

Brookland Baptist Church
Lecture VI – Bible Study
April 13, 2020,

Reverend James A. Jamison, D. Min., Presenter

We are grateful to God that we are able to resume our study: **Understanding God's Will for our lives**. Although we are having to do a virtual study, we are studying nonetheless.

Before we begin our study on the **Circumstantial Will of God**, it might be wise if we kind of recap our last session. In chapter five, we spoke of the **Intentional Will of God**. When we noted that - when we speak of God's Intentional Will, we think of the will of God in the sense of **His ideal intention**. In other words, the Intentional Will of God means the way in which God pours himself out in goodness, such as the true father longs to do for His son or daughter.

One of the first things we must do is to dissociate from the phrase "*the will of God*" all that is evil and unpleasant and unhappy is the will of God. Rather the intentional will of God means the way in which God pours himself out. We referenced **Matthew 18:11-14; 2 Peter 3:9, Jeremiah 29:11, and 1 Corinthians 8:11**.

Knowing God and God's ways helps us to understand that God doesn't will or wish suffering on any of us. God's will is not about evil or unpleasantness, disaster or unhappiness. God intentionally pours out love, mercy and absolute goodness. This simply leads us to understand that everything that happens is **'NOT' God's will**.

We concluded that we must agree with Laird in the end: What sort of a God is this, who of His own intention, not through circumstances thrust into life by ignorance, folly, or sin; but of divine intention, pours misery undeserved and unhappiness, disappointment and frustration, bereavement, calamity, and ill health on His beloved children, and then asks them to look up through their tears and say, "**Thy will be done**"? We simply must break with the idea that everything that happens is the will of

God in the sense of being His intention. However, it is within the will of God, if you must use the phrase.

Today in lecture six, we will turn our focus to the **“Circumstantial Will of God”**. God’s Circumstantial Will — that is, how evil circumstances may momentarily counter God’s ideal purposes; and God’s Ultimate Will that is, how God’s ideal purposes may finally be realized though temporarily derailed. In other words, Evil circumstances, sometimes rooted in the free will of human beings, may temporarily counter God’s ideal purposes, but God’s intentions will ultimately be realized, and with or without our help.

Looking in your book on page 27, Laird again uses the example of the cross. She states that, “Christ did not just submit to this dread event of the Crucifixion with what we miscall “resignation.” He took hold of the situation.” Given those circumstances which evil had produced, it was also God's will that Jesus should not just die like a trapped animal, but that he should so react to evil, positively and creatively, as to wrest good out of evil circumstances. That is why the Cross is not just a symbol of capital punishment, similar to the hangman's rope, but is a symbol of the triumphant use of evil in the cause of the holy purposes of God.

In other words, by doing the circumstantial will of God, we open up the way to God's ultimate triumph with no loss of anything of value to ourselves. We say that he transformed that hill of horror into a mountain of hope. The popular hymn the Old Rugged Cross, made enormously popular by Mahalia Jackson.

Let’s along with Laird move to an example that is a little more human, the example of an unmarried woman. Now it is not the intentional will of God that she should remain unmarried. The divine intention, surely, is that every woman should have a home and a husband and babies. The very structure of her body and the creative centers in her brain, her sex instinct and her maternal impulse, are sufficient evidence of this, for every woman possesses all these things. Though some instincts can be repressed into unconsciousness, or can be diverted into non-biological activities, every instinct is present in every person, and biological fulfillment is God's intentional plan. Be fruitful and multiply. **Genesis 1:28**

Let us suppose that the tyranny of evil circumstances - and they are evil if they deprive women of their primary *raison d'etre* - thrusts a woman into a dilemma. She cannot have that part of her nature biologically satisfied. Let us imagine, unless she sacrifices her ideals - cannot have sex without sin. I want to pause here and look at the biological challenges to this line of thought. **Raison d'etre:** - In French, *raison d'etre* literally means "*reason for being*," and in English it means about the same. (*Dictionary definition: Vocabulary.com*)

Someone's *raison d'etre* is their life's purpose. What if a woman who is infertile, or who had to have a hysterectomy or some other physical problem? How might that be a part of God's circumstantial will? (Illustration the story of my Aunt Essie and her favorite usage of this passage: **I Corinthians 7:28; 34-35.**)

We note, then, that the second part of God's circumstantial will – will be done with or without human co-operation. Without that, the Cross would have been another in the long list of capital sentences carried out by a savage and barbarous state. It would have been a noble sacrifice for an ideal. In the case of the kind of woman we have described, without cooperation, the woman would simply resign herself to the forces of the universe and make her frustration unendurable. She has to by a positive and creative attitude to the situation come to realize, be it noted, that life not God, has thrust upon her. So that out of her frustration, she may make an immense contribution both to her own inner harmony and to the final purposes of God. How might she do this? (Perhaps: Adoption, foster parent, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), and etc.)

Conclusive thoughts

Evil, circumstances, disaster, death, disappointment, disability, sometimes the consequence of natural causes in the scheme of life, and sometimes rooted in the free will of human beings may temporarily counter God's ideal purposes. But God's intentions will ultimately be realized. Natural disasters and challenging human conditions...such particular circumstances may at times temporarily frustrate God's intentional will. But we must not conclude that every disaster or death or disappointment is intended by God, for that would not be consistent with the loving, caring God who created us, and who wishes only what is good for us.

