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## 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're looking at the lectionary texts for November 16<sup>th</sup>, and we're going to take a look at the Psalm, 128:1-5. It's pretty short so I'm going to go ahead and read it.

Blessed are all who fear the Lord,  
who walk in obedience to him.

You will eat the fruit of your labor;  
blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house; your children will be  
like olive shoots around your table.

Yes, this will be the blessing  
for the man who fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Zion;  
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life. [NIV]

Alright, Brian. What do you think of this one?

Brian: I'm really excited to have this passage come up this week. When I saw it, I thought, how do we talk about that one? There's just something nice, you know – a few weeks ago we talked about Amos, the passage from Amos. It's one of my favorites, and it's sort of like, 'your religious feasts disgust me and I just want justice.' I was like, *yeah*. I love that. But there's also sort of something that resonates with me about this one. I just like that this text is about being blessed and being prosperous and having a happy family, and God wanting that for you. I think that's resonating with me as I'm going through my... it's probably too late for a quarter-life crisis, maybe too early for a mid-life crisis, but maybe like a third-life crisis. I'm 29, and sort of asking myself lots of questions about what I want out of life. I've spent the past many years either working for or working with nonprofits and doing a lot of activism, especially LGBTQ or faith-based activism,

so it's – I don't know, there's something about it that's like, yeah, I just want a spouse and some kids and to be blessed. That sounds nice, to not always have to be striving. So I think it's a good reminder for LGBTQ Christians that yes, we have something unique to offer the world and the church, and yes that can be a blessing for the world... and also, we don't always have to be on. We don't always have to be, like, the person that answers all of the invasive questions about our sexuality or our gender or our bodies. We don't always have to be leading the group. Sometimes we can just sit and be and sort of accept the blessings that come our way. What about you, Shay?

FS: Yeah, I like the fact that we're doing this passage, because it's so heterocentric. [Brian laughs] It's all about the man who obeys the Lord being given a wife and a couple of kids. I love the fact that we're able to not throw this passage out, as queer and trans people, but we're able to say, how can we queer this? What is the message here for queer and trans people? That's a subversive reading of this passage that really appeals to me, and that I appreciate. And so thank you for suggesting it, because I probably would have been like, eh, not doing this one. But I think you're right. I really like this passage because it – well, it's funny, because I grew up kind of being taught that if you followed God, then you'd have a happy life. And if you weren't happy, then it probably meant that you were messing up in some pretty significant way, [laughs] when it came to following God. And so that always felt really icky, for one, because there was a lot of pressure there. And it also heaped more blame and shame on me when things weren't going well. And it also created this kind of tension between what I thought what God wanted from me and what I wanted, and it never felt like I could actually have what I wanted. Right? Like, if I really wanted something, odds are, God was going to try and take it away from me.

B: Right.

FS: And I'm not really sure why. Maybe out of spite, [both laugh] maybe because I wanted it... and it always left me with this really kind of antagonistic relationship with God, and also with my own desires. It's been interesting; I've been reading *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron lately, and she talks a lot about how what God wants from us as creative people is to invest in our dreams. And that's been such a shift for me, because that is *not* what I grew up with. It's also been really beautiful to think that, maybe what God does want for me – maybe the best way that I can serve God – is by going deeply into the things that I desire. Whether that be work that's really fulfilling for me, or a relationship and a family, or creatively – just really investing in that. That's a beautiful thing, and it's

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something that is new for me, and something that I'm kind of learning to lean into. And that feels really good.

[outro music]

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

## **PODCAST END**

Transcript by Taylor Walker