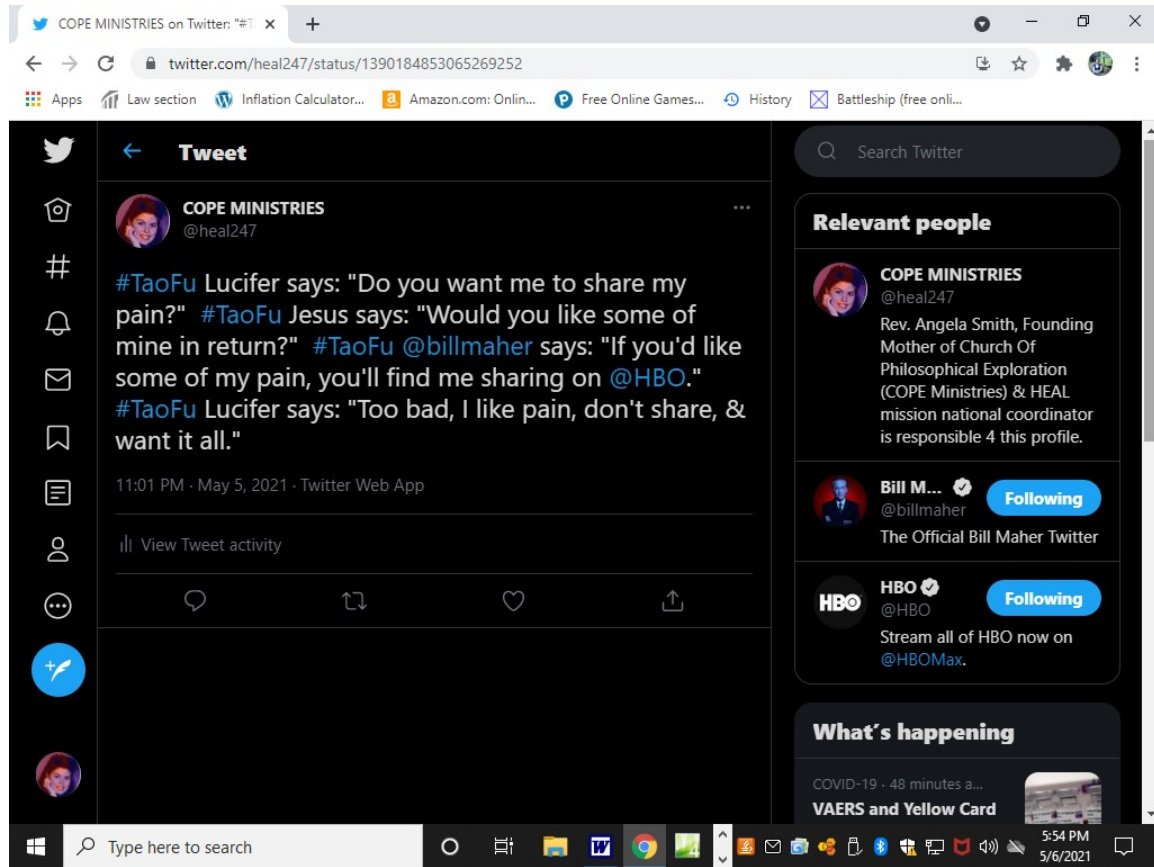


A Sermon on the #TaoFu of Pain

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 30th, 2021 (and beyond)



Greed is defined in many ways. Greed is defined by Oxford Languages via Google.com as “intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power, or food”. Greed is also recognized as one of the seven deadly sins. Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/seven-deadly-sins> Mammon is also known as the personification of Greed. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammon> And, the demon of Greed. Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/486811040976592083/> Oxford Languages via Google defines “devil” as “(in Christian and Jewish belief) the chief evil spirit; Satan" and "a person with specified characteristics.” And, some say Lucifer, Mammon, and the devil are all the same entity. Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/folklore/history-of-the-devil>

In the above #TaoFu short, you see Lucifer (AKA the devil, Mammon) exhibiting characteristics of being selfish and wanting it all without willingness to share. Though he didn't ask, he does express his desire. What would Jesus do when faced with an arguable enemy who is in need or want of something?

