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## PODCAST START:

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: Happy Easter from Queer Theology! This week on the podcast we are going to talk about Easter. The text options: there's a text from John where Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene in the Garden, and then there's also a passage from Matthew where the women find the empty tomb [John 20, Matthew 28]. But we're going to talk more broadly about the meaning of Easter and the meaning of these texts. So Brian, what does Easter do or not do, as the case may be?

B: [laughs] You know, Easter is one of those things. I love Palm Sunday, I love Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and Holy Saturday – I can do me some waiting. But then Easter rolls around, and I'm just sort of like... there's a beautiful message there, but I get hung up on the details there, of like: did Jesus really resurrect himself from the dead? What does resurrection mean? Was there a zombie Jesus walking around? And... aaagh! I don't know what to do with that. [laughs] So, Shay, what sort of advice do you have for a person like me, who's maybe a bit skeptical about things like resurrection when it comes to Easter?

FS: So, the biggest thing – we've been doing this book study at the church where I work, a book called *Surprised by Hope*. It's by NT Wright. Now, NT Wright is problematic in all sorts of ways. He's a fairly conservative Anglican bishop, so he's like, kind of awful on the ideas of women and LGBTQ people. But on the idea of the gospel in historical context, and the meaning of the resurrection, he is spot on. *Surprised by Hope* is this gorgeous book about what the resurrection really means, and how, if we actually take the resurrection seriously, it changes everything. I highly recommend you pick up that book. It's a little bit scholarly, but it is one of the books that he's written for kind of a lay audience. It's highly recommended. But one of the things that we've been talking about in that book study – at my church, there are lots of people in the congregation like you, Brian, who are just like, “Uh, we have science, and science says that this thing is not possible, and so I don't know what to do with that.” My friend Adam has been teaching the book study, and one of the things that he keeps reminding us is that whether you believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead or not, there are two things that are really important to keep in mind. One, it's not really necessarily

about what we believe, it's about what the earliest followers of Jesus believed. What did they believe that Jesus's death and resurrection meant and accomplished? Because they're the ones who were then tasked with translating that for the rest of us. And two, it's clear that *something* happened. Right? Like, lots of messiahs had come and been killed and their movements faded away. Lots of people had died. But clearly, something happened to turn this super-fearful ragtag band of followers into this mass movement, who were willing to face down persecution and death, in a way that – when Jesus was arrested – they all disappeared. And after he was crucified, they were locked in a room because they were afraid of the authorities. Something clearly happened from that moment, locked in a room, to Peter standing in a square testifying in front of the council that Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not, and resurrection has happened. Right? Like clearly something happened. So whatever we believe about that, I think we had to say – well, *something* happened. And that something changed everything. So that's always where I start.

B: Yeah, you know, I see echoes of resurrection in the history of queerness. Society has tried to kill us over and over again, through pseudo-science, torture, conversion therapy, through hate crimes, through a neglect of the AIDS crisis – and time and time again, we continue to be a people of resurrection. We continue to, in the face of impossible odds, rise up. I think to be in 2017, despite all of the bullshit going on in America right now with the Trump administration and some setbacks for trans rights and all that, we've come so far so quickly. The state of the world right now when it comes to LGBT rights is unimaginable to even a 15-year-old Brian. I think that there's something there. I think of Matthew Shepard being murdered and left to die on a fence in Wyoming, looking almost like the scene of a crucifixion. And the resilience of people to bounce back from hate crimes like that, and from Pulse in Orlando – to be a people that, despite terrible violence visited us... you know, it's not the Roman Empire, it's society at large, but we have this spirit within us that refuses to die. The more it seems like the world tries to clamp down on us, the more that we rise up. The Roman Empire thought that they could defeat the moment by killing Jesus, and they were totally wrong. I see that sort of resilience in the queer community, and other marginalized communities as well. God is in the margins, and we see the resilience of God's people there.

FS: And I think what is so powerful about the story of resurrection, and the message of resurrection, is that it's not just our spirit that survives. It's our bodies. And for a community for whom bodies in particular have been maligned and hated and beaten, and people have refused to touch us, and have said our loves are dirty and messy – for the resurrection to say that our bodies are good and holy and pure, and that they matter, and that they will live – I think is a

hugely important message. It's not just about our spirits. It's about our bodies as well.

B: Amen to that. So, over the years, we've done a number of things around Holy Week and Easter and crucifixion and all that sort of stuff, so we will put a link to a round-up in the show notes to this episode, which you can get at [QueerTheology.com/175](http://QueerTheology.com/175) [correction]. Have a very happy Easter!

[outro music plays]

B: The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at [QueerTheology.com](http://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](http://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