

Pastor Ted Hartman's sermon for June 21, 2026 based on the Epistle reading from Romans 6:12-23 especially verse 23 and the Gospel from Matthew 10:5a, 21-33 especially verse 30.

### **"Fear Not"**

Sometimes we preachers are accused of not providing info. This morning, I want to change your perspective on that if that is your perspective. I want to share some very, very interesting info...on hair. In the Matthew text this morning, Jesus talks about the hairs on your head being numbered. I am reading this because I don't trust myself with numbers. "The average hairs on our heads are between 80,000 and 120,000 averaging 100,000. By hair color, if you are blonde 150,000, if you have brown hair 110,000, black hair 100,000 and if you happen to be a redhead, 90,000. Hair grows an average of 6 inches per year which is about 1/2 inch per month and males grow hair faster than women. Hair loss, buckle your seat belts! People shed hair to the tune of 50 to 80 hairs a day. The things that contribute to hair loss; the first one - genetics, then hormonal changes, follicle aging, medical conditions then stress and physical trauma, life style such as nutrition and treating your hair badly. Patterns of hair loss – now we get personal – for us men, receding hair lines, thinning on top and balding. Women have diffused thinning hair especially where they part it."

So now, we move on. We are challenged this morning; not by fear of hair loss, but by fear in our lives. Our first answers may be, "We are not afraid! We are sitting in church. In my home, everything is peachy keen." Then we start uncovering some things that you and I get involved with. Jeremiah telling us that the Lord is with us and with the image of the fearsome warrior by our side. We have that picture in our house with an angel with a mighty sword – the strength of God on our side.

Our Romans 6 reading, reminds us that we have eternal life in Jesus Christ and that the wages of sin is death. This is where our conundrum comes in. We are getting what we paid for. So, if you have not sinned raise your hand, go ahead raise your hand and if you do, I will laugh at you as would others. So, we are all under that same problem, we get what we paid for. Sin leading to that. Paul reminds us that we have eternal life in Jesus. Don't be afraid in the midst of persecution – don't be afraid. Interesting world in which we live. A lot of the values we hold dear because of our spiritual life are not representative necessarily of the world. Sometimes we are criticized as Christians unfairly. We are judged by society. We come down to our reality; what we do with fear. We have different approaches to it and different fears. Our focal point can generate fear and that fear can have other triggers; others judging us, others not liking us. And "self" – more subtle. Afraid of things in our own head and hearts. You see how our

history matters even if we haven't had a challenge for decades. No matter how long ago – a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade judgement maybe. We are fearful that some how the true self inside of us will be known. **DON'T BE AFRAID.** The Lord says, "I will never leave you or judge you!" For instance, you can choose your own fears. Say, financial. Marty and I retired years ago on the Concordia plans but they had no inflation figured in it. So now anytime I hear of an inflation number, I YELL 4%, WHAT! Then there is our health. Marty and I had a wonderful celebration, our 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays a few weeks ago. That was fun. Look at the mortality tables. We catch onto our reality; genetic and life styles. In 1999 I had a heart attack followed with a pacemaker and triple bypass – a reality check there. That can cause us fears or fearful of our relationships. Almost 60 years or 49 "happy years". Had to say that! In that relationship all kind of things can cause fear. Marty has a doctor's appointment this week. She'll be just fine but if something would hit her – I'm not good alone. And Jesus comes to us and says it is okay in the areas that generate fear "I'll take care of you, don't be afraid. I love you." I mentioned earlier, fear in our mortality. None of us are getting out of here alive. Once you capture that concept, in a way, it becomes freeing. It can scare you. The promise of God, promise of resurrection and new life. Outlandish! He says to us you are not an exception to that; I will take care of you no matter how often you come to church.

So, let's listen to the Lord this morning. If you are fearful of anything, please hear the words of Jesus. I counted the hairs on your head all 120,000 and if you think I care about the hairs on your head think of how I care about you. Trust me.

The peace of God. Amen