

A Sermon on "US HISTORY: THE FAIRYTALE VERSION" (delivered 2/23/20)
Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for December 18th, 2022 (and beyond)

It is nearing the end of 2022 and closer still to traditional Christmas Day. It seems a good time for a review of one of my previous sermons. The sermon being reviewed this week is "US HISTORY: THE FAIRYTALE VERSION" originally delivered on February 23rd, 2020 and provided in full below this review sermon for your convenience.

The first full paragraph is awesome and I believe accurate enough to avoid calling it a fairytale in full context. But, the second paragraph has some issues. Below is how I'd like that paragraph to read:

"For those unable to establish settlements themselves, willingness to relocate and travel the open road to unfamiliar places risking death, robbery, and at times even being trafficked for labor was circumstantially mandated. Those trafficked for labor may have been victims as a result of being misled and trusting those offering employment will keep their word while perhaps not being able to read or write so not understanding contracts signed which would suggest incompetence at law and result in being deemed incompetent or criminal and institutionalized in a fashion where they were likely to experience some labor trafficking or worse just trying to survive. And, that survival is wholly up to the individual and the individual's willingness to trust or at least reasonably exercise due diligence by reading and understanding contractual agreements while understanding if the other side breaches, you can sue at law which is the remedy in such cases. But, you really need to understand what you are signing when you sign contracts which is why the "at will" employment contracts are seen by many as the most fair because both sides are free to discontinue the contractual arrangement at any time without penalty to either side and the bargaining power of the individual is limited by competition for jobs that wouldn't exist at all without civilization as facilitated by the Constitution or laws of the land."

Even with that edit, I'm still not totally pleased with the second paragraph but still feel it is representative of what I intended to communicate at the time. And, throughout and elsewhere I agree I use the word "but" too much. That is an area I'm working on and aware of the issue.

I'm overall good with the third paragraph but believe it is topic adjacent though not on point overall. Some would like it broken up, but I feel though long, it should be one paragraph. The purpose of that paragraph was to encourage appreciation for freedom and advise on ways to protect it while recognizing the US is a free country whether you believe it or not.

Given the final paragraph I see I was being a bit theatrical in delivery. I think exposure to televangelists may have played a role in that one or maybe just partisan news outlets. However, I stand by the message even if I think delivery could use some improvement.

Also, I honestly remember it being a better sermon. As a result, I believe retrospectives can reveal changing perspectives or the idea of that being true is reinforced. Happy week before Christmas!

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

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US HISTORY: THE FAIRYTALE VERSION

Sermon by Minister Angela Smith of COPE for February 23rd, 2020 (and beyond)

Europeans set sail for India and found a whole new continent they were not expecting now known as the Americas. Historically, it is suggested the aboriginal locals settled thousands of years before having traveled from Japan or Southeast Asia and had established their own territories, customs, and society. It was a time of conquest, colonization, and imperialism. The existing and established locals were ill-equipped to deal with the advanced militarism of the imperialists, but, there was hope. Some of the imperialists were fond of Priest John Ball, Protestantism, Plato's Republic, and the Magna Carta. They felt oppressed by the monarchies of Europe and joined forces with the remaining locals (a.k.a. American Indians), French dissenters, and settlers of all sorts from colonial times and decided to establish a new constitutional republic in the spirit of recognizing all human beings as equal in the eyes of the law where even President Ulysses S. Grant would one day be subject to arrest for violating traffic laws (speeding) in DC while President of the United States and allegations of corruption including things like Iran-Contra are televised, exposed, and the accused publicly questioned. And, then the spirit of the law resulted in amendments to the laws resulting in greater recognition of equality for all American Citizens.

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trafficked for labor as a result of being misled and trusting those offering employment will keep their word while perhaps not being able to read or write so not understanding contracts signed which would suggest incompetence at law and result in being deemed incompetent or criminal and institutionalized in a fashion where you are likely to experience some labor trafficking or worse, was required then as now just to survive. And, that survival is wholly up to the individual and the individual's willingness to trust or at least reasonably exercise due diligence by reading and understanding contractual agreements while understanding if the other side breaches, you can sue at law which is the remedy in such cases. But, you really need to understand what you are signing when you sign contracts which is why the "at will" employment contracts are seen by many as the most fair because both sides are free to discontinue the contractual arrangement at any time without penalty to either side and the bargaining power of the individual is limited by competition for jobs that wouldn't exist at all without civilization as facilitated by the Constitution or laws of the land.

