

A Sermon on Charity Cases

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 26th, 2024 (and beyond)

This is a meditative sermon in dialogue format for your contemplation. Many say charity starts at home.

DIALOGUE

Party 1: I've been looking for work and applying to every job for which I'm qualified for a few years without finding gainful employment. I have health conditions that I cannot hide that do not impact my ability to work, but does limit the types of work I can do. I think I'm being passed over due to disability even where otherwise qualified.

Party 2: There is a labor surplus right now, globally 47.8% of adults are unemployed and have no income. In the US, that number is 37.26% and so the US is doing over 10% better than the global average. You may be competing with over 1/3 and up to about 1/2 of the human population when seeking employment. I don't think you should assume discrimination where competitors are chosen. Have you applied for Social Security Disability Insurance?

Party 1: I don't have enough work credits or haven't paid into Social Security enough yet to qualify for those benefits. That's why I keep looking for work. I currently live with family and the household income is too high for Medicaid assistance even though I'm uninsured. If my situation gets worse, I may qualify for public assistance. In such a case, I'm likely to be placed in congregate care even if competent and able to take care of myself otherwise. I'd rather die.

Party 2: That's good you have family or loved ones to help when needed. Some people don't and end up on the street or institutionalized.

Party 1: I don't understand why that's the case when institutionalization in prisons or group homes costs more per person than some form of guaranteed income. Do you think contemplating suicide is unreasonable under the circumstances? If conditions result in suicide being a reasonable solution in full context, why punish the reasonable with institutionalization or mental health labels?

Party 2: It's the only way they can potentially get help through public assistance. If the family can't take care of you and asks the state to help, the state will take custody and look for foster care though likely place you in some form of congregate care.

Party 1: I'm competent and perfectly able to care for myself. I just don't have a job and am unable to make a living taking online surveys and pay-per-click programs. I'm fortunate to contribute to the household some through the little I make with that though and wouldn't be able to without reliable internet access.

Party 2: Why don't you file income tax returns for the little you do make each year even if not required to do so at law so that the Social Security Administration registers some credits for you every year so maybe someday you will qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits?

Party 1: My family claims me as a dependent for the exemptions that compensate for any minimum cost of supporting me under the circumstances. The tax service used has repeatedly told us I don't need to file and it would cost more to process than be worth it.

Party 2: You can file for free online. And, if you are able to work independently and make some money that way, consider expanding your entrepreneurial efforts if otherwise unable to compete in the job market.

Party 1: Maybe the suicidal are just ignorant regarding all available options for sustainability then?

Party 2: I'm not a tax expert and think you should take the advice of the fiduciary for your family. But, I do believe there is more opportunity than you've considered. Suicide is arguably only reasonable where the only alternative is segregated congregate care/institutionalization. But, even under those circumstances, there is always a chance at foster care or even job placement followed by independence depending on setting.

Party 1: So you don't think it is discrimination that's the problem, you think it is the labor surplus?

Party 2: Labor surplus isn't a problem per se, as one can always choose the most independent path, which is entrepreneurship and should not be confused with multi-level marketing schemes or scams that claim that's what you'll be if you invest and join.

Party 1: So, if you were me you'd be doing the same thing, but also look into filing tax returns even if someone else claims me as a dependent at this time.

Party 2: Even if you don't have to, you probably should. How much did you make in 2023?

Party 1: \$36.84 earned income and \$180 in gifts. In 2022 I also earned \$170 selling original artwork. I'll look into it. Thank you.

END DIALOGUE

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.