



Our topic this week invites us to look at God's **positive will** and His **permissive will**. I chose this topic because a few weeks ago the topic came up at our community retreat day. It's a heavy one, but one I think many will find helpful or interesting. Good topic for discussions.

Most people probably have not heard about the two wills of God: **positive** (ideal) and **permissive** (conditional). Understanding the **distinctions**

between these two is important because when **properly understood**, it can help us **know God better**, our world and ourselves, but when **misunderstood** can **confuse us about God**, the world and ourselves.

God's **positive** (or ideal) will essentially means **what God desires for us and the world...the best!** It's what, in a **perfect** world, we would always do — **loving God** with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and **loving our neighbor** as ourselves. God's positive will is **always good**, never evil. Because God is infinitely good and has no evil within him, he can **only** will that which is **good** and holy.

Events, such as the **Crucifixion**, can't fall into the category of God's positive will. They can, however, be understood to be part of His permissive will, which is everything that happens in the world. God's **permissive** will is what He **allows, not wills**. If he didn't allow it, it wouldn't happen.

God's will is what holds the **world** and **everyone** and **everything** in it in **existence**. Each of us **exist** because God wills it. Each of us **moves, thinks, breathes, and acts** because **God wills it**. As such, everything we do, for good and for ill, is made possible by God's will. However, we get to make **choices** because we have been gifted with **free will**. A gift, but a responsibility.

If we don't understand the **consequences of free will**, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking of God as a dictator and ourselves as puppets on a string. While **free will** is a gift, it holds us responsible for our choices. In the end, it all comes down to **trust** — trusting that God **is** working out all things for our good.

God's **positive will** is what **God wants**. God's **permissive will** is what **God allows**. These distinctions matter because they shape how we **think** and **feel** about God. Hopefully, this will give us a better understanding of what we are experiencing during the **pandemic** and other **hardships** in our **personal lives**, knowing that God does not directly will it but **permits it**. Why? I don't know. You'll have to **ask God** that when you **see Him!**