

## JESUS HAD SAWDUST IN HIS BEARD

- Rod Barks

“My life is slipping away,” moaned my friend. “I feel I haven’t done anything extraordinary.”

A pause, then the question: “What should I do differently?”

I’d like to say that I delved deep and delivered a generous portion of wisdom that instantly allayed all concerns – but I would be lying. However, I did assure him with complete confidence that such feelings are common.

I suspect we possess a spiritual greatness gene -- it is part of being created in the image of the Divine. Peering deeply into one’s soul reveals a yearning to make a difference during our allotted days on Earth. We are haunted by the nagging acknowledgement that life is short -- and the suspicion that our lives are being squandered.

Accordingly, the temptation to seek fulfillment in the flash and glitter of large accomplishments is ever alluring – discover a cure for AID S or usher in world peace. And when we don’t, we question the value of our life.

But I am convinced that rich, purposeful living is simply the accumulation of the seemingly small and easily forgotten events of life performed with faithfulness and seasoned with love.

Case in point is none other than Jesus. Christians focus much upon a small slice of His life called public ministry. Yet the walking on water, opening of blind eyes, crucifixion on a cross and resurrection after 3 days of death, only followed 3 decades of seemingly mundane living. What was His life like during those less-than-spectacular early years?

I suspect He spent much of that time with sawdust in his beard.

Joseph, His adoptive human father, was a carpenter and true to the culture, Jesus would have learned how to wrestle with a wood-slab and make a handsaw sing.

He arose each morning, got dressed then went to work. Sometimes it was raining. He attended weddings and funerals and paid bills. He spoke to His Heavenly Father and hung out with neighbors who sometimes played their music too loud. He lived. He laughed. He learned.

That’s a good pattern for you and me – it’s doable

It is a stretch for most to discover more than 15 days on our calendar that we truly celebrate – birthdays, anniversary, graduation, Christmas or the first hot day in Saskatchewan (June this year). That leaves about 350 sawdust-in-the-beard kind of days.

A well-invested life is not discovered in the 15 but in the 350. Greatness is the accumulation of thousands of “small” decisions made over thousands of days. When seen in such a light, we discover that there are no average days; each one brims with opportunity to make greatness-deposits. Average is simply opportunity in disguise.

A grumpy gas station attendant is an opportunity for encouragement. A rebellious child is an opportunity for lavish love. The person behind us at the restaurant is an opportunity for generosity (won't they be surprised when they discover their bill is paid). Sorrow is an opportunity to pray. Temptation is an opportunity to make right choices.

Such lofty living initiates us into an unlikely army of everyday citizens, who march to the beat of a different drum; who view life from lofty perspective; who rise up via the unlikely pathway of humility. They know it is in the trenches of normalcy that true mettle is proven and in the soil of the mundane that greatness grows. Average is just a state of mind.

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day. Shake of the regrets of yesterday, live fully in the present - and remember to brush off the sawdust before sitting on the couch.

*“Average is simply opportunity in disguise.”*

*Rod Barks is lead pastor of the Apostolic Church in Nipawin, Sk. and can be contacted at  
rodbarks@hotmail.com*