But, the desperation involved in trying to survive and get basic needs met with some dignity while looking for gainful employment is extraordinarily challenging as many can imagine and worse yet for the orphaned or abandoned. And, relocating sounds so scary and requires having a lot of faith where such relocations in the past involved being trafficked, exploited, or otherwise abused. But, Americans have always taken the chance and many have died or succumbed to vice in the process. This is why I encourage everyone to see anyone tempting you to vice or vicious illegal misconduct as a "devil" that you exercise #TaoFu to reject by responding to said temptations with the correct corresponding virtue. See, as a creative construct without invoking notions of demonic possession on either side, but rather realizing if you choose to commit a crime and can't afford a good defense attorney that you are going to be enslaved most likely by the Prison Industrial Complex and if you'd prefer not to be trafficked while criminals are made trustees to oversee you as a newcomer that for your own modest current freedom committing to Truth and Virtue is how best to protect yourself from being lured into a life of slavery through temptations to vice. So, figuring out which Virtues best address your situation is how to totally embrace and protect your own Freedom which is possibly the most important virtue second only to Truth and equal to Justice. If you Love (another virtue) Freedom, committing to Truth and Virtue is the best way to show it and Freedom has a way of affirming that through the Justice System. So, if the Democrats have frightened you into wanting a "Nanny State" where you have less freedom and way less responsibility and all your decisions are made by those who assume authority where you fail to exercise your own, you are falling for the temptation to vice in rejecting virtues such as Freedom, Diligence, and Responsibility for arguably Sloth and Vanity which are traditionally deadly sins and you risk death, exploitation, and oppression either way but if you exercise due diligence and sue or press charges where you've legal grounds (i.e. wage theft by employer) to do so, you'll get Justice too. If you think, "But, rich people just pay others to do all their thinking and work and do nothing all day, I want that lifestyle and don't think it is fair," you need to look at how the wealth was acquired and understand both Ex Post Facto and the statute of limitations as well as your own responsibility for pursuing justice in a timely fashion. And, if you believe a violent overthrow of the government or establishment is how all wealth appears to be acquired historically, then

you are ignoring the wisdom of the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, and Malcolm X among others. One could argue missing the point of Crocodile Dundee too. You could think of it in terms of a tween (10-year old) unsupervised at a grocery store that is bothering you in a manner that could be considered assault or menacing at law, perhaps malicious mischief, and as an adult or even other more reasonable tween, how you might respond to the threat or annoyance. Do you think "Where's your parent or who raised you?" Would you say, "Are you orphaned, neglected, abused, or abandoned? Would you like it if I menaced you in some way? If not, don't be a hypocrite and treat others the way you'd like to be treated. Did you graduate Kindergarten? Most people are familiar with the Golden Rule to assist in avoiding hypocrisy by the time they graduate Kindergarten." So, you can see at law where people doing such things would be deemed criminal or incompetent and end up in some form of institutionalized segregated congregate care where human trafficking is a known issue and sometimes authorized for the adjudicated.

So, if you are a Snow White, Cinderella, or even Jack of Beanstalk fame, what is your story? Oppressed orphan or prodigal reliant on charity and/or own entrepreneurship (Jack) who contributes to show own Virtue and by Virtue of said Virtue merits upward mobility while accepting graciously charity until the right blend of Virtues results in upward mobility. And, that could be your American Dream too, but, if you take vicious shortcuts you may find yourself officially made a slave or indentured servant that arguably is intended to teach you humbleness. And, the US Government airs all it's dirty laundry on what seems with the internet to be a nonstop freak show, so, at least being honest and many government officials go to prison too when found violating the laws. So, in admitting to fallibility and open to correction the government is also humble and simply wishes everyone else to show the same willingness for correction the government shows the people and we're all the government so it is just recognizing an existing social contract that is an adhesion contract but a really cool one if you understand the Constitution and Love Freedom. And, we all fought together for it and the amendments to it as the majority as we built this country together. Are you in or out? It's up to you and I agree it would seem a more civilized society would more actively facilitate virtue rather than just penalize vice, but, it's up to all of us to choose virtue if we want the world to be more virtuous or else it is hypocritical to demand from others what we won't commit to ourselves and in that sense is oppressive and/or supports inequality which violates a major principle of both my church and the laws of the land. Do you want to learn to fish or just to be served fish when in the mood for it? There are many ways to learn and if you would rather just be served and are not independently wealthy then understand beggars can't be choosers, but, are still equal with recognized potential as long as not viciously committing crimes. And, anyone attempting to prevent you from learning and impose ignorance while employing Machiavellian emotional/behavioral manipulation to train you like some nonhuman animal is also a devil and you rebel against their evil and learn anyway, that's why we have libraries and now the internet. Overcome the devils and villains in your life and refuse to become one, America awaits your welcome.

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