

Nowhere Else to Go

II Corinthians 1:8-11

*I have been driven many times upon my knees
in prayer by the overwhelming conviction that
I have nowhere else to go.*

Abraham Lincoln

Underlying (false) assumptions

– Trials and afflictions point to some fundamental spiritual deficiency.

- Job's 'friends': great suffering points to great sin
- Man born blind: Who sinned?
- If you're really spiritual you won't have problems
- Health, wealth & happiness = sure signs of blessing.

Underlying (false) assumptions

- **Trials and afflictions point to some fundamental spiritual deficiency.**
- **Wrong approaches to ‘the problem of evil’**
 - Why do bad things happen to good people?
 - If God is God he is not good; if God is good he is not God.
- **But Scripture reveals instead...**
 - Our good God has good purposes even when bad happens! [Rom 8:28](#) - [Psalm 119:65-72](#)
 - *This happened so that...* [II Cor 1:3-11](#)

Bringing the text to light & life

– Paul's dreadful trial vs. 8-9a

- At the center of God's will for Paul ([Acts 9:15-16](#))
- Despaired of life itself... in our hearts felt the sentence of death.
- At this moment he did not have the perspective of [II Cor 4:7-9](#); [I Cor 10:13](#); [II Cor 12:8-10](#)
- It was the death of his plans, dreams, calling...
- Getting to where we need to be spiritually is neither automatic nor instantaneous – it takes us to the end of ourselves.

Bringing the text to light & life

- Paul's dreadful trial vs. 8-9a
- God's good purpose vs. 9b

*So that we would not trust in ourselves,
but in God who raises the dead.*

- There is the divine purpose: 'so that'

As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened. Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally—not a bad idea since he's the God who raises the dead!

(II Cor 1:9 The

Message)

Bringing the text to light & life

– Paul’s dreadful trial vs. 8-9a

– God’s good purpose vs. 9b

*So that we would not trust in ourselves,
but in God who raises the dead.*

- There is the divine purpose: ‘so that’
- At the end of our sufficiency we find God to be the all-sufficient One. II Cor 12:8, 10.
- Note the pattern: affliction–death–resurrection.
- It is either/or – either self or God.

Bringing the text to light & life

- Paul's dreadful trial **vs. 8-9a**
- God's good purpose **vs. 9b**
- Firm confidence *and* prayer **vs. 10-11**
 - A long and arduous journey remains. We must *keep* relying on God and not ourselves.
 - Confident reliance on God grows as we confidently rely on God!
 - Confident reliance on God and the prayers of other people for us are tied together.

Bringing the text to light & life

Applying the text to life

- Are you on the look-out for God's purposes in the problems you face?**
- Will you willingly turn to Him when you have nowhere else to go?**

Lord, I am willing to:

Receive what you give,

Lack what you withhold

Relinquish what you take