Matthew 5:40 (Wycliffe) "and to hym that wole stryue with thee in doom, and take away thi coote, leeuue thou to him also thi mantil;"

Luke 6:29 (Wycliffe) "And to him that smyth thee on o cheeke, schewe also the tothir; and from hym that takith awei fro thee a cloth, nyle thou forbede the coote."

Matthew 5:40 (KJV) "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

Luke 6:29 (KJV) "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also."

Jesus is long-suffering or so the story goes. But, there's hope.

Matthew 19:26 (Wycliffe) "Jhesus bihelde, and seide to hem, Anentis men this thing is impossible; but anentis God alle thingis ben possible."

Matthew 19:26 (KJV) "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.""

If there is a perfect abstract intangible version of "Greed" that truly wants everything and selfishly without desire to share with anyone, because it is pure greed, and that is personified as Lucifer or Mammon, using Abstract Aikido one might concede or even help by giving Greed all one can spare and possibly more.

Instead of visiting it all on Greed though, is it possible that there is a perfect abstract intangible version of Masochism that actually wants all the pain? Masochism is defined by Oxford Languages via Google as "the tendency to derive pleasure...from one's own pain or humiliation" and "(in general use) the enjoyment of what appears to be painful or tiresome."

Is pain ever helpful though? I believe pain can be helpful, particularly physical pain (as opposed to emotional pain). Do you have a toothache? What is that communicating to you? Pain is the only way your body can notify your mind that there is a problem that if ignored may result in death if the toothache involves an abscess. Do you have abdominal pain of a kind alerting you to the fact you should find a toilet pronto? If you didn't have that alert to the need for remedy or accommodation, would you just shit yourself? Do you appreciate your physical pain as an alert system that is helpful in full context?

Emotional pain, however, is not particularly helpful. But, I believe it is a result of dependency, ignorance, superstition, and subjugation. As many of you know my dog Gypsy died in March of this year. I meditated on my grief and asked God if I could just love her and enjoy the memories without the pain of grief. So, first I had to deal with any guilt and reason out why there was no need to feel guilty in light of all the variables discussed in the sermon available at <https://www.cope.church/gypsysermon.pdf>. Physical bodies are temporal, vulnerable, and expire. Many loved ones, human and nonhuman, have died throughout my life. And, often my pain related to that is because I still want to do more with and for them. Art is a great way to include my memories of them in my life, which in a way is doing more with and for them like my book "The Karmic Crew"

about my friends who've died fighting fraud and human trafficking. (See: <https://www.cope.church/awe.htm> if interested.)

If you're emotionally dependent on others in your life, the dependency is the root cause of the pain. And if those on whom you are dependent are absent, you may overtly, covertly, or inadvertently attempt to subjugate others to meet your emotional need. So, in such a position you are prioritizing yourself and your needs over others, therefore not treating everyone as your equal, but rather as a means to your own emotional satisfaction or comfort. Perhaps you see emotions as powerful and a way to exert power or control over others. That's where superstitious bullshit comes in and "gurus" or whores running cults manifest in your life to reinforce your beliefs that they claim to share so you don't have to do any real work or become what the majority see as mature, enlightened, well adjusted and sociable.

Ignorance and superstition are often the same problem. You might say "I've been cursed. Three days in a row I've had a hard piece of sleep or dry mucus in the corner of my eyes. The sandman did it. I'm being punished." Or, you could actually consult a physician, visit a library, or just run a search on Google to see what the causes of hard mucus or "sand" in the eye is evidencing. Then, you might learn "Eye discharge, or rheum as it's technically known, is a collection of cells, mucus, oil, and debris from the tears that form at the corners of our eyes during sleep. Rheum actually serves a protective function to remove waste products and potentially harmful debris from the front surface of our eyes. You might be surprised to learn that our eyes produce mucus throughout the day, but a continuous thin film of tears washes the mucus from our eyes as we blink. Blinking flushes out the rheum before it hardens, but when we're asleep, we aren't blinking. This is why the eye discharge collects at the corners of our eyes overnight, and we wake up with crusty eyes." Source: <https://www.essilorusa.com/newsroom/what-is-sleep-in-your-eyes> So, what you felt was a curse visited on you by the sandman was actually just trying to protect you from harmful debris and remove waste so your eyes are clear and healthy.

