
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.

Brian: Welcome back to the Queer Theology podcast! This week, we are looking at the lectionary text for Sunday, August 9th. We're going to look at 1 Kings 19:4-8. It's sort of short so I'm going to read it for you. This is the NIV version, and it's talking about Elijah.

...While he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. [NIV]

So, Shay, as we're looking at this text, what comes up for you?

FS: You know, I first heard about this text from a friend of mine whose dad was a pastor. He had preached a sermon talking about his own struggles with depression, and had preached on this passage. She sent it to me at a time when I was in college and I was dealing with my first, named, pretty severe bout of depression. I remember being really struck by the fact that, finally, someone was talking about this in church, because that had not been my experience growing up. My experience growing up was really that we didn't talk about mental health

at all. If you struggled or were at all unhappy – and of course it was never depression, right, it was just unhappiness – that you should just pray harder, and that God would fix it.

B: Right.

FS: I remember just being really thankful that someone was talking about this in a more serious way. And I love that this passage is in the Bible, and that we have this example of someone who's really struggling and is longing for death. I think that that's – it's comforting for me to be able to see my story reflected in scripture. What about you?

B: I think that it's important that an angel not only came and spoke to him but also brought him food.

FS: Yeah.

B: You know? Sometimes you need people to take care of you, and that's okay. I've never been diagnosed with depression, but this story resonates with me, like, today. The day that we're recording this, I have spent the entire day either in a bed or on the couch, just sort of like [makes noise] unable to motivate myself, motivate myself to do anything. Finally at some point after noon, I was just like, I just have to get up and eat. So I got up and I walked outside and I went to somewhere and like, bought food. Because, like, I have plenty of food in my house, but the thought of making food was too much. And so, like, this get-up-and-eat really resonates with me as well. Sometimes kind words from well-meaning strangers aren't enough. Sometimes, either you have to do something, or you need help from people around you to do something. I think that is true for lots of people in general, and certainly queer folks in particular.

FS: I think one of the last verses is, "Eat something, because you have a difficult road ahead of you." I think that, as we talk about being queer or being activists or navigating the world as a trans person – realizing that we have a difficult road ahead of us, we also have to be really careful about self-care and about taking care of ourselves and about making sure that we have the energy and the resources to walk the difficult road that is sometimes called of us.

B: Yeah, and it's okay to name that. We don't have to pretend that everything is peachy and happy in our lives.

[outro music]

B: This has been Reading Queerly, the queer lectionary podcast. 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