

Daily Meditation 01/19/22

Thurman on Love & Senate Vote Against Voting Rights

Good morning.

Today we are invoking Howard Thurman and his teachings about love in the context of yesterday's disastrous vote in the Senate.

Thurman says that fear is a disease. He says, "Fear is a disease, how do we get through this disease?"

He says, "The awareness of being a child of God tends to stabilize the ego, and results in a new courage, fearlessness and power. I've seen it happen again and again," he says. "The notion that you are a child of God," he says, "establishes the ground of personal dignity so that a profound sense of personal worth could absorb the fear reaction." This is an experience he had as a child learning at the feet of his grandmother who was an ex-slave.

And he says, "This alone is not enough. But without it, nothing else is of value."

...Without it, nothing else is of value. In other words, this recognition of one's own value is the beginning point for supporting the value of others.

He says, "If we accept the basic proposition that life is one, arising out of a common center, God, all expressions of love are acts of God."

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"Hate, then," he says, "becomes a form of annihilation of self and others. In short, suicide."

There's a lot of suicide going around these days, both in its literal form, but also in the form of fatalistic self hatred, of denial of climate change, or denial to do anything serious about it. We're bringing about our own extinction, that is a kind of self-hatred for sure. Just as we are sitting around, bringing about our own destruction as a democracy.

So once we get over the serious negativity and temptation to despair about votes like yesterday's in the Senate, that are the same as depriving millions, mostly minorities, but older people too and younger people also, of their rights to vote -- what to do?

Well, obviously, we cannot just wallow in disappointment, sadness or revenge. What we have to do is to ignite the energy of fire, of moral outrage, and to go out and work strongly to elect new senators who will speak for the rights of all Americans.

So I think participating in supporting new senators, so the next time around, we don't have just a 50:50 split, but we have at least 52:48 split to see that better laws are enacted, and that this country becomes sustainable again.

So the first lesson in crisis is not to give up or to give in. As Julian Norwich points out, you don't go into denial, which is another way of giving up. Julian of Norwich talks about handling the pandemic in her day, recognizing the seriousness of it. But don't let that get you so down that you don't contribute the rest of your life.

So to fight the good fight against gerrymandering, and the leaders stepping up and the media stepping up and politicians with a conscience stepping up, to wake one another up and to get things done.

All of this, I think, is our way of putting Thurman's teachings about love and King's teachings and actions, sacrifice, and Jesus' teachings about love, and others. Love and Justice go together. All this is what we're called to enact in dark times and light, in times of day and times of night, in valleys and in mountains.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.