

**Bible Study - Lecture VIII**  
**Brookland Baptist Church**  
**Wednesday, May 6, 2020, 2020**  
**Presenter: James A. Jamison, D. Min.**

**CASE STUDY #3 Trinity Church**

After a period of decline in membership, the leadership of Trinity Church splits down the middle. One group wants to relocate outside the inner city while the other wants to stay put and refocus the resources of the church on the people who live near the existing building. Several influential families leave; the rest are determined to band together and pray for guidance. The remaining few decide to open a day care center as an outreach ministry to low-income and working class families. A few new families from the neighborhood begin to attend and take leadership in the outreach efforts of the church, but financial problems continue to plague the church and threaten its closure.

**Considerations:**

- 1. Weatherhead points out that "because of our oneness with the great human family ... evil among other members of it may create circumstances which disturb God's intention for us." How has this "oneness" influenced Trinity Church negatively and positively?**
- 2. What natural laws are in effect in the life of this church?** Natural laws of the universe continue to operate despite abuses of human freedom, and are not broken by God (except through miracles) to save us from suffering.
- 3. Does God overrule natural laws and provide miracles? What would be a miracle in this situation? Do you believe one could happen?**
- 4. Regarding Trinity Church:**
  - (a) How can we understand the circumstantial will of God in the spiritual realm?**

## **The Permissive Will of God**

- (b) How could the church members cooperate with God to wrest good out of the evil that has befallen them?

### **5. How do these acts of cooperation meet Weatherhead's guidelines?**

- (a) actions are of use to the community or benefit the common good of humankind.
- (b) actions or attitudes are satisfying a true need.
- (c) actions and attitudes are in harmony with personal and spiritual values.

### **For further inquiry, look up these scripture verses:**

- Micah 6:8-9 - (God's requirements of us)
  - Hebrews 10:32-39 - (Persevering in doing God's will)
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### **1.) In the particular circumstances of life, God's will for us has two sides:**

- a.) To accept that we are subject to the divinely ordered natural laws of the universe; and
- b.) To actively respond to evil, positively and creatively, as to wrest good out of evil circumstances. By so doing we open the way to God's ultimate triumph.

### **2.) God has ordered the natural realm.**

- a.) God ordains that universal laws remain in place, even when human violation of natural law results in suffering and death.

### **3.) God is at work and we also can participate in the outcome of events by our choices.**

### **4.) We know that we are choosing cooperation with God's circumstantial will when we react to suffering and tragedy in ways that are consistent with the following:**

- a.) Our actions are of use to the community or they benefit the common good of humankind:
- b.) Our actions or attitudes are satisfying a true God-given need.
- c.) Our actions and attitudes are in harmony with personal and spiritual values.

### **The Permissive Will of God**

We have completed our study on the Intentional Will of God that is, 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. Tonight we have completed our study on 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. We understand that human folly and sin often delay or prevent God's intentional will from coming to fruition in our lives. Thus in the circumstances created by evil or neglect, there is a "will within the will of God." This means that God will make provision to help us overcome and bring good out of current circumstances.

As we begin lecture eight, we are veering away from the book and our initial outline, to focus on an aspect of the will God that is perhaps the most difficult, to understand because it introduces the why question. "The Permissive Will of God." When we speak of the Permissive will of God that there are somethings that God allows and permits for an indirect fulfillment of God's. In other words, because God is sovereign, He must at least "permit" all events and happenings. Within God's sovereign will, He chooses to permit many things to happen that He takes no pleasure in. The question of why God permits some evil and the suffering that comes from it, even the suffering of innocents, is an extremely hard question to answer, because only God knows the purpose or the reasoning of it all.

The questions around why God allows and permits somethings is not new. Human beings have grappled with question since the beginning of time and that question becomes more personal when tragedy, suffering, or difficult times hit close to home. In fact they have been asked by men and women of all ages of history. How would you answer these two questions?

## The Permissive Will of God

1.) Why does God allow pain and suffering? -----

2.) Why did God allow \_\_\_\_\_?

**Let's consider a few terms:**

**THEODICY:** refers to the attempt to justify the goodness of God in the face of the manifold evil present in the world. Further theodicy is an attempt to reconcile the belief in a loving and powerful God with the suffering in our world

**ANTHROPODICY:** has to do with or is concerned with man's inhumanity to man; the evil we do to each other.

**Acts of God:** an act of God is generally considered an act attributed to nature without human interference. For an example, damage from tornado or a lightning strike would be considered an act of God. Damage would not be considered an act of God if it is caused by the property owner.

**WIGIAT = Where is God in All This? Or where was God in all that?**

May I interject that as we study this aspect of God's will that we consider two things as it relates to our disappointment with God in the face of suffering, tragedy, or injustice comes from to two places. First, our assumptions about how God is supposed to work in our world. Namely, when God does not meet our expectations, we are disappointed, disillusioned, and confused.

Second, the way we have interpreted the message of the Bible. That is to say, we must remember that the message of the Bible is not a promise that those who believe and do good will not suffer, but the Bible shares the share the testimonies of those who refused to let go of their faith in the face of suffering.

Next week for your homework assignment you are to look at these characters and scriptures and explain how God's permissive will is involved:

## **The Permissive Will of God**

- **Genesis 37:12-36**
- **1 Samuel 8: 1-6**
- **Job 1:1-12**
- **Habakkuk 1:1-11**
- **Psalm 49**
- **Psalm 7**