

A Sermon on Hope

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for April 14th, 2024 (and beyond)

This is a meditative sermon inspired in part by comedian Steven Wright. Spend as much time on it as you feel is warranted. Are the facts below presented in a manner that suggests propaganda or not?

In 2023, the total number of individual income tax returns filed is 162,037,000. Source: <https://www.efile.com/efile-tax-return-direct-deposit-statistics/> The US adult (18 and over) population is 258,300,000 people. Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/united-states-adult-population-grew-faster-than-nations-total-population-from-2010-to-2020.html> This suggests that 96,263,000 US adults have no reportable income/no gainful employment. It is important to note that even retirees/those receiving social security benefits, those receiving social security disability benefits, and those receiving unemployment all must file tax returns whether or not gainfully employed at present. This means it is possible more than 96,263,000 US adults are currently seeking gainful employment or need steady income. By the end of January, 2024, there were 8,860,000 available jobs/job openings in the US. Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/217943/monthly-job-openings-in-the-united-states/> This suggests that someone seeking gainful employment has a 1 in 10.86 chance of finding it. In other words, it suggests a 9.2% chance of finding a job and a 90.8% chance of not for those seeking lawful gainful employment at this time. Of course, such assumes every adult who has no income is seeking to responsibly address that. Have you ever told anyone to get a job and did you know the above when you said it? Personally, I'd lose respect for myself if I didn't at least try to earn an honest living and accept the only other option is death because I morally and patriotically reject the alternatives. Would the stress of the reality as shown above be too much for you and what would you do?

There are many who might attribute not finding a job to discrimination of some sort. I'm 50-years old, female, and currently rely on public transportation for financial reasons, but have a valid driver's license and clean driving record with a commitment to get my own wheels as they say as soon as within my budget to do so. Some job openings expressly state they will only hire those who are 18-25 years old. I don't apply to those. Some job openings I've found won't hire anyone over 36 years old and expressly state that on signage about the openings. Even those who will consider someone who is older require employees have their own vehicles and not rely on public transportation. They consider public transit unreliable and often phrase it in terms of reliable transportation with a caveat express or later disclosed that they mean your own car even if the job doesn't require use of one's own car and is a stationary position. I could assume socio-economic discrimination is at play on the transportation issue, ageism, and/or sexism as the reason I've not yet found gainful employment. I could also assume that my internet present and history is too entertaining where some may feel I'd bring that into work which would create a distraction. I would not. But, that would arguably amount to religious discrimination if the basis of not being considered for a job. I've been tracking my job applications and have applied to 194 since I began tracking. I've had 10 interviews and 2

tentative job offers, one that remains open if they ever recover from being robbed which happened later within 24 hours of my interview and a more solid offer that became tentative after the financial setback caused by the robbery and destruction of the building. They still haven't replaced one of the broken windows. I keep hope alive for their recovery. I've kept in touch and last time we spoke about it, they again reassured they would hire if and when they fully recover.

Initially when I calculated this, I only included the returns e-filed and not all returns filed. The result on that was 1 in 12 rather than 1 in 10.86 chance of being hired. When I sat down to prepare this I double-checked my own facts and was pleasantly surprised that things weren't as bleak as first thought even if the difference is arguably negligible. The shift was from 8% to 9.2% probable on finding gainful employment in the US right now. I smiled when I found I miscalculated. Does a 90.8% chance of not finding a job when you need one seem hopeful to you?

#TaoFu Steven Wright says: "If the calculations are accurate, 37.26% of the US Adult population is currently unemployed and has no reportable income. At the height of the Great Depression, 24.9% of US Adults were unemployed and had no reportable income.

Source:

https://www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2015/march_2015.html#:~:text=The%201933%20banking%20crisis%20was,had%20risen%20to%2024.9%20percent.

#TaoFu Joker says: "That's only those receiving unemployment benefits. The number of unemployed during the Great Depression was likely much higher."

#TaoFu Steven Wright says: "August 14th, 1935 is when President Roosevelt established unemployment benefits by signing the Social Security Act. That was 2 years after The Great Depression ended."

#TaoFu Joker says: "So, unemployment is higher now than during the Great Depression?"

#TaoFu Steven Wright says: "It would seem so. But, those receiving unemployment benefits are often mistaken for the total number of unemployed in the media."

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.