

EXTRA! from the Creek

is a CreekWeb Internet Ministry of

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Here's a midweek letter from the pastor:

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My Dear Church Family,

I don't watch soap operas, but if I did, I think I'd watch "Days of Our Lives" just because of the title. I suspect though, that since it's a soap opera, it likely depicts the more banal and gross ways in which we waste our lives—like watching television!

To me, the best play ever written is Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. In that play there are some rather mournful words, such as these from Simon Stimson, the alcoholic church organist who lived most of his own life in sad depression: "That's what it was to be alive. To move about in a cloud of ignorance; to go up and down trampling on the feelings of those...of those about you. To spend and waste time as though you had a million years. To be always at the mercy of one self-centered passion, or another."

Yet there are other great lines in the play that remind me to seize the day (*carpe diem* in the Latin). For instance, here are Emily's words, after returning to life from the grave to relive her twelfth birthday: "I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back—up the hill—to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Good-by, Good-by, world. Good-by, Grover's Corners...Mama and Papa. Good-by to clocks ticking...and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths...and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you." She then looks to the Stage Manager, the more pastoral-godlike figure in the drama, and

asks, "Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? – every, every minute?" The Stage Manager responds, "No," then pauses, then adds, "The saints and poets, maybe – they do some."

The King James Version says, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." The New Living Translation similarly puts it, "Teach us to make the most of our time, so that we may grow in wisdom." And finally, the Message deems it, "Oh! Teach us to live well! Teach us to live wisely and well!" In each case, the words are from Psalm 90:12 – a verse I want to commit to going over and studying and remembering every day of my life. The whole of the ninetieth psalm stresses the importance of the day – not the longer measurements of time like months or seasons or years or decades, but merely of the simple day.

Perhaps we should measure our time on this earth by such a simple scale. Indeed, now at every funeral I officiate, I add up all the days the deceased lived. A person who lives a hundred years to the day, for instance, is granted as a gift from God a total of 36,525 days. (That's, of course, counting the extra days of leap years!) And by making handy use of a calculator, I figure today to be day 17,463 for me on this terrestrial ball! Which causes me to wonder: *What of note or worth have I accomplished in these 17,463 days? How many of them have I allowed to become a total waste? And of course, how many days might I have left?* The answer to each question gives me all the more reason to seize the day! *Carpe diem!*

Jeff

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