

Daily Meditation 04-11-23

The Sorry State of Tennessee and American Politics

Good morning.

In our meditation today, we are talking about the reality of evil in our time and in our headlines today. And I fall back on the biblical admonition in Deuteronomy: "I put before you life and death; choose life."

And I want to share with you a teaching found in my book on evil, *Sins of the Spirit, Blessings of the Flesh: Transforming Evil in Soul and Society*, from Erich Fromm, the psychologist who wrote a brilliant book on evil called *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. But this is what he writes, and he is Jewish; he comes from that biblical tradition, and he knows that admonition surely about choosing good. He writes:

Love of life or love of the dead is the fundamental alternative that confronts every human being.

...Love of life, or love of the dead.

Necrophilia grows as the development of biophilia is stunted.

That is so profound and so real. The love of death grows when we stunt biophilia, the love of life. What a statement about the importance of the via positiva, about the importance of falling in love with life. He continues:

Severely necrophilious persons are very dangerous.

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They are the haters, the racists, those in favor of war, bloodshed, and destruction.

So he's filling out the teaching from Deuteronomy about what it means to choose death instead of life. And this is a psychologist talking.

They are dangerous not only if they are political leaders...

They're dangerous not only if they are political leaders.

...but also as the potential cohorts for a dictatorial leader.

Potential cohorts for a dictatorial leader. Does this have something to do with the rise of fascism, the rise of authoritarianism in our time? People lost Biophilia?

They become the executioners, terrorists, torturers. Without them no terror system could be set up.

So this is real. This is a statement about how evil spreads and gets around, becomes successful, takes over. It takes over countries, takes over political parties, takes over judicial systems, takes over religious systems, takes over the media. They become the executioners, terrorists, torturers. Without them no terror system could be set up.

Much to meditate on here. Much to pray about, that grace might flood the temptations to necrophilia, to evil our species is so capable of.

Of course, Erich Fromm being Jewish, was writing out of experience of the Holocaust, when he wrote all of these things.

This is on page 20 of my introduction to my book on evil.

Necrophilia grows when Biophilia is stunted.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.