
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.

FS: Welcome! We are taking a break from the lectionary this week to instead talk a little bit about a webinar that we've got coming up on April 8th. If you've been on the Queer Theology list for awhile, you saw that this year for Lent we released my trans passion narrative called *Walking Toward Resurrection*. What we're going to talk about that week in the webinar is a little bit about that trans passion narrative, but more broadly, about learning to read scripture from a queer perspective and a queer lens. Today, Brian and I want to talk a little bit about our journeys with scripture and give you a bit of a preview for what that webinar is going to be like. I know, for me, I grew up believing, and being taught, that the Bible was God's love letter to me, where every word was specifically spoken to my heart. I remember, when I first learned about other ways to read the Bible in seminary, I was kind of shocked to realize, oh, actually, the Bible's not God's love letter to me. [laughs] It was actually written for communities that are very different from mine. But that perspective really helped as I learned to read the Bible in a new way, and instead of feeling like I had to figure out how every single verse applied to my life, instead, I was able to look at it and figure out, okay, what was the context in which this was written, and what did this mean for the people who wrote it and for the community in which it was developed? By extension, then, what does that mean for me, and who would I have been in this story? I think often, especially as a white American, if there's a bad guy in the story, odds are it's my community and that it's important to pay attention to who we are in the stories. So, all of that's to say, I think it's really important that as queer folks, we learn to read the Bible in new ways that move us beyond just passages out of context, or getting stuck in the clobber passages or trying to proof text scripture to apply to our lives. There's actually much more beautiful and powerful ways to read scripture. What about you, Brian? What's been your journey with the Bible?

B: So instead of describing the Bible as God's love letter to us, I was taught that the Bible stood for 'basic instructions before leaving Earth.' [Shay laughs] It was

basically like a user's manual. The Ten Commandments were the quick-start guide, but the rest of the Bible was the user's manual. [laughs]

FS: And not just the user manual, but the user manual for like... a rocket that you were planning to eject out of, right? [laughs]

B: Yeah, exactly.

FS: [laughing] The goal is to get off of Earth as soon as possible.

B: Yep. So that, so that. Looking at that, everything was about, like, what is this telling me about what I'm supposed to be doing, literally, in 2017? Or in 1992. And, also, it was a lot of like, how can every single Bible story from Genesis all the way through Revelation be made into a story about Jesus? [Shay laughs] Daniel and the Lion's den – about Jesus. Adam and Eve in the garden – about Jesus. Job – about Jesus. [laughs] Everything was about Jesus. I remember the first time that I read Exodus as a text of liberation rather than just this story that happened a long time ago, literally historically happened, to prove that God could perform miracles. And I sort of saw, in Exodus, God siding with the oppressed and God saying to the powerful, "Let my people go!" And unabashedly, with everything God has, being on the side of the oppressed – was really cool. As a person who is queer, that notion of God being on my side when I face oppression, and God saying to my oppressors, "Let my people go!" was this really comforting notion. What I like about Exodus in particular is sort of what you were saying. It's important to find our place in the story. And that, as a queer person I can see myself aligning with the Hebrew people and my oppressors with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but, you know, as a white, male, cisgender American citizen, there are a lot of ways in which my people are the oppressors of others. This one story can both inspire and comfort me, and also challenge me. I think to hold those two in balance is really cool and makes the Bible not less true, but more true, a more rich text because of that.

FS: Yeah. We're going to dive into this more in a webinar on April 8th, and really talk about some different strategies and tactics that you can use to read the Bible and to learn to see yourself in it. I'll talk more about the work I did writing the trans passion narrative, and how I went about that, and why that has been meaningful, both to me and to other folks. It's going to be a really (hopefully) helpful and practical webinar. If you've got specific questions, you can get those in beforehand and we'll answer them. And Brian, how can people sign up for this webinar?

B: You can sign up for this webinar by going to QueerTheology.com/queerbible, and you'll be able to register for it there. If you want to pick up *Walking Toward Resurrection* beforehand, you can get that at QueerTheology.com/resurrection. I will put links to both of those things in the show notes, which you can find at QueerTheology.com/172.

[outro music]

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