

A Sermon on Redistributing Wealth

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for November 26th, 2023 (and beyond)

In the United States of America, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (per person) in 2023 is \$64,187.00. Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/gdp-per-capita> In 2021, it was \$70,248.63 per capita. Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=us+gdp+per+capita&rlz=1C1OPRA_enUS934US934&oq=US+GDP+pe&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAyGAQyBwgAEAAyGAQyBgBEEUYOTIHCAIQABiABDIHCAmQABiABDIHCAQQABiABDIHCAUQABiABDIHCAyQABiABDIHCAcQABiABDIHCAgQABiABDIHCAkQABiABKgCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 Of course, that's gross and not net. Overhead can range from 20-50% depending on profession. Source: <https://blog.clover.com/business-scenario-managing-your-overhead-costs/> . The average would be 35% for overhead or cost of doing business and should be deducted from gross before determining potentially available income per capita. In 2023, this leaves \$41,721.55 per capita net before taxes and would be taxed at 12% for federal income tax annually. This would leave every individual in the US (regardless of demographic including age) with \$36,714.96 per year if divided equally to each citizen based on Gross Domestic Product.

The average annual cost of raising a child from infancy to age 18 in the USA is \$21,681. Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-much-does-it-cost-to-raise-a-child-240000/> So, even though children typically have no income of their own, those with children can deduct \$21,681 annually from their \$36,714.96 to determine how much is left for housing, food, and other living expenses. With equal redistribution of net annual wealth in the US in 2023, a single parent household will have \$15,033.96 left to cover all living expenses after taking care of the child each year.

For everyone, including low level Hollywood writers who have not been promoted to writer-producer and so make a more modest living than those who have been so promoted, who makes more than \$41,721.55 gross and \$36,714.96 net each year, someone else can't find work and is left to live as a charity case/dependent. The average salary of a writer in Hollywood before the most recent strike was \$70,200 with a starting annual salary of \$53,125 and maximum of \$80,416 per year. Source: <https://www.talent.com/salary?job=writer&location=hollywood#:~:text=How%20much%20does%20a%20Writer%20make%20in%20Hollywood%3F&text=The%20average%20writer%20salary%20in,up%20to%20%2480%2C416%20per%20year>. So, for every Hollywood writer, another individual can't find work because they are hogging double their due per capita arguably.

Now, if you think you couldn't live on \$36,714.96 net each year, imagine not even having that and looking for work diligently while living with friends, family or in public housing if lucky enough to qualify even though there is a 2 year waiting period for public housing at this time. How long before you find rioting tempting under those circumstances? Rioting doesn't help though and money to repair damages caused by riots results in less emergency housing and living services being available to those in need. But, if caught breaking the law, you may get three hot meals and a cot courtesy of

the justice system much swifter than any alternative available depending on your particulars.

Forbes reports the average income for working individuals in the US regardless of industry is currently \$59,428. Source: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/average-salary-by-state/> But, that barely covers the cost of raising a child in a single income household each year given if renting the average annual cost per year in the US is \$20,424 (\$1,702/month) and if paying an average mortgage monthly \$21,216 per year (\$1,768/month) Sources: <https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/> and <https://www.quickenloans.com/learn/average-mortgage-payment> .

So, a single income household caring for one dependent can expect to pay an average of \$42,105 per year on housing and child expenses. If the average salary is \$59,428 as Forbes has stated, that leaves \$17,323 for transportation, food, entertainment, utilities, and medical care. The average cost for food annually per person is \$3,364 and for transportation \$10,225. After deducting those costs, the average American is left with \$3,734 to cover utilities, entertainment, and medical expenses. Source: <https://247wallst.com/state/cost-of-living-in-washington/> The average cost of utilities per year in US is \$2,060. Source: <https://www.nationwide.com/lc/resources/personal-finance/articles/average-cost-of-utilities> So, that leaves \$1,674 on average for entertainment and medical care per person with an income and a child/dependent.

Even a redistribution of Jeff Bezos' wealth to every American citizen right now would be \$485.98 per person and that's it. I've personally saved over \$300 when comparison shopping buying through Amazon rather than competitors on the same brands and products this year alone. So, I feel in a way, Bezos has already redistributed to some extent at least from my perspective. And, if one qualifies for food stamps, \$291 per person per month through SNAP in 2023 or \$3,492 per year in benefits. Source: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/a-quick-guide-to-snap-eligibility-and-benefits>

That's the reality of the situation and patience is a virtue. But, you can't hog all the jobs and spit on those who would work if you'd accept a pay cut so they could earn too without tempting people to cause you harm in some way. It would be hypocritical of you to hate them for thinking about it if you would if roles were reversed. And, even the most saintly among us get one snobby remark too many when really trying to be productive and contributing members of society earning our own living lawfully.

So, this holiday season recognize that sometimes intrinsic value still needs to be recognized and rewarded where the jobs are just not there to prove it economically and everyone needs food, shelter, and clothing that is expected to be civil because if you didn't have it and were desperate you wouldn't be civil for 2 years waiting and you know it.

Please watch the film "Trading Places" starring Dan Aykroyd, Eddie Murphy, and Jamie Lee Curtis for more information and have a very happy holiday season!

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.