

God does not want lip-service. Rather our Lord desires *authentic love*, which is manifested primarily through *action*. God does not want *talkers*, He wants *doers—and specifically doers of His will*. This is how I would summarize today's Liturgy of the Word, especially the Gospel from Matthew regarding the famous parable of the Two Sons.

The greatest lesson we can learn from this great parable is that God prefers honest, humble, and repentant sinners over *fake and superficial* disciples. *And how can you blame Him?* Who doesn't want to be truly loved with authenticity and fidelity that is grounded in concrete action? Which parent would ever want their children to pay them empty lip-service and not truly love them through their actions? How many of *us* would like to be paid empty lip-service and not truly loved by others in their actual deeds? I'm guessing none of us.

Brothers and sisters, it is possible for us to *say* all the right things, while *doing* all the wrong things. Our merciful Savior emphasizes in today's Gospel that *nothing pleases God more* than a humble, contrite, and loving heart that is dedicated to actually *doing* the Lord's will. Nothing brings greater joy to God than a person who *repents* and

humbly realizes the sinful error of their ways, embracing the Lord with their whole life and seeking to love Him in their words *and* deeds!

Let me be absolutely clear: *God does not need us*. He is absolutely and totally perfect and self-sufficient in Himself! And *yet* out of his perfect love and goodness, *He desires us* and invites us to share in His divine life for all eternity! The fact that God doesn't need us but *still* created us and invites us to share in His divine nature demonstrates the incomprehensible goodness and love of the Triune God. The fact that God doesn't need us and *yet still willingly suffered and died for us* to save us from our sins and from death demonstrates that the divine mercy and love of God surpasses anything we could ever grasp.

God is *so good and generous* that He wants to share His goodness and love with His human creatures who are so much lesser than Him! *God desires our repentance because He desires us!* And not only does He desire us, but He desires *all of us!* He wants *every aspect of our life:* our private life, our public life, and our professional life! He wants us to love Him when *no one's watching* and He wants us to love Him when

*everyone's watching!* He wants us to love Him *when it's easy* and He wants us to love Him *when it's hard!*

Make no mistake, our Lord is not being unfair or unreasonable in His demands to those whom He calls to follow Him. *He only desires what we want for ourselves.* Who *doesn't* want to be loved totally and perfectly! And remember, as finite, sinful human creatures, we are not equal to God, Who is infinitely greater than us and infinitely more deserving of all our love than any creature in existence! It's only reasonable that God Who gave us *everything* in His Beloved Son for the sake of our *eternal* salvation and happiness, invites us to give Him everything in return and to hold nothing back! And the "everything" that we are called to give our Lord and Savior in return for everything He has given to us, is our *entire life!*

True love desires faithful, total, and perfect love! Love, by its very nature, is not half-hearted! *Love is total—it goes all in!* We must give God what we want for ourselves and *yet, God deserves so much more than we do* because *He is God* and we are not! In every relationship, especially among family and friends, we want to be loved perfectly and

faithfully, even if we don't openly admit it. Now obviously, there is and should be a hierarchy of love in our lives that has God *first*, followed immediately by our family, and then our friends. Of course, we should love God *more* than our family and our friends, and yet whenever we love, we should strive to love *perfectly* and *faithfully*. So yes, our relationships should exist within a reasonably ordered hierarchy that has Christ at the top, but our love, regardless of its degree or whom we're loving, should *always* be faithful and authentic, meaning that it should be *defined* by *action* and not by empty words and lip-service.

The secular world tempts us to pay empty-lip service to God and not to love Him with every fiber of our being! In short, the secular world does not want us to do the will of our loving and merciful Lord. The world tempts us to *call* ourselves Catholic and yet selfishly reject the fundamental moral teachings of Christ and His Church. The world tempts us to *call* ourselves Catholic and still support intrinsic evils like the legalized killing of innocent pre-born children, racism, blatant disregard for the poor and the suffering, the redefinition of marriage and gender, and the destruction of conscience rights and religious liberty—

all of which are totally *contrary* to the loving will of God! Brothers and sisters, we *cannot* call ourselves “Catholic” with our words and then actively support these and other intrinsic evils with our actions! The secular world tempts us to call ourselves Catholic when it’s convenient for us and then renounce Christ and His Church when it’s inconvenient for us or when we experience public pressure to bow to the crowd. Always remember that it was the crowd who shouted for the death of Christ!

Brothers and sisters, if we’re going to say “yes” to Christ and *call* ourselves Catholic, then we must *be faithfully* and *authentically Catholic* and actually *do the will of Christ* in every aspect of our lives as one of His faithful disciples! If we’re going to say “yes” to God with our words, then we must be willing to *do His will* by humbly forming and examining our consciences according to the fundamental teachings of Christ and His Church! If we’re going to say “yes” to God, then we must be willing to honestly and humbly recognize our sins and turn back to the Lord with a repentant heart, for all of Heaven rejoices when one sinner repents and turns back to the Father!

Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus loves us so much that He *demand*s all of us! If we humbly surrender our whole life to Christ our Savior in love and fidelity in *all that we say and do*, we will not regret it! If we lovingly give Christ our whole life as one of His disciples, then He will *never lead us astray—I guarantee it!* If we actually *do* the will of God in our *actions*, then we will discover a happiness, peace, and freedom that this passing world can never give!

As we prepare to worship and receive our Lord Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist, let's thank Him for His incomprehensible love for us and ask Him for the grace to love Him in return in both word *and* deed, so that by *doing His will*, we may find the happiness, peace, and freedom we so desperately long for!