
PODCAST START:

[intro music]

Brian: Welcome to the Queer Theology podcast!

Fr. Shay: Where each episode, we take a queer look at the week's lectionary readings. We're the cofounders of QueerTheology.com and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns —

B: And I'm Brian G. Murphy. Hello there! Today we are taking a look at the lectionary text for Sunday, February 12th. We're going to be looking at Deuteronomy 30:15-20. I'm going to read it for you right now. It will also be in the show notes if you want to read along that way.

See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. [NIV]

Alright, Shay. What does this bring up for you?

FS: I really love this passage. I love it because it kind of subverts how we normally think about God and God's commandments, right? I think often we —

especially when we're reading the Hebrew scriptures – some folks have said, you know, the God of the Hebrew scriptures is really violent and vengeful and the God of the newer testament is not. Which, first of all, is not true. But second of all, I think that this passage puts a lie to that. God is saying to the people, "There are two options here. You can choose which one you want for your life, but if you choose these things, it's going to lead you to destruction." And it's not God saying, "I'm going to destroy you if you choose wrong." It's just like, if you choose to invest your life into bad things, there are consequences to that. I think, especially in the kind of world that we're currently living in, where there's all of these things set up about what's good and what's bad, it's clear that there's a way that leads towards life and towards abundance and towards community and towards healing and wholeness. And then there's a way that leads towards death and destruction. And we get to choose which one of those things we want to invest in, and it's pretty clear what leads to good things in life and what leads to death and destruction. I find a lot of comfort in this passage, and also some hard truths to think about. Which way am I choosing? What about you?

B: When you think about this from a queer perspective, right, just looking at, is it okay to be gay or trans or queer or lesbian or bisexual, we can look at – I say this all the time – we can look at the fruits of affirming theology and see, this leads to life. And [laughs] we can look at the fruits of non-affirming theology and see, this leads to literal death. So if you're someone who's out there trying to decide between, is it okay to be queer or not, choose life! Choose life. It's that simple. This also reminds me of – in Sanctuary Collective right now, which is, for those of you who don't know, our online member community, we're going through *Relig-ish* by Rachele Mee-Chapman. There's this anecdote she mentions in the book, of knocking at the door and Jesus entering, and what does Jesus say to her – and one of our members, Karen, was like, "Pose to us, if you were going to open the door to Jesus, what would Jesus say to you?" And my thought was [laughs] "Take a load off, and give that load to me." Sometimes, religion in general and Christianity in particular can feel so weighty, that we have the weight of the world on our shoulders. Whether you're a conservative Christian and it feels like you have to be responsible for spreading the gospel and saving people from hell, or you're a progressive Christian who is looking to do social justice in the world, it can just feel so heavy sometimes. And I really appreciate this reminder that at the end of the day, it's about choosing life. If we're not living our lives, that's not what God would have for us.

[outro music]

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It's okay to not be okay

1 Kings 19:4-8

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B: The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at QueerTheology.com, which provides resources, community and inspiration for LGBTQ Christians and straight cisgender supporters.

FS: To dive into more of the action, visit us at QueerTheology.com. You can also connect with us online on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

PODCAST END

Transcript by Taylor Walker