

Head Lice / Leprosy Cleansed

Dolly: “Look at Roslin’s hair!” said Waty to her friends in school. “She has those white things in it! Nits! Eeee!”

The other children looked over at Roslin, who started to cry. Her head had been itchy for a few days, and now there were little brown insects crawling in her hair...and little white things stuck to the hairs. She didn’t like the other children pointing at her and laughing!

Tammy: Welcome to Women of Hope, I’m Tammy. Oooh I’m starting to scratch my head already! Here’s Carol...

Carol: Hello and welcome. If you’re the parent or carer of young children you’ll know what it’s like to find these little insects crawling in your child’s hair. Today Dolly has come to tell us the story of Roslin and the lice in her hair. Welcome Dolly.

Dolly: Thank you.

Tammy: Do tell us what happened.

Dolly: Their teacher noticed them talking in class and said, “What are you children *doing* there?”

He came over to Roslin’s desk. She was crying and scratching her head. When he looked carefully he could see the lice in her hair.

“Ah!” he said, “yes you do have head lice. But don’t worry, Roslin, they’re very common in school - lots of children have them. Head lice are easy to treat. I want you to go to the clinic on your way home today and get the medicine to treat it, OK?”

Roslin nodded and rubbed her hands over her wet eyes. The other children were listening and snickering, but they stopped when the teacher said to them, “One of you gave the lice to Roslin, and by now you probably *all* have them in your hair. When you go home, get your hair checked too for lice and nits. You can shave off your hair to get rid of all the lice and their little eggs. Or you can use the medicine too.”

“Sir!” asked Anwel, raising his hand, “What are lice, anyway?”

Their teacher returned to the front of the class and drew something on the board. It looked like a fat little beetle with very short legs. “Lice look like this, but they’re very small. They don’t have wings, so they can’t fly. And their legs are so small that they can’t jump like a flea. They can hardly even walk with these little legs, but they can hold onto your hair very well. The female louse makes a kind of glue that holds her eggs onto the hair. The eggs look pale brown until the baby lice hatch out a week later, and then the empty shells of the eggs look white.”

The children started looking in each other’s hair to see if they could see any pale brown or white eggs. Their teacher said, “Listen! After they hatch, lice bite your head four or five times every day to drink some blood, and their poop is dark red.” Then the children all started making noises and pulling faces at the thought of the lice drinking blood and pooping in their hair!

Anwel raised his hand again. “Please, Sir,” he said. “How do we *get* lice in our hair?”

The teacher pointed to his drawing on the board. "Remember I said that they can't jump? And they can hardly even walk? So they have to *ride* from one person's hair to another person's hair. They can only live for one or two days in a hat or in clothing or on your pillow, with no blood to drink... So the usual way they move is if someone else has lice and you put your head close to theirs.

Now think about it...when do we put our hair close to some else's?" he asked the class.

Several children answered:

"When we play a game and all hunch around close."

"Sometimes we bump heads," said one.

"When we carry our young brother or sister around," answered another.

"When we hug someone," added a girl.

"When we sleep together at night," said one boy.

"When we're in school and work in pairs, we get close so we can hear each other."

"Yes, you're all correct," said the teacher. "When your head touches someone else's, if they have lice, the lice can climb quickly over into your hair. Because they can live for a few days on a hat or comb, don't share them with anyone else!" And wash your hat and comb regularly.

Tammy: On Women of Hope today we're talking about head lice. Dolly, can you tell us what happened next in the classroom...

Dolly: Sure. Janel, one of the girls, asked, "Do they make us sick, Sir?"

"No," answered the teacher. "Other types of lice on our body can make us very sick, but this type only stay on our heads and don't make us sick at all...just itchy!"

Janel asked again, "What will they do at the clinic, Sir?"

The teacher answered, "They'll tell the boys to shave off their hair. That's easy and quick and cheap. No hair, no lice! But you girls will not want to shave off your hair, eh?" They laughed. "So the staff at the clinic will give you some special medicine to put on your hair that will poison the lice."

The teacher continued to explain: "You put it on when your hair is dry. You must put it all over your head and hair...but be careful not to get it into your eyes or on your face.

