
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 hello! Today we're going to take a break from the lectionary for a special Pride-themed edition of the Queer Theology podcast. This coming weekend is NYC Pride where I live, and it's Minneapolis Pride where Shay lives, and it's Pride in many other cities around the country and around the world. We haven't had a Pride-themed podcast this Pride month yet, and so that's what we're going to talk about this week. It's all about LGBTQ Pride and how that intersects with queer Christianity. So Shay, can you kick us off?

FS: You know, I have struggled with Pride over the years for lots of reasons. I remember when I was first coming out, just the idea of Pride made me uncomfortable because I had grown up in a tradition that said pride was the worst of all sins. And then when I was still kind of coming to terms with my sexuality and gender identity, the idea of being prideful about something that was being condemned by the people that I loved and my family and the church I had grown up in, was really hard. It was also hard to be prideful about something that I felt a lot of internalized shame over. I didn't necessarily want to be queer. I didn't want to be gender non-conforming. I really struggled with all of that. Over the years, I got past that stuff, after a lot of work and, you know, meeting other people and doing unpacking. And then it became hard to go to Pride because there just wasn't a lot of things for trans folks, often. It was rainbow flags but no trans flags, you could buy a million and one things for LGB folks but nothing for trans folks. So that became hard. And also, like, how commercialized Pride is, and how it has so far strayed from its roots of being this radical act of resistance to something where the police lead the march, right? It's all of this stuff. So, I have struggled with Pride over the years. And also, I think it's such an amazing thing to be in a community that has been so persecuted and has had so many people try to disappear us, and yet we still thrive and we still claim pride. For me, Pride now becomes this yearly reminder that I am from a people who are defiant and proud and thriving and alive, and that really means something to me. I think it also reminds me of what it means, too, to be a follower of Jesus. To be a part of a community that is working for justice in the world, and who by all means should

not exist, and yet still do, so many years later. So those two things I think are what I carry with me, this Pride season. What about you?

B: Yeah, *all* of that. I similarly struggled with internalized shame and homophobia, but when I came out and was sort of feeling uncomfortable in spaces that were quote-unquote too queer, and also the commercialization of Pride and the police involvement with Pride – both make me uncomfortable. Pride started to commemorate the Stonewall riots, which were sort of an uprising against the police. I think, you know, there's some world where it's beautiful that it all comes full circle, and the police are now part of it in this restorative way, but the police still target trans folks, queer folks, gay folks, people of color, women, marginalized communities, so we're not yet at a place where policing is **performed**. So it just feels sort of icky. I just think that there's something so beautiful about this diverse community of ages and bodies and genders and expressions coming together to say, you know, "We're still here and we're proud and we're thriving." I think when I was first out of the closet, and struggling to find my queer Christian place, I was a little bit uncomfortable with the nudity and the displays of sexuality. It made me a little uncomfortable. And now I just sort of love that we can say, we're proud of our bodies, we're proud of our sexualities, we have something to teach the world about being proud about those things and sort of taking them out into the light of day. You know, I think that I see these parallels between Christianity and the queer community. We both started out as very marginalized, persecuted communities, and over time Christianity has sort of made an alliance with the empire, and in doing that, we see the result is prosperity gospel, the rise of the very political, Republican-aligned super-conservative churches, that sometimes to me seem to be more about being Republican than being Christian. I think that there's a cautionary tale there to the LGBTQ community, that as we fight for acceptance and inclusion and visibility, which are all really important, necessary, life-saving goals, that we need to be wary of sort of losing our soul in the process – and remember our priorities, remember where we started, about love and inclusion and justice and liberation. We need to remember to hold on to those things.

FS: And you know, we have this entire issue of Spit & Spirit that we did around Pride, and you can get that on our website at QueerTheology.com/pride. It's a digital magazine, full-color, with lots of awesome pictures and essays and prayers and thoughts about the intersections between Pride and being a follower of Jesus.

[outro music plays]

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