The superstitious stuff is fun sometimes and makes for great horror and fantasy books and films. Dependency is subjugation and often #TaoFu as the dependent is subject to everyone else as a result of the dependency while the dependent in turn subjugates those on whom the dependent depends. That often leads to resentment. The best way to avoid that is to be honest, know what you offer and what to reasonably expect in return. Do you offer unconditional love, honesty, and consideration? To the extent you do, you can reasonably hold others to the same standard without being a hypocrite. To the extent you feel pain but don't recognize it is universal and everyone has some trauma and pain in life or just don't care if others feel pain or have been traumatized because only your feelings matter to you, then if you hold others to a different standard you are a hypocrite. The point is the Golden Rule. And, in a world where the majority have been moderately to severely traumatized in different ways, prioritizing your own comfort without consideration for others is evidence to those who do practice the Golden Rule that you wish to be treated dismissively and without consideration. If not, why do you treat others that way?

It's possible you just need to study more. Learning what is known and knowable is a great way to reason through any pain or discomfort, physical like with the sleep in the eye, or emotional like with the grief that follows the death of loved ones.

If you only focus on what you want and your means of getting it are limited to flattery, pouting, crying, whining, and/or throwing a tantrum of some sort, you may actually be developmentally disabled and require intervention if older than 7-years old exhibiting such limitation. I'd say older than 3 years old, but there are late bloomers. It is also possible your parents are or were lazy morons who really just want you to not be a nuisance, so give you what you want so you'll go away. Parents who can't be bothered and can afford to spoil or are willing to take on debt to avoid active parenting (which involves active listening and learning about child development rather than remaining ignorant and relying on superstition or bribery) may find their child's arrested development is not a sign of mental illness, but, rather neglect and/or abuse. But, independence, emancipation, and education are the ways out. And, no one wants to leave a situation where they get everything they want just for being undeveloped people who learned early on that all they need to be is fussy to get everything they want at any given moment. Even nonverbal infants or toddlers can be fussy and recognize when that means applesauce rather than vegetable puree.

It's also important to know that sometimes fussiness can be a result of a yet undiagnosed medical condition. Is the infant or toddler allergic to something in the vegetable puree? Is the infant or toddler hypoglycemic (low blood sugar)? Without words, we can't ask the infant or toddler what symptoms, if any, they are experiencing. The only way to rule out a medical (internal) cause and recognize a social-emotional cause is through honest communication and/or medical tests. However, in November of 2020, a new disorder was discovered they have named VEXAS. "Researchers discovered a new inflammatory disorder, called VEXAS, shared by men with diverse symptoms." Source: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/new-inflammatory-disease-discovered> So, it is possible whatever is making you or others fussy has not yet been discovered even though it does exist. I personally believe that superstition is belief that the unknown has magical or supernatural elements. I believe that history and current events show that until you know something having learned it (through discovery and study), you don't know even if others do know and are willing to share the information with you or otherwise make it available. I feel it is best to believe the truth is out there and knowable and for a closer relationship with the Absolute Truth, one of the many names of God, it is necessary to always be learning. To know God is to love God. God is the force in all living things and all creation. To learn about anything in creation is to better know God. And, if you choose to take blind or out of context guesses at the cause of something, the devil's got your number and you are a slave to superstition rather than liberated by the Truth. John 8:32.

MEDITATIVE QUESTIONS

Is Jesus with God or not?

What would Jesus do and with God is that possible?

Do you appreciate pain more after having read this sermon?

Do you feel you can better address pain in your life having read this sermon?

Do you need the emancipation guide? See <https://www.heal-online.org/emancipationprep.pdf>.

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/>