
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 are taking a look at the texts for November 8th. We're going to look at Psalm 146:7-10. It's a good mic-drop, psalmist passage, so I'm just going to go ahead and read it.

The Lord, who gives justice to people who are
oppressed, who gives bread to people who are starving!

The Lord: who frees prisoners. The Lord: who makes
the blind see. The Lord: who straightens up those who
are bent low. The Lord: who loves the righteous.

The Lord: who protects immigrants, who helps orphans
and widows, but who makes the way of the wicked twist
and turn!

The Lord will rule forever! Zion, your God will rule from
one generation to the next!

Praise the Lord! [CEB]

Brian: Praise – the – Lord!

FS: We thought about just ending the podcast here. [both laugh]

B: I think we could write, just like, 'the end!' Sometimes, sometimes scripture says it better than you can.

FS: Yeah. Pretty much. What's this bringing up for ya?

B: I think what I appreciate about this is – if you've listened to the Queer Theology more than four or five times [both laugh] you've probably heard us talk about justice, and specifically justice in the Bible. Even I, who do this work and have been doing this work for a decade, I still get excited when verses like this pop up in the lectionary. It's just this wonderful reminder that God being on the

side of the oppressed and being a force for justice in the world is not an anomaly or an exception to the Bible. It's woven through the Hebrew scriptures and the Christian scriptures. It's at the heart of what these folks were doing. There's lots of other stuff that goes along with that, but this is just as much about Christianity as all the rules of sorting crops and eating shellfish from Leviticus, or Paul's sometimes problematic musings on women from the Christian scriptures. This is there too. And this idea of people being progressive, justice-oriented folks and Christian, is not some sort of modern invention. They're not tweaking religion or reclaiming this thing that was originally a bad thing and making it new. Like, [laughs] the Lord who protects immigrants. We were talking about immigration justice when Psalm 146 was written thousands of years ago. This isn't a new thing. I just really appreciate that reminder that justice really is at the heart of this.

FS: I think, so often, for those of us of a more progressive or liberal, or what has been defined as a more progressive or liberal Christianity, we can feel really run down. Because what makes the news and what kind of gets the most press is often folks who claim Christianity and who are also not fans of immigrants and orphans and widows. [laughs] Or the oppressed, or the starving. And I think like you, it can be really comforting to realize that, this is central to the faith that I hold to and central to the faith that I'm trying to live up to. In a way that's really authentic, that I'm not adding anything new, or I'm not just, you know, liberal and trying to make my faith fit that. Really, it's like, no, it's my faith that's calling me to that liberal stance. It's God who's calling me to be on the side of the immigrant and the starving and to work for prison abolition. It's nice to read this and be reminded of that.

B: Yeah, there's this sort of saying or pretty inspirational graphic that says something to the effect of, if your God isn't calling you to love your neighbor more, to be a kinder person; if your God would send someone to hell and punish them eternally just because they didn't say the right prayer or because they're queer or because they doubted or asked questions – that's not a god. That's an egomaniac. That's not a god worth worshipping. This text almost, in a way, sort of says that. It ends with, "The Lord will rule forever. Zion, your God will rule from one generation to the next." But it's not just any god – it spends the preceding verses saying what sort of god that is. The God who will rule forever is the one who gives justice to the people who are oppressed, who gives bread to the people who are starving. That is the God who will rule forever. These other images of God that we hear people talking about, those are the idols that will eventually be torn down, and will be shown to be false.

[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