

The Higher Will of God Over Our Lives

by Timothy Tow

The Higher Will of God is at work in our lives, even when our travel plans are changed, and we should trust in His sovereignty and be thankful for His safekeeping and protection.

Scripture: Romans 8:28

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Divine Providence"

Description

Timothy Tow preaches about the Higher Will of God over our lives, emphasizing that God is in control of our travels and circumstances. He shares examples from the Bible, like Paul's missionary journey being redirected by the Holy Spirit, to illustrate how God's plan always works for our good. Personal experiences of unexpected changes in travel plans are used to demonstrate God's providence and protection, urging gratitude and trust in His guidance. Tow concludes by highlighting the importance of acknowledging God's sovereignty in our lives and the need for non-Christians to find security and hope in Jesus as their Savior.

Transcript

Text: Man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man then understand his own way?

To restate this text, "There is the Higher Will of God over our lives." To focus it more sharply, "There is the Higher Will of God over our travels."

Travel is very much a part of modern living. In my young days, Singaporeans were all confined to our Island State . Rarely would any Singaporean venture out to Kuala Lumpur , the Malaysian capital. Today almost every Singaporean travels out of town, and many go to distant countries, bringing their family and children with them. Singaporeans travel for business, for study abroad, or on vacation. Oftentimes, their schedules are altered by unforeseen circumstances. For, we cannot see beyond a day into the future. "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." (Jas 4:13-15).

When our travel plans are changed, let us not be disappointed but rather give thanks to the Lord. For we have a living and true God who is also our Governor and Provider. He is in control of every circumstance. It is He who has willed it, and it is for our good. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).

A classic example of God's Higher Will operating over man's goings is the case of Paul travelling on his second missionary journey. When he planned to go somewhere into the province of Asia , the Holy Ghost forbade him. So he turned to go northeast into Bithynia , and again the Spirit suffered him not. A humorous commentary of the Spirit forbidding Paul to proceed to Bithynia is given by Rev Tai Po Fu, our Taiwan missionary friend. He said, if he succeeded in the north-eastern route he would end up in China . Now the Chinese are very selfish. If they received the good news of the Gospel, they were likely to keep it for themselves. So the Holy Spirit led Paul to Troas . There came a vision. Paul saw a man standing on the shore of Macedonia beckoning him to come over and help them. As a result, Paul went trus (straight in Malay) into Europe . From Europe, the Gospel spread to America and thereafter to the Far East . God changed Paul's plan for good (Rom 8:28).

I had a similar experience when I yielded to serve the Lord a second time. Having obtained admission to study at Dr Marcus Chen's Chungking Seminary, in West China, I made my way to Shanghai to take a further 2,000 miles journey by boat on the Yangtze River . My Aunt in Shanghai thought this was crazy, when there was a better Seminary by Dr Chia Yu Ming in Nanking only 150 miles away, like Malacca is from Singapore . She bade me to hear Dr Chia who happened to be in Shanghai speaking at a Conference. By attending his meetings I agreed it was more sensible to study in Nanking than Chungking . God changed my plan for good, for it was through Nanking that I got a scholarship to study at Faith Seminary in America . After 3 years I returned to Singapore in 1950 and have since been your pastor.

Now, let me relate the story of our going to New Zealand for a holiday and how three-fourths of the way the Lord thwarted our plan and we had to come home abruptly. My toe nail developed an abscess and being a diabetic I feared complications. I returned quickly with my wife and son Jonathan and got hospitalised. The doctor on duty ordered me to be warded for there was danger of ending up in amputation. That night, the whole Church prayed. The Lord heard their prayers and I was discharged in two days. Though discharged, my full recovery was prolonged. Nevertheless, God had a high plan to get me back early. All things work together for good to them that love God (Rom 8:28 again). I thank God for His Higher Will for my life. I should not grumble, but rather thank the Lord. When you have your travel plans cut short, who knows God is thereby saving you from a greater danger?

The experience of a sister of this Church in the Silkair Disaster near Palembang Indonesia 2 years ago illustrates. This sister went to Jakarta with her boss. They were booked on the ill-fated Silkair flight but missed the plane through unfinished business. When it was announced that the Silkair flight crashed with total loss of life, wasn't she glad that both the lives of her boss and hers were saved!

On a holiday in New Zealand we travelled hundreds of miles, yea, beyond a thousand, and we were back preserved from accident. But when we returned safely, we forgot to thank Him for journeying mercies. I believe we all owe the Lord for His safekeeping and thanksgiving is in order. Rather than buying insurance, we who have a living Saviour to watch over us are more insured than ever.

My recent experience has taught me to take better care of the life God has given me. There is the human responsibility under God's sovereignty.

It teaches me, through the injured toe that life is frail as David has discovered through his illness in Psalm 39. Therefore one must use time wisely, to live productively for the Lord. To hasten unto the coming of the Day of God.

It teaches us all who luxuriate in good health to be thankful unto Him. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Now to the non-Christians. Those who are outside Christ live a precarious life. They are under the oppression of a blind fate. In their daily livelihood they do not have the trust and security in a God who watches over us. They get the fortune-teller to choose a good day for their travel. They buy travel insurance not to assure them of no accident but rather to meet with the accident and get some compensation from it. I call this negative insurance. What a fearful and insecure life! Let me urge you to receive the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, to be your Saviour and you will be freed from the darkness of a life without God and without hope in the word (Eph 2:12).

"Man's goings are of the Lord." Though he cannot understand the Higher Will of God that changes his course, he knows that under God's guidance, all things work together for good to them that love Him. Amen.

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