

A Sermon on the Line Between Reason and Faith

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for April 7th, 2024 (and beyond)

This is a meditative sermon in questionnaire format for your consideration and contemplation.

1. “All rise”, “please be seated”, “read and abide by the rules”, and “prepare to be judged while wearing your “Sunday best””, are preparing you for: a. church, b. life, c. court, or d. judgment day/Judgment Day? Something else? School?
2. Darrell Brooks was sentenced to 6 life sentences without parole plus 1,067.5 years. Was it by a secular or theocratic government? Was it to prison or hell?
3. In some theocracies, courts do not require evidence beyond the intuition of the judge regarding guilt or innocence of the accused. Would you prefer churches/theocracies handle justice rather than secular governments?
4. Historically, some countries had peripatetic (traveling) courts and various provinces would eagerly wait for judgment days to have grievances addressed and heard. Persia had a peripatetic court and is presently a theocracy. Do these facts change your answer to #1?
5. Would your answer to #3 change if the theocracy represented a faith system of which you weren't a believer/member?
6. Do you believe you could determine whether someone was more reasonable or more faith-driven based on how they answered the first 5 questions?
7. Does eternity in hell as a potential reality make Darrell Brooks' sentence seem light to you?
8. Does 6 times the length of your own life plus 1,067.5 years sound like an eternity?
9. Is God a bogeyman that will spirit you away to a scary place forever if you don't follow the rules?
10. Does a judge that presides over a court recognized by the government wield similar power as that wielded in #9, though real and not symbolic in nature?
11. Do you believe that teaching people the modern laws of the land or jurisdiction in which they live would offer them more social preparation, and result in less people violating laws that come with immediate penalties rather than potential ones, where the laws differ between two or more influencers (one real and one symbolic)?
12. Do you feel church prepares you for court while arguably encouraging you to follow the example of convicts? In other words, does a church operating in a country with a secular government create a problem it once addressed, when it was formerly a theocracy, by continuing to address everyone as if they are the accused

awaiting trial while offering absolution or condemnation and showing favoritism among congregants, undermine values such as equality while insulting their own followers?

13. If you broke the law, would you prefer to be sentenced by a theocratic or secular government? In other words, would you want to be maimed or stoned to death based on a cleric's intuition or would you rather have Darrell Brooks' sentence after due process to determine innocence or guilt requiring proof beyond a reasonable doubt?
14. Would you consider watching "Law & Order", listening to and/or watching all oral arguments heard by the Supreme Court of the United States (https://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_audio/2023), and/or reading and studying the US Constitution, the secular equivalent of attending church services and reading the bible?

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.