
PODCAST START:

[intro music]

Fr. Shay: Welcome to the Reading Queerly queer theology podcast, where each week, your hosts Brian Murphy and Shay Kearns will offer a reflection on the week's lectionary readings. This week Brian and I are looking at the lectionary text for August 25th, 2013. We're going to take a look at the Isaiah passage, which is Isaiah 58:9b-14.

[not read aloud]

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. [NRSV]

So Brian, what comes up for you as you read this passage?

August 25, 2013

What will you be called?

Isaiah 58:9b-14

2/3

Brian: I'm just really glad that passages like this continue to come up. I, in my heart, know that this is the type of religion that resonates with me, and it's just so easy for me to become convinced that my version of faith is not right, and that I'm sort of being this 'liberal, touchy-feely person' or that I'm 'corrupting' it or that I have my own socialist agenda. And so finding passages like this remind me that the Hebrew and Christian scriptures really are rooted in this sense of justice. And yeah, there's some not-so-great stuff in the Bible, and some weird stuff in the Bible, but over and over again, throughout it and in all the different parts of it, we find different passages like this that really are just prophetic and spot-on, a clarion call for justice. It's always a good reminder for me to remember that, in the midst of the crap out there that some people claim to be Christian – or 'the only way to be Christian' or 'the right way to be Christian' – that the scriptures so often have stuff like this in there. I'm excited to read this again.

FS: Yeah, for sure. This is another text that I get to preach on as we're getting House of the Transfiguration off the ground. We're getting ready for our second preview gathering, doing monthly services through the summer. This is the text that I'm going to be preaching on on the 20th of August – we're a little bit ahead of the lectionary. And, for me, this is a lesson in the lectionary being made as a service to preachers and not preachers being a service to the lectionary, because I'm going to cheat a little bit and actually preach on Isaiah 58:1-14 instead of starting in verse 9, so I'm pretty excited about that.

It echoes the passage that we talked about the other week, I think it was in Amos [actually it was Isaiah 58:6, in the August 11, 2013 episode] about the fast that God has chosen for us. And I love this, like you said, this idea that these passages about justice keep coming up. It's not just, we get to get excited about that one passage in Amos, right? [laughs] We get to *keep* getting excited, because we see these same themes coming up over and over again. I think this passage in Isaiah is really powerful. I love this idea that, *if* we open our hearts to the hungry, and *if* we provide abundantly, there's this kind of cause-and-effect. Light will shine in the darkness.

The verse that really resonates with me is verse 12, "they will rebuild ancient ruins on your account. The foundations of generations past you will restore. You will be called mender of broken walls, restorer of livable streets." [CEB] I think about, you know, from a queer perspective, how often queer people are told that the destruction of society is our fault. The reason that Christianity is crumbling is because the United States has allowed gay marriage, or whatever. And if we think about a different perspective – if we actually live in solidarity with one another, then these things will come true. That we'll rebuild ancient ruins, and

Subscribe to the podcast by [email](#) or on [iTunes](#)
Connect with us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Instagram](#)



August 25, 2013

What will you be called?

Isaiah 58:9b-14

3/3

we'll be called menders of broken walls and restorers of liveable streets. That's such a powerful thing to be living into, and something so different than being called the ruiners of society, you know?

B: It's also sort of a challenge, or a litmus test. Is that what we're known as? Are we known as – my text says, 'repairer of broken walls, restorer of streets with dwellings.' [NIV] Is that how we're known? We also say, like, 'they will know we are Christians by our love.' Is that how folks know us, and if not, what can we be doing to be known as repairers and restorers and bridge builders?

FS: Yeah, for sure. It's definitely a good challenge to our communities to be asking the question of, who do people say that we are? What do people say that we're about? And are we living into these things well? I think that's a really important question.

[outro music]

B: I'm Brian—

FS: And I'm Shay. And you can find out more at QueerTheology.com.

B: If you'd like to connect with us, send us an email to connect@queertheology.com.

FS: Thanks for listening.

PODCAST END

Transcript by Taylor Walker