

FEBRUARY 27, 2026 FATHER STEVE DEMAIO

To just to set the stage of what is happening, we have God and His people and that word "Covenant". Well, I think something that that word that we try to understand and we try to enter into this relationship between God and His people. That God chooses us, that He sees us, that He knows us, that He forms us and that is the entirety of scripture, of the children and their Father. God and the people.

And He's calling them to holiness. He's calling them to keep the ordinances, the statutes, the commandments with all their hearts, with all their mind, with all their soul. He's calling them to life, He's calling them to holiness, and it's beautiful, right? That is a gift, that is beautiful.

To stay there and to recognize that we have a Father, that we have a God who is calling us children, who is forming us, who is bringing us together, who wants to be with us, who wants to cherish us, who sees us as a treasure. But I don't know about you, in my day-to-day life, I constantly fall short. I know. I can read these words and I can desire, I want to keep the commandments. I want to, I want to love God with my whole heart, my whole mind, my whole soul.

That I can see day in and day out how I constantly fall short, and so, it's something beautiful for us to reflect on and to see, okay, even this morning, waking up in the morning and saying, "Okay, I'm praying, I feel connected, I love God," and then I leave and what happens? I can barely love my brother and community let alone my enemy. I have a struggle with a parishioner, I'm impatient, I don't feel like working. There's just so many ways that I fall short of the commandments, of the ordinances of the way God actually wants me to live.

And there was something about the first reading that kind of struck me as I was praying. That it's as He promised. That the holiness that we are called to is something that He has promised. That we are treasured children as He has promised. That He is the one that's going to set us above, that He is gonna teach us how to be the light to the nations. And so, it gave me a little bit of room to relax. To take a deep breath and say, "Okay, it's You who promised me that I'm called to holiness. That holiness is not something that I'm going to be able to do on my own."

And then, what works? What works for trying to become holy, for trying to live the commandments, for trying to do this with my whole heart, with my whole mind. What actually works. What actually works is what we see in the gospel today. That the disciples had gathered around Jesus on the mountain. This, this should be it, right? This should be our posture, this is what happens at every time we go to mass, that we gather around Jesus on the mountain. Every time we read scripture, we gather around Jesus on the mountain. Every time we pray, we gather around Jesus on the mountain, because He's the one, He's the one that's going to teach us, He's the one who gives the grace, He's the one who is going to teach us how to love.

So as disciples, this the posture that we should take. Every day, waking up and throughout the day. Right? We're always in God's presence, right? So throughout the day trying to gather around Jesus and allowing Him to teach us. Having the posture of receiving, of listening, of allowing Him to work in our life so that our hearts become like His. That's holiness. Holiness at the end of the day is looking and acting and loving and thinking like Jesus. Having the heart of Jesus and that's not something that we can do on our own. Only grace. Grace will make our hearts look like His.

And I think it's beautiful at the mass, we say, "Through Him and in Him and with Him." That's the way our life, that's the rhythm of our life that we should have every day. And so, trying to see, right? And trying to learn and trying to live as Jesus did with His heart because of His grace. And I think then we can say happy are those who follow, happy are those who follow the law of the Lord. Happy are those who really, who follow Jesus.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets and He didn't keep it for Himself. That fulfillment is poured out on us every day. From this table, from this altar, in the eucharist, in prayer, in the sacraments, through the Church, all these different ways, He is trying to give us His life-giving spirit. He is trying to give us His heart, His grace. He is not holding anything back.

And so, I really hope that during this Lenten season, we can really take it seriously of this gathering around Jesus. It's gonna take prayer, almsgiving, fasting, all of it is part of it, but all of it is meant to be with Jesus at the centre so that we could really learn to become children of the Father. We're gonna learn how to love our enemies, we're going to learn how to pray for those who persecute us. It's not something that I can just wake up one day and say, "Okay, I love my enemies. I'm gonna pray for those who persecute me." Right? It's something that needs to be learned. It's grace that needs to be poured into our hearts so that we can little by little learn how to love like Him.

And I think if you look at your own life, I know if I can look at mine, there are glimpses, there are glimpses of those moments when not only am I gathering around Jesus, but I'm actually beginning to love like Him. I'm actually willing to love my enemy. I'm actually willing to persecute the one who's bullying me. I'm actually willing to pray for the one who

is giving me a hard time. That coworker who is, I'm struggling with. I'm actually beginning to see people like Jesus because grace works and I know I forget that sometimes in my life. I forget that grace works. I forget that I'm actually becoming good. I'm actually becoming like Jesus.

That it's not just a show, that it's not just empty ritual, that grace is actually healing me, grace is actually working, grace is actually making my heart look more and more like Jesus'. And so, it's not something that's going to be accomplished in one day. We can say why did God, the Father, give the Israelites something they couldn't actually do? But as I was praying about that, He wasn't so concerned. He was concerned about the heart. He wasn't so concerned, I think, about whether they kept it or not kept it because He knew, He knew that it was about the heart.

That what He wanted was His children to be close to Him. And the law and the ordinances and the statutes weren't meant to be burdensome. They weren't meant to be something painful. They were meant to be a gift so that they could live in freedom, they could live in peace, they could live in joy. And so every time the child returns back to the Father, every time the son return back to the Father, every time the daughter returns back to the Father, there's rejoicing there.

And so, it's not so did you keep it perfectly or not. Run to the Father's heart. He is the one who promised. It's His work, it's His grace, it's His life, it's His heart. And so, as we continue to journey towards Easter, right? That's where it was all poured out. And so, during this Lenten season, let us continue to draw close to Jesus to be honest, to be open, to continue to ask, for His grace to ask for His heart to Jesus' make my heart like Yours so that when we do finally reach that Easter season. Easter Sunday, the Easter season, we can say with Him, we can say

alleluia, we can say all the beautiful things that God has worked in my life and that my heart looks like, looks more like Jesus'.

My heart looks more like His and I begin to live like Him, to love like Him, to think like Him, to act like Him because He promised the Holy Spirit that we would do greater things than even He did. But it doesn't happen without grace, so let us continue to journey to Him, to walk with Him, to gather around Jesus, and let Him teach, let Him give, and let Him work miracles in our life.