

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN?

Sermon by Minister Angela Smith of COPE for February 16th, 2020 (and beyond)

Ignorance is the basis of all unreasonable and irrational fears. What do you know about yourself and the world around you? How honest are you and how objective in your reasoning? God is the Absolute Truth and the further anyone strays through dishonesty and deception, the further removed from God to a point they become unrecognizable. The Church Of Philosophical Exploration is a House of God.

In contemplating various perspectives and the abstract perfect versions of any intangible quality (such as a vice or virtue), I meditated on oppression and prayed for guidance on how to best address oppression. And, I believe ending oppression for me starts with me and when I am not oppressive I am leading by example and avoiding hypocrisy where I oppose oppression. I was thinking of economic disparity while understanding history and having many conversations with people from every economic position. And, I've dined with the homeless as a volunteer at a soup kitchen and with the affluent at 5 star restaurants. I listen.

What if I had nothing but my body, my mind, my soul (TRUTH & VIRTUE), and the clothes on my back, shoes on my feet, and no other resources? And, I saw other people in civilization had abundant resources beyond what I reasonably would imagine ever acquiring? How did they acquire the abundant resources? Are there rules for doing so and have the rules (a.k.a. laws) evolved over time to help keep the peace for the sake of civilization which includes making chattel slavery illegal? Can I reject civilization and the rules of society while benefiting from the abundance civilization and said rules facilitate without being a hypocrite or oppressive in my own right? I believe the answer to the last question is "No". And, this is why I'm a Christian Church. I am in full agreement with Jesus Christ that hypocrisy is the biggest problem then and now.

So, for civilized society, those who appear to be feral humans to some degree that reject civilized society's rules while assuming authority to dictate how the abundant resources are distributed or simply redistributing without authority to do so are hypocritical because you are either an anarchist and totally self-reliant with full commitment to rejecting civilized society or a Cain/Lucifer/Narcissist that wishes to oppress established civilization solely for personal gain without offering anything but your satisfaction in exchange. And, if an anarchist and totally self-reliant, not relying on charitable assistance and refusing any if totally committed. However, if a total self-reliant anarchist living amongst those with established rules and law enforcement, you will find if you violate those rules in a given jurisdiction like incompetent or feral nonhuman animals, you may be destroyed by death or institutionalization. So, regardless, it is best to stay committed to Truth and Virtue (a.k.a. GOD) regardless of politics or economic status.

This may be a good time to explain how #TaoFu (Jesus and The Way as a Defense Strategy) using the Socratic Method (which I believe should perhaps be known as the Platonic Method as I hypothesize that Socrates was an artful or creative construct by Plato and perhaps never actually existed beyond Plato's concepts of Socrates as a

teaching tool and opinion about the appropriate way to handle someone who causes children to sin or corrupts youth) may help you think about issues more objectively in terms of seeing everyone as equal to yourself. So, outside of economic variables and considering yourself as equal to everyone else and vice versa, what general rules (a.k.a. laws) would you like to universally apply in how people govern ourselves collectively and individually? If you said "no rules should apply to anyone", then it's alright with you if I rape and murder you and your whole family because there are no rules. Now, considering that fact, think about what belongs to you as solely being your mind, body, soul, and clothes on your back (shoes on feet included). I'm barefoot and need shoes, you look to be the same size, should I take your shoes if I need them and leave you barefoot? What's your initial response to that? Did you think "I'd like to see you try and I'll fight you for it?" Did you think, "If I don't protest and give them without actually verbally agreeing to your taking my shoes, can I still report it as theft to the authorities if I felt intimidated or coerced into giving them to you or parting with my shoes?" Did you think, "That's my only pair of shoes and I don't see why I should have to go barefoot just because you want to trade places with me in some way by taking my shoes?" Now, without any laws or rules at all, likely coming down to "might makes right" in all such scenarios and whomever has the most brute force wins. Is that the world you'd prefer to the one with a human and therefore fallible justice system to deal with such situations? If not, then you understand even where economic variables are a factor that you might prefer having shoes yourself and that the person who wants them ask where to get their own rather than demand or forcibly take your shoes, right? And, if they approached you demanding or threatening to force you to give them your shoes you'd feel threatened and perhaps adopt a flight or fight posture in response to the perceived threat, right? So, where they might ask where you got them or how to get them too, you might provide options including those listed at <http://www.churchofphilosophicalexploration.church/resources.htm> as a place to get a pair of shoes rather than take your only pair from you leaving you barefoot. But, some may feel since you know where to get them you should just go get another pair and understand it is more convenient for them if you just give them your pair of shoes. And, if you feel that's unreasonable, then you understand how from some perspectives #TaoFu self-examination using the Socratic/Platonic Method to avoid hypocrisy can be useful and why #TaoFu is a predominant part of my church's philosophy and religious practice.

Now, before you get offended at all, please understand ignorance can be overcome. For best results, start with math and the scientific method for determining what is reasonably true versus what is reasonably false when objectively considered. The closer you are to the Absolute Truth, the closer you are to GOD. And, overcoming ignorance is the best way to address any fear of the unknown. This requires a willingness to learn and consider multiple sources of information while exercising due diligence to fact check so you make the best informed decisions for life. And, it totally sucks that any trust issues exist between people that prevent a rising tide that lifts all proverbial sails. But, we all have to be honest (including intellectually honest) if we want to overcome fear of the unknown because as long as some are deceiving others won't trust and progress will be stymied. So, overcoming fear of the unknown begins with your total honesty (including intellectual honesty) and commitment to overcome ignorance through diligent study and

cross-referencing, fact checking, and exercise of honest reason in service of the Absolute Truth (a.k.a. GOD).

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