If you use a medicated shampoo you will need to put just a little water on your hair first – but use as little water as you can.

Wait for 20 minutes then wash your hair with soap or shampoo. If you have some conditioner rub a little through you hair and then comb it with a fine-tooth comb. This will remove any lice that might still be there, and will help the eggs – the nits, to slip off your hair more easily. You'll see them in the comb as they come out. When you've finished, dry your hair in the sun or with a blow-dryer if you have one. When your hair's dry, ask someone to check that all the lice and nits have gone. If you can still see any eggs, soak the hair in a solution of vinegar and water for 30 minutes - one cup of vinegar in one cup of water. Use the fine-tooth comb again to remove the eggs.

Keep your hair tied up, not loose, so it's harder for new lice to get into it. If new ones come back you'll need to do the treatment again in a week."

Anwel spoke up. "But Sir, if the lice can live for one or two days on hats and pillows, shouldn't we wash them as well? Otherwise, tonight we will get new lice in our hair again!"

The teacher nodded. "Yes, you're right. You must change the cover on your pillow tonight. Wash it in hot water and dry it in the hot sunshine. And you'll need to clean your combs and brushes and hats very, very well. AND the other people in your family will have to check to see if *they* have got any lice from you. If they have, everyone in the family needs to get rid of their lice at the same time. And if you're sleeping at a friend's house later, try sleeping the opposite way around...your head down near his feet. That way, you won't get lice from him."

The bell rang and school was finished for the day. It was Friday, so the teacher gave them their weekend homework. "Tonight I want all of you to ask your parents to check your hair very carefully to see if you have any lice or nits. Then if you have, I want all you boys to shave your hair or treat it, and all you girls to wash your hair well with the special medicine from the clinic. Or you can use tea tree oil instead if you have some, to kill the lice. But you still have to comb your hair afterwards very carefully for a long time to get all the dead eggs out.

We don't want a problem with lice here, but it's easy to treat. OK...goodbye until Monday!"

Carol: It's good to be together on Women of Hope. Head lice are pesky little things aren't they? And most of us will get them at some time.

Tammy: Having head lice doesn't mean you're a dirty person. They love clean hair just as much as dirty hair!

And you can't always tell whether you have them – only about half of the people who have head lice feel itchy and scratch their head. If you think you, or your child, might have them, the easiest and most effective way to find them is to follow these steps once a week:

Firstly comb hair conditioner into your child's hair – this will remove the tangles and make it difficult for the lice to grip the hair or run around. If you don't have conditioner, you could use oil.

Next, wipe the conditioner, or oil, from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue...and look at the tissue for any lice or eggs.

Repeat the combing several times, over *every* part of their head.

If they have been treated for lice recently and you only find those little white, hatched eggs, you may not have to treat their hair again since the eggs could be from an old infestation.

If you *do* find any lice or eggs, they need to be treated. They will not just go away.

Carol: It's good to share ideas together isn't it! And we all have different ways of treating different things. The important thing is that it works.

Tammy: If *you* have a way of treating head lice that we haven't talked about today you could write in and tell us – and we can share it with others. We will tell you later how you can contact us.

It's always good to feel clean, isn't it? And if you've had lice and nits in your hair, it's good to know that they're gone and your hair feels clean again.

Carol: There's a story in God's word, the Bible that I'd like to tell you today about some people who were very happy to be clean. They were not dirty people, but they had a disease that other people were afraid of. Other people didn't want to get close to them because they thought that they might

catch the disease, so they made these people stay right away from them. In fact in some places, they made them call out, “Unclean... unclean” if they were walking anywhere near other people.

We often talk about Jesus on Women of Hope don't we? We love to talk about Jesus, because he came to earth to show us what God is like. Often in God's word, the Bible he is called the Son of God.

When Jesus lived on earth he travelled a lot around the country where he lived teaching, preaching, performing many miracles and healing those who were sick or tormented by evil spirits.

Towards the end of his time here on earth he had to go up to the city of Jerusalem. He usually travelled with his special followers and other close friends.

