

A Sermon Inspired by Soren Kierkegaard

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 29th, 2022 (and beyond)

This sermon is inspired by Soren Kierkegaard and specifically his work titled "Fear and Trembling". The version of "Fear and Trembling" quoted below is published by the Penguin Group in New York, NY with a copyright of 2006 from a 1985 translation by Alastair Hannay.

On the cover and also found in the script (short for scripture) is the following quote: "IF THERE WERE NO ETERNAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN A MAN, IF AT THE BOTTOM OF EVERYTHING THERE WERE ONLY A WILD FERMENT, A POWER THAT TWISTING IN DARK PASSIONS PRODUCED EVERYTHING GREAT OR INCONSEQUENTIAL, IF AN UNFATHOMABLE, INSATIABLE EMPTINESS LAY HID BENEATH EVERYTHING, WHAT WOULD LIFE BE BUT DESPAIR?"

The specific passage of "Fear and Trembling" that has inspired the dialogue portion of this sermon that follows is found on page 10 of my copy and reads "He [meaning Abraham] caught Isaac by the chest, threw him to the ground and said: "Foolish boy, do you believe I am your father? I am an idolater. Do you believe this is God's command? No, it is my own desire." Then Isaac trembled and in his anguish cried: "God in heaven have mercy on me, God of Abraham have mercy on me; if I have no father on earth, then be my father!" But below his breath Abraham said to himself: "Lord in heaven I thank Thee; it is after all better that he believe I am a monster than that he lose faith in Thee."

DIALOGUE

First Party: This is all mine, you are all mine, it is my birthright. I'm the chosen one. My parents are Gods. I'm a God. Obey me. You are my slaves and if I'm displeased I'll torture and/or kill you. Obey.

Second Party: There is only one God I recognize and you are not it. My God is so powerful. My God is the only God and all others are false Gods and my God is the only one that is infinitely wise and eternally present everywhere including here. My God says we are all equal and should live by the same rules. Want the first 10?

First Party: You shall be killed, tortured, and enslaved for such blasphemy. I'll show you who has the power of life and death.

Second Party: That's cool, "Hey everybody, we get to go meet God for real because we'll all be martyrs and this idiot will be left to walk the earth alone with no ability to do or have anything because there will be no one left to do his bidding." You suck. Happy to meet my real maker because it is not you. You are nobody.

First Party: Such insolence! How dare you! Where's my....

END DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE PART 2 (MUCH LATER AND DIFFERENT PARTIES)

Modern Party #1: How did you come by all this abundance?

Modern Party #2: Civilization based on social contract theory facilitated it. It's like being invited or welcome to join a game already in progress as a player yourself. If you are just learning the rules or how to navigate and are not certain what to do or whether you even have what you need to play well or do well, it can be very frustrating. The free market doesn't operate secretly and whether or not you succeed is often based on whether you provide goods or services that are needed or wanted determined by market demand for the goods or services.

Modern Party #1: I think you stole it and usurped the power from the rightful owners of the earth and all that inhabits it. I think you established rules after the fact to confuse the real owners such as myself. If stealing is the basis on which your abundance rests, then to reclaim my own I must steal as defined by your supposed "social contract" to which I never agreed and was born to naturally adhere to according to your "authority".

Modern Party #2: You just committed libel per se by falsely accusing me of a crime. Your reasoning is flawed. Has anyone ever stole from you?

Modern Party #1: Yes, thousands of years ago my ancestors were Gods and ruled the world where everyone else served their every whim and purpose or else faced torture, enslavement, or death. Then, some new religion surfaced claiming we are all "equal" and all "human" and all "God's children" with only one God who is omnipresent though immaterial who established rules everyone has to follow thereby usurping the power of my ancestors and therefore me.

Modern Party #2: It is likely outside of the statutes of limitation for remedies at law under the circumstances. But, if you have documentation backing your claims that can be carbon-dated and validated to prove you are a victim of theft and establish actual damages, you might be able to sue. It will depend on how the court feels about discovery. How long have you held this belief or had evidence of its truth?

Modern Party #1: The system is rigged and by people like you. So, cut the crap. Evidence from thousands of years ago? Please.

Modern Party #2: So, your case is faith-based and not evidence-based then. That would be a barrier to justice. That's too bad.

Modern Party #1: You just messed with the wrong person. I'm going to own you by the time this is over.

Modern Party #2: Human trafficking and chattel slavery in which one person owns another person are both crimes in the USA and most jurisdictions worldwide. So, you

truly appear to be a lawless person and may end up institutionalized. I'm a law-abiding citizen and person of faith.

Modern Party #1: I'm the true leader. Obey me. I'm a God or at least a demigod. Sell all your possessions or give them to me and all your cash too. You are the thief.

Modern Party #2: I don't recognize you as an authority in my life and at this point you just committed assault and attempted robbery unless you forcefully take and abscond with one of my possessions, then actual robbery. Do I need to call the police?

Modern Party #1: I'll kill you before you can dial "911". Show some respect.

Modern Party #2: I'm sorry the educational system has failed you so terribly. Are you developmentally disabled or suffering a learning disability that has gone undiagnosed and/or without remedy? Maybe I should call social services.

Modern Party #1: You are dead.

END DIALOGUE

Whether or not the above helps you respect everyone else a bit more or not, I feel enough has been said to make the points I intended with this sermon. I have faith both Kierkegaard and Wycliffe would appreciate the message even if not the delivery.

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.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>