

Dear Friends,

I just got done with Tai Chi. Tai Chi is about bringing our bodies, our breath, and our spirit/energy into harmony. The Jewish people have a similar concept in that their name for peace is Shalom which means all working together in harmony. Jesus often taught about shalom in parables and stories of people working together, of compassion being given in needy situations, and even talks about the seed and the soil working in harmony. Paul wrote a lot about the separation of the physical/flesh and the spiritual and has been widely interpreted that anything of the flesh is bad and anything of the spirit is good. But he was being literal when talking about circumcision, that was a physical requirement for men to be part of the Hebraic covenant of Abraham. We, Christians, are no longer bound by this because we have been freed from circumcision and kosher dietary laws so that we may focus on 'loving our neighbors as ourselves.'

In our country and in this time, we are hearing from the conservatives in our country that the Bible and the Constitution are aligned in with a single purpose to make our nation, our chosen nation, a true Christian nation. However, they pick and choose which commandments and which practices should be included and ignore those that aren't in harmony with their vision of who can be an American and what is its purpose. Coaches and teachers are allowed to pray (but not say gay) openly to Jesus because this is the freedom of religion and speech in our 1st Amendment. A Muslim, Wiccan, or even Satanist will not be given those rights because the only religion that is true is Christianity. So, the separation of church and state is ignored both in the Bible and in our Constitution.

The conservatives have scored a touchdown with the reversal of Roe v. Wade, and this is emboldening them to go after other recently won rights such as same sex marriage (Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that in his opinion that they can be overturned, just as abortion rights).

Jesus tells us that all the laws and all the prophets are brought together in harmony with this single 'Golden' commandment, "You shall treat others as you want to be treated." Telling women what to do with their bodies, telling children who they can be and how to identify themselves, telling adults who they can and cannot marry, and telling teachers and schools what they can or cannot say because 'white' children might become uncomfortable is on silencing others, controlling others, so others have to act in a way that they want, not how we and others want. We are to love those who seek control, but work for justice, lift up the poor and needy, and work in our country for freedoms for all, not just those in power and those in fear.

Peace

Pastor Enno