

## 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 we're taking a look at Romans 10:5-15. This is the lectionary text for August 10<sup>th</sup>. So Brian, you were pretty excited about picking this passage. What comes up for you when you read it?

[not read aloud]

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

"The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart,"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"  
[NRSV]

Brian: Yep, I was. When we were looking at the different passages for this week, I knew right away that I wanted us to talk about this one, and you relented [laughs] to my persuasions. You know, it's the last bit of this that really is what grabbed my attention at first, though I ended up loving all of it. Starting at verse 14, "So how can they call on someone they don't have faith in, and how can they have faith in someone they haven't heard of? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they're sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the good news!'"

It reminded me of – one of my sort of radicalizing moments along my queer Christian path was, in my senior year of college, I ended up having this enormous fight with my parents about being gay. It started about health insurance and then just sort of ran the gamut about everything. And afterwards, I remember laying in my bed thinking, you know, for the past few years I've been out and I've been waiting patiently and I've been trying to give them space and trying to be gracious. I've been trying to live into the tension of me being gay and them being not quite affirming but wanting to love me anyways, sort of seeing how this might work. And it just sort of struck me that, my parents hadn't really changed because I hadn't asked and demanded that they changed. And so I needed to do that. And America and the church wasn't going to change if someone didn't ask and demand that of them. That could be me too. I'd heard about this thing called the Equality Ride, but was not going to do it, because activism was for other people. That was the moment where I said, you know, if not me then who? And so I signed up and I did it. The cool part is, I watched my family change. They're super supportive and a hundred percent affirming. They all voted for Question 6, and they love my boyfriend, and we've had some really amazing conversations, even about sex and nontraditional relationships. It's just been really cool to see them evolve. It's been cool to see the church evolve over the years. I don't claim that I singlehandedly did that, but it's been cool to play a part in the church and in the schools across the country, and in the country in general.

And so I think that, as progressives, we sometimes are wary of evangelism. You know, just today I tweeted about our 'redefining the missionary position' hashtag. "I'm redefining the missionary position by honoring people's faith journeys rather than trying to convert them." I think that's true and that's good, and, also, I think that as folks who have found something that really works and resonates and feels like good news for us, it's okay for us to share that. And certainly share that in a way that isn't confrontational and doesn't say, 'you have to be a Christian in order to be a good person and to be my friend', but to say, you know, there's

something really exciting going on here, and if you're up for it, I'd love for you to be a part of it. And sometimes it's with words – you know, 'preach the gospel always; if necessary, use words.' And sometimes it's by our actions and how we treat each other and how we treat the strangers. I think there's something that progressives can learn, the mainline church can learn, LGBTQ Christians can learn, about reclaiming evangelism but for our own queered theology.

FS: I've been thinking a *lot* about this idea of reclaiming evangelism. As someone who is in the process, and has been in the process for a year and a half now of starting this new church – and knowing that the statistics say that 70% of people that come to church come because someone invited them – and this idea of helping people in my congregation to understand the importance of having conversations with their friends about their faith journeys and inviting them to church... not, in a way, like you said, to convert them, but to say, this has given meaning to my life and has been beautiful to me, and I would like you to be a part of it. I think a lot about what it is to tell people the good news. To be bearers of the good news in the world. I think that we need to reclaim our boldness in a lot of ways. I'm often shocked by emails that we get, both to queer theology and emails that I get personally, of people who say, you know, "I've never been told that you could believe these things and be a Christian." [Brian *mhms*] Or, "I've never met any queer Christians who are living out radical faith and being unapologetic about it." And I'm always kind of taken aback by these emails, because, in my world, this is such a norm.

B: [laughs] Yeah, it's a given.

FS: This is what we do and this is who we are. And also, I feel a little bit ashamed by those emails, of like, okay, well, maybe I haven't been clear enough about where I stand on certain things. Maybe I haven't been outspoken enough about how much hope and joy and abundance of life I've found in this Jesus story. So, I think it's a lesson to all of us that this idea of being evangelists – that doesn't have to be a dirty word. It doesn't have to be street corner preachers. It doesn't have to be any of that stuff. And you know, you mentioned this kind of pithy thing that we've got going on, this 'redefine the missionary position.' And part of it's tongue and cheek, and part of it's a little bit... [pause]

B: Sexual. [laughs]

FS: Sexual.

B: [laughs] We can say it!

FS: Well, I mean, it's cheeky, right?

B: Yeah, it's totally cheeky.

FS: It's meant to be funny, and whatever. But it's also meant to be like, if we really believe in this stuff, let's get out there and tell people about it. Let's say, like, there is this way of being in the world. You can *be* radically queer. You can *be* radically Christian. Those things can fit together and be really beautiful. I just – I really love it.

B: Yeah, you know, the people who ask “Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and savior?” are not the only ones who get to have a claim on public Christianity or on evangelizing or on spreading the good news. Our good news is [laughs] actually good news. We can be bold in that.

FS: Yeah, absolutely.

B: And, also, if you're intrigued by this 'redefine the missionary position' thing, we actually have a pre-sale going on for our t-shirt that says just that in big bold letters. It says 'redefine the missionary position' on the front and on the back is the Queer Theology logo. So if you want to make a public claim to a Christianity that is bold and subversive, you can check that out. If you just go to our website [QueerTheology.com](http://QueerTheology.com), you'll be able to find a link to grab that shirt.

[outro music]

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FS: And I'm Shay. And you can find out more at [QueerTheology.com](http://QueerTheology.com).

B: If you'd like to connect with us, send us an email to [connect@queertheology.com](mailto:connect@queertheology.com).

FS: Thanks for listening.

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Transcript by Taylor Walker