

## June 27th – Adversity Is Opportunity

*“At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria...therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”*

(Acts 8:1, 4)

No one enjoys the trials of life, but all of us experience them. I once heard a man say, “You’re either going into a storm, you’re in the midst of a storm, or you’re coming out of a storm.” I think there is a lot of truth in that statement. Sometimes we wish we had a crystal ball to see what lies ahead, but it's probably a good thing we don't know the future because it would surely scare us to death. When we go through hard times, we're tempted to ask “Why me, God?” as we question the Lord's plan.

We need to start seeing adversity as an opportunity for God to do great things in and through us. Today's verses provide a great example. After the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), “a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem.” The assault was led by a man named Saul, whom you and I have come to know as the Apostle Paul. This is Saul before he was converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Consequently, the persecuted church was scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Most anyone would've seen that as a terrible tragedy, but the early church didn't see it that way. They saw their adversity as an opportunity to reach more people with the Gospel. As a result of their expulsion from Jerusalem, the Gospel began to spread north to Samaria and beyond. If God had not permitted the church's persecution, the Gospel wouldn't have spread. What are you going through right now? Whatever it is, trust that God can take it and use it for your good and His glory!