

A Hairy Reminder

A person between the ages of 20—30 has about 615 hair follicles per square centimeter. A person 50 years of age has around 485 hair follicles per square centimeter. Typically, most people have somewhere between 100,000—150,000 hairs on their head. By the way, the average hair loss for an individual is 50—100 hairs per day. As a result, there is no way you can tell accurately how many hairs you have (in fact, unless you are going bald, most of us don't really care). But God knows.

Jesus said: "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:29-31). This passage reveals three interesting truths.

First, **God knows more about us than we know about us.** That is a humbling thought. When we sometimes feel like no one understands us or grasps our situation, we forget that God does. God knows your personality. God knows your strengths. God knows what motivates you. God knows when you stumble. God knows what you like and don't like. God knows the real you. Therefore, when God declares something worthwhile, He knows what He is talking about. When God warns about danger, He knows what He is talking about. When God tells us that we should do something, we need to do it, because He knows us better than we know ourselves.

God is a God of detail. How insignificant are hairs and sparrows to us. Yet God is aware of them. He is a God of details. The motives, attitudes and heart behind our actions are as important to Him as the actions themselves. It does little good to give, if you have left out the detail of being a cheerful. Singing fails if we neglect thankfulness in our heart. Let us be a people of details, as God is.

God cares about you. This is why Jesus referred to sparrows and hair. We are of value to Him. Christ was not sent to save the whales, the environment, or the endangered species, but mankind. Man has value! Stress and worry often make us wonder if God cares. These two simple illustrations remind us that He does.

- by Roger Shouse

The Lord's Church in Your Community

There are many churches in many places which have no bowling club, no softball team, nor do they sponsor a Boy Scout troop. The physical property of these churches includes a very modern place for assembly and worship, with class rooms for Bible Study; but in all of this widespread plant there is no kitchen, no banquet hall, no gymnasium, no party room.

Your first thought may be, "What strange churches! What strange people!" Perhaps. However, many of these church members are your neighbors and enjoy their food, recreation, and entertainment just as much as everyone else. But the church building is not used as a civic or social club. By now you may be asking, "Then what does this congregation offer me? What does she offer the community in which you live?" These are fair questions and demand fair, open answers.

The church was established by Jesus Christ the Son of God, to fill a need, to do a work that no human institution could possibly perform. We deplore the fact that denominations have smothered the real purpose of the church beneath civic, social, and domestic affairs. Upon reading Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 3:10-11; 5:25; and 1 Timothy 3:15 we need to be impressed with the sacredness of the church. She can have no trivial purpose, nor is such assigned to her by the Word of God.

But some say, "We live in the 21st century. The church must meet the needs of today!" Exactly so! We have many fine civic and social organizations which can meet the physical needs of our community, and we as individuals need to support and promote all wholesome efforts to better the lot of mankind in this life. But this 21st century is woefully lacking in emphasis upon the soul of man, and his eternal welfare. Yes, the church must meet the need of today -the very greatest need of all being the peculiar and distinctive benefit offered mankind by Christ - the salvation of their soul.

Our primary concern is with the spiritual needs of mankind - his need is for God, for

forgiveness of sins, for genuine God-satisfying worship, for the pureness of conscience that can come only from living, working and worshipping according to the directions of the Word of God.

As a people we know we are not perfect, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without measure, but according to the measure to reach even unto you" (2 Corinthians 10:12,13).

We make no plea of greatness on our part, but pledge ourselves to strive diligently to follow the rule of God, the divine message. We speak where the Bible speaks, and are silent where the Bible is silent.

Visit with us and we will welcome your honest investigation of the church of Christ in this community.

- by Robert Turner

Doing the Really Hard Things

There are some difficult things that God commands us to do...

- It's hard, for example, to go to a brother or sister who has sinned, look them in the eye, and tell them that they must repent. It would be much easier to simply "look the other way", but God says we must go to them (Luke 17:3).
- It's hard to approach a weak Christian, point out their serious neglect of duty, and urge them to turn back to God. It would be easier to just "let it slide", but God says we must speak to them (Gal. 6:1).
- It's hard to finally withdraw yourself from a disciple who has sinned and refuses to repent. It would be easier to ignore the situation and act as though nothing had happened, but God says such action must be taken (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

To all of you who obediently do these difficult things, we express our thanks and admiration. You are truly "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-16).

May we say a word to those of you who might be on the receiving end of such actions? We hope that you understand that your brothers and sisters take no delight in doing such things. It gives them no perverse sense of pleasure. There is no morbid gratification that comes from this. Surely you can see that it is truly difficult. Your fellow Christians can think of a thousand things they would rather be doing. There is absolutely no enjoyment in this. But they do it anyway, because they know two things:

- 1) God commands them to do so, and
- 2) It is in your best interest.

Please try to understand this, and if it becomes necessary for someone to come to you - in a conscientious effort to serve God and you - please respect them for it. Respect them - even if you don't agree with them - knowing that they are doing one of the really hard things that God calls upon His people to do.

- by Greg Gwin