
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. Today we are taking a look at Psalm 121, and I'm going to go ahead and read it.

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

God won't let your foot slip. Your protector won't fall asleep on the job. No! Israel's protector never sleeps or rests!

The Lord is your protector; the Lord is your shade right beside you. The sun won't strike you during the day; neither will the moon at night.

The Lord will protect you from all evil; God will protect your very life. The Lord will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming—from now until forever from now. [CEB]

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

Brian: [sighs] Oh, I just love it. As we were looking at the texts for this week, it really struck me as standing in contrast to the Genesis 12 text, which is one of the other texts for this week, which is sort of like 'I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you' – just sort of this really partisan God, angry. And this one is just so comforting and inspiring. It reminds me that, when I was figuring out that I was attracted to guys, I didn't know exactly what I was going to do, but I just had this sense that God was on my side, that somehow God and I would get through it together, and that I could count on God to be a rock and a shield from the madness of the world. This resonates with me in that way. What about you, Shay?

FS: I remember loving this passage when I was in high school. You know, it was the time when I knew that something was *different* about me, but I didn't really have any language around what that was. I think, because of not having that language, I was really depressed. I found a lot of comfort in passages like this one in particular, of just this idea that God wasn't going to fall asleep on the job. Right? Like, that phrase in particular. God won't let your foot slip. [Brian *mhm*'s] I really love that, and I love this idea of a God who is looking out for us and caring for us. I think, especially for queer and trans people, who so often hear that God wants us dead, this idea that there's this perspective of God as someone who is *caring* for us, and will *always* care for us, no matter what, is something that's really appealing and I think comforting.

B: When I think about queer organizing or Christian organizing or queer Christian organizing, what might it look like if we like, *really* believed that God was on our side? That God had our back, that God was protecting us. What might we be inspired to do? I think, you know, it's not just 'what if' but 'God is.' God *is* on our side, God *does* have our back. And, you know me. Depending on the day I *really* believe in God or *really* am convinced that it's an empty, empty universe. And I sort of also think that it doesn't even necessarily matter whether it's God of the Christian Bible or the universe or your community or – some of my friends in Alcoholics [Anonymous] say God stands for 'group of drunks' – that there's just something bigger than ourselves that we can tap into and that will protect us. That will inspire us, that will be with us, that will help us. As queer Christians, or as Christians in community with queer people, I think we can tap into something bigger than ourselves and move the mountains.

[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