One day, Jesus was walking along the road with his followers through the country called Samaria. The Bible tells us that the Jewish people looked down on the Samaritan people. They did not want to mix with them and would even pass by on the other side of the road if they saw them coming.

Let me tell you what happened that day from God's true word (from Luke 17:11 – 19 CEV)...

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus went along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

As he was going into a village, ten men with leprosy came toward him. They stood at a distance and shouted, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” Jesus looked at them and said, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”

And as they went on their way to the priest, they looked at their skin and found that they were healed – their skin was clean.

When one of them discovered that he was healed, he came back, shouting praises to God. He bowed down at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. This man was from the country of Samaria.

Then Jesus asked, “Weren't ten men healed? Where are the other nine? Why was this *foreigner* the only one who came back to thank God? Then Jesus told the man, “You may get up and go. Your faith has made you well.”

That's the end of the story from God's word.

Carol: That was a short story wasn't it? Did you like that story?

Tammy: Have you heard it before? It's a short story but a very important one. It tells us a lot of things...about God...about Jesus...and about people.

Carol: That's right Tammy. Let's see if we can remember everything. Where was Jesus going that day? ...That's right, to Jerusalem – where many Jewish people lived and worshipped at their temple.

Tammy: Who was with Jesus? ...Yes, his special followers and close friends.

And do you remember the country they were passing by? ...That's right, Samaria. You may have heard before about people from Samaria – there was the Samaritan woman who Jesus talked to at the well...and the Samaritan who stopped to help the man who'd been beaten by robbers and left on the roadside. Even though the Jewish people looked down on the Samaritan people, it seems like some of them were very good people doesn't it!

Carol: So what happened as Jesus was passing by? ...Yes, ten men with leprosy came toward him and shouted to Jesus. They asked him to have pity on them.

They must have heard of him, because they knew who he was...and perhaps they had heard that he had healed people.

Tammy: Do you think the men would have been surprised at what Jesus called back to them? Do you remember what he said?

He said, "Go and show yourselves to the priest." They must have wondered why. Imagine them perhaps saying to each other, "Why did Jesus tell us to go to the priest? We have leprosy – the priest won't want us to come near." Maybe they discussed together whether they should go or not. Well – whatever happened, they decided to go. They did what Jesus told them to do – and they were healed.

Carol: Can you imagine what might have happened? Maybe as they started to walk toward the temple where the priest was, one of them noticed his hands – imagine the surprise when he looked at them and they had no sores, or white spots. And another one may have had fingers missing, and as he pulled his hands out from under his cloak to have a look, he discovered that all his fingers were there!!

Imagine how excited they would have been as they looked at each other and at themselves and discovered that they were clean – they were healed. Maybe they *ran* the rest of the way to the priest.

Tammy: But one man didn't, did he? As soon as he realized he was healed he went – maybe *he ran* – back to Jesus. He wanted to say *thank you* to Jesus.

Do you remember what it said in the story? 'He shouted praises to God. Then he bowed down at Jesus' feet and thanked him.'

Carol: And he was the man from Samaria – those people that others looked down on. He was the one who wanted to say *thank you* to Jesus and praise God for what he had done for him.

What do we learn about Jesus from this story?

He wasn't afraid to be near people who were sick and untouchable. His healing was for *all* people. He had compassion on the people who were rejected by others. He always had compassion on those who were poor and suffering.

What do we learn about God?

He still has compassion on suffering people. He hears us when we cry out to him. And he answers our prayers. He loves us and is waiting for us to tell him what we need.

Tammy: And what do we learn about the people?

They needed to be obedient to Jesus and have faith and courage to go and show themselves to the priests. Do you think they would have been healed if they had not obeyed Jesus? I don't think so.

Carol: And Jesus expects us to have faith in him too. As we learn what he wants us to do, we need to obey. Then we will experience God's blessing in our lives.

And something we all need to remember – to say *thank you* to God for all the good things he provides for us.

Let's do that now...

Thank you God for sending your son Jesus to show us what you are like. Thank you for hearing our cry and for answering our prayers. Help us to learn to have faith in you and obey you. We pray in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen

Tammy: Goodbye for now. We look forward to being with you again soon. \

© Copyright Trans World Radio 2013