch it while you feel it touching you. It's your skin. Genesis 2:7 says that "God formed Adam from the dust of the ground." The word "formed" is the same word that is used for a potter making a pot. Just that point is a reminder that each one of you is special to God. Your fingerprints are so unique to you that your fingerprint can be used for the highest degree of security. Everyone's skin is just a bit different. The shape of our skin and the precise color and hue of your skin is unique to each one of you. Those who spend most of their time outside, like sailors or farmers or construction workers, end up with skin that is a bit tougher. They are sometimes even called leathernecks. Those who spend more of their time inside, like pastry chefs, end up with skin that is a bit smoother and softer. Those who live closer to the equator and are exposed to a lot more sunshine end up with darker colored skin, while those who live far up north in Canada or Siberia, end up with skin that even has a bluish tint to it. Some have freckles and some do not.

Even though each person's skin is unique to them, the skin of every human being in the history of the world has many similarities. Skin is simple, but complex. Skin is flexible so that it can stretch when you overeat a Thanksgiving meal or twist when you move your limbs or neck or waist. Skin can repel water so that you can swim through it. But it can also soak in water so your fingertips get all wrinkled if you sit in the bathtub or pool too long. Skin protects you from allergens and bugs that would damage your delicate organs inside of you. Skin is not just an outer coating to protect you, like the peel of a banana, it actually is a separate organ that is vital to your survival. Your skin accounts for 1/6 of your body weight. Your skin has three layers to it and every four weeks you get another layer of outer skin. During the time of this service, ½ million cells will fall off of your body. Most of the dust in your house is.... you. Yes, it's a good idea to take a bath or shower and to wash your clothes and bedsheets regularly.

It is a general truth that the closer you look at man made things, the worse it looks. For example, if I draw a line on a piece of wood and saw along that line, it may look like a straight line. As you look more closely though, even putting it under a magnifying glass, you can see where each stroke of the saw cut into the wood at a slightly different angle. The straight cut is not perfectly straight. When you look at things God made, however, the more amazing it looks. For example, if you look at a petal from a flower, it looks pretty. As you look more closely at it though, even under a microscope, it opens up into a beautiful kaleidoscope of beauty as you see how the different cells fit together perfectly and work together to form the beautiful flower pedal. The same is true when you look closely at human skin.

I think this video does a good job of explaining how amazing your skin is.

[The Science of Skin](#)

Your skin is the ultimate chicken and egg dilemma. Chickens come from eggs, but eggs come from chickens. Which came first? Your skin can not exist unless your lungs, your immune system, your blood system are all complete and working properly. But unless your lungs, immune system, and blood system cannot exist until your skin is complete and working properly. You have to feel sorry for the people who believe in evolution. They have to believe that everything in our bodies and skin just happened to evolve at the exact same time. That's sort of like saying that you roll a billion dice and they all happen to come up as sixes. What are the odds of that? (Don't try to figure it out.) Mathematicians speak about some things being a "statistical impossibility." Although not truly impossible the probability is low enough so as not to mention it in a rational, reasonable argument. You would not bet on a statistical impossibility and no judge would accept it as an argument in a court of law. But the person who has been taught that the world and humans came into existence only by chance has no choice but to trust in the statistical impossibility. He has to accept that our skin are just a happy accident.

I read some articles about how some think that skin evolved. Scientists make grand statements about how hair began like weeds sprouting up in a brick path. Growing skin with hair boosted our chances of survival, because humans could then travel further, explore new terrain and find better food. Scientists make such great claims because for their theory to be true, there must be some sort of transition from a primordial blob into an animal and then a human, without ever admitting that the science they represent says that such transitions can not take place. Even worse than not knowing how skin came to be, they do not know about God who loved them and saved their skin along with their soul. That is truly a tragedy.

When you meet someone who believes in evolution, talking about your skin might be a way of sharing your faith. There are good and bad ways of doing that. A wrong way would be to say, "There's no way that skin could have evolved. Only a dummy would believe in evolution. If you were smart like me, you would believe in creation." That will probably only result in you getting a bruise on your skin. But even worse, you won't be able to tell them about Jesus.

