Introduction:

“Sometimes the shortest distance between two points is a ‘zig-zag’ line.”

– Dr. Don Sunnnikian

Restatement:

God’s ultimate purposes for our lives are often achieved by circumstances that seem to make no “apparent” sense to us.

Review:

- C + P = E
  (Circumstance + Perspective = Experience)

- Key #1 = ______________________

- Question #1 = ________________ ___________ ________________?
Key #2: ____________________

**Question #2:** What’s my purpose?

**A second lesson from the life of Paul**

- Paul’s report = his thesis

  \[12\] Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

  Philippians 1:12 (NASB)

**How God used Paul’s difficult circumstances**

- Exhibit A = The __________________ goes forth

  \[13\] so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

  Philippians 1:13 (NASB)

- Exhibit B = The __________________ grows strong

  \[14\] and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

  Philippians 1:14 (NASB)

- Exhibit C = The __________________ grows deep

  \[15\] Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; \[16\] the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; \[17\] the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

  \[18\] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.

  Philippians 1:15-18 (NASB)
3 purpose statements for every believer

1. I am an ambassador/messenger of the Gospel.
   
   - Purpose: _______________ ________ “______________”

   - Question #1 = How could God use my difficult circumstances to 
     advance the Gospel?

2. I am called to encourage God’s people; to help them grow to full maturity in 
   Christ.

   - Purpose: _______________ ________ “______________”

   - Question #2 = How could God use my difficult circumstances to 
     encourage other believers?

3. I am a servant of the living God.

   - Purpose: _______________ ________ _____ ____________

   - Question #3 = What might God want to do “in” me through my 
     present circumstances.

The Big Question = Whose purpose or agenda have I been most eager to see 
fulfilled… God’s or mine?
Discussion Questions:

1. Review the divine formula \([C + P = E]\) and share how your “P” was altered by your “focus” last week.

2. What was Paul’s thesis in verse 12? How did his view of his purpose transform his perspective?

3. What “good” come out of Paul’s adverse circumstances? Why could he be so joyful when his life seemed so difficult and unfair?

4. Talk through the four questions with a close friend or your small group. What would it look like to act on questions 1, 2, and 3?