I do not know what opportunities the Lord will give you to talk about your skin and share your faith. Maybe it might sound something like this, "At our Thanksgiving Service, my pastor talked about how amazing our skin is. I never really thought about it before. It's like we are wrapped in a miracle. The world's smartest scientists and doctors can only guess at how our skin came to be. Then my pastor pointed out how people answered the question a few thousand years ago before they had microscopes and all sorts of other scientific equipment. The complexity of the human body, including the skin, reminded them of the finest

needlework they could imagine. King David, who lived 3000 years ago, wrote a prayer to God (Psalm 139:13-14), **“you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”** And the word “fearfully” has the idea of reverent awe as if you are seeing a miracle happen, like seeing a baby being born. A guy named Job, who lived 4000 years ago, prayed to God (Job 10:10-11), **“Did you not ... clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews.”**

See how they react. Maybe they’ll chuckle a bit at those people who did not know a thing about science. Maybe they’ll say that Bible is just an old book that can’t be trusted. Maybe you’ll be able to say that the Bible is has been preserved far more accurately and faithfully than any other book in the history of the world. Be careful not to turn it into an argument, though. It would be better to suggest that they just read one of the gospel accounts – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. Introduce them to Jesus. Knowing that God created their skin won’t do them any good unless they know about Jesus as their Savior.

As we age, our skin becomes more fragile. When you are young and the doctor pokes your skin to take some blood for a test, it leaves a small dot that heals over in a few hours. When the doctor does that for someone who is 95, a large bruise stays in that spot for a week. Sometimes, our skin gets irritated and we get a rash. Or, we itch when a bug bites us. Or, we develop skin cancer. Leprosy is still a disease in our world. It slowly and painfully eats away at the skin until the person dies. Leprosy is a good description of sin.

Sin is a defect in us. If a computer or machine has a defect, it does not work the way it should. We do not behave the way we should. When God created us, he designed us to be perfect. Sadly, our first parents, named Adam & Eve, rebelled against God’s operating instructions. They did the opposite of what they were supposed to do. They infected themselves and every one of us. From the very moment of conception, each one of us is infected with sin and that sin shows itself in selfishness, lack of love for others, taking our blessings for granted and whining for more instead of giving thanks, and on and on. The symptoms of sin are all over in the world – wars and rumors of wars, bodies that grow old and wear out, skin that gets diseased and infected. Yes, we inherited a sinful nature, but we can not blame all of our sins on our parents or Adam & Eve. There have been all sorts of times when we have done and said things that we know we should not have. And we can not stop ourselves. We need help. We need a Savior.

Our skin that holds our insides inside of us is amazing. It blows the mind. But what is really out of this world is the thought of God being contained by human skin. God is everywhere in the world at the same time. God is beyond the reaches of the farthest galaxy. And yet, in the person of Jesus Christ, God was contained in the body of a baby boy. That is what we will be focusing on for the

next month until we explode with rejoicing at Christmas. Jesus is God in the flesh. By the way, the Latin word for that is “incarnation.” I mention that because it shows up in a lot of hymns.

You can not nail a spirit to a cross. In order to be our Savior, Jesus had to have flesh and blood just like you. For our rebellion against God, we deserve to be cast away from God and to experience what life is like without his blessing. That’s the definition of hell and that is what Jesus experienced on the cross as he cried out that God had forsaken him. Because Jesus suffered the punishment that you and I deserved, God is not going to punish you. You have already been forgiven. There’s nothing to feel guilty about any more. And the grave has been turned into a recycling center. A worn out, weary body with fragile skin is placed in the grace and – because of Jesus – a glorified body comes out. Jesus even proved it on Easter morning. He appeared to his disciples who did not believe it until they could touch him. He said (Luke 24:39), **“Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”** That’s the same Jesus who said (John 14:19), **“Because I live, you also will live.”** Job, whom I mentioned earlier, was infected with terrible sores on his skin and yet he confessed his faith (Job 19:26), **“After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.”** In heaven, you will not have any itches or oozes, stitches or scabs, bumps or bruises. You will be perfect. Jesus will welcome you home into heaven as he wraps his skin around your skin and hugs you as he says, “Welcome home. You’ve made it. You’re safe with me forever.”

God is happy that you get to enjoy thanksgiving. Like a loving parent, he smiles when you are happy and enjoying the blessings he has given you. Enjoy the turkey, duck, pork, fish whatever you eat. Enjoy a day or two off or work or school. Enjoy time with family and friends. Take the time to pause to reflect and praise God. Thank God for your skin. But especially thank God who took on skin in order to save your skin along with your soul. Amen.