
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: Hello! And welcome back to the lectionary. This week we are taking a look at the lectionary for July 9th, and we're going to look at part of the text. The full lectionary is Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30. We're going to look at 16-19 and verses 28-30. They're pretty short, so I'm going to go ahead and read them.

To what will I compare this generation? It is like a child sitting in the marketplaces calling out to others, "We played the flute for you and you didn't dance. We sang a funeral song and you didn't mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon." Yet the human one came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." But wisdom is proved to be right by her works.

...

"Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I'm gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves. My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden is light." [CEB]

B: Mm! I like this one. [laughs]

FS: There's a lot happening in here.

July 9, 2017

Queer Christians' burden
Matthew 11:16-19, 28-30

2/4

B: Sometimes I look at a passage from the lectionary and I'm like "ugh." But this one makes me all giggles inside. I think what first jumps out at me is this first part, this 16-19, and in particular, "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say 'He has a demon,' yet the human one came eating and drinking and they say 'Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved to be right by her works." It just makes me think, the TL;DR of this is, "Queer people can never do anything right." [Shay laughs]

It's just a fool's errand. Straight Christians – not all of them, obviously, but anti-queer Christians – are constantly setting up all of these hoops for us to jump through, and then once we jump through them, it's not good enough or it's not what we want. They say that our relationships are invalid and not real and that we can't get married, and then when we don't have relationships they say that we're too sexual and promiscuous and we don't have relationships that last and we don't get married. And then we want to get married, and they say we're destroying the institution of marriage and trying to destroy marriage. There's no winning. And that's just looking at relationships. You're never going to please everyone, and you're particularly never going to please those people that don't understand your full humanity and refuse to recognize it.

Part of the game that anti-LGBTQ Christians play, whether they realize they're playing it or not – and even people who are straight who will say that they're supportive but aren't really working in true solidarity, they can be complicit and do this sometimes too – is that they just keep you occupied. Always jumping through the next hoop. As the pastor says – complain that you're not dancing, and then when you dance, complain that you're not mourning. Complain that you're not eating and drinking, complain that you are eating and drinking. I think you have to focus on learning to love and accept for yourself, to find the community that does support you, to do the work of reconciliation with yourself, to take care of yourself, set boundaries for yourself, to develop spiritual practices that work for yourself, to find a spiritual home that works for you... and to say, "You know what? I'm not going to make my faith beholden to what straight people say it should look like, because wisdom is to be proved right by her works." What about you, Shay? What's resonating for you here?

FS: You know, so much of what you just said. And I think, for me, one of the most healing moments in my life was when I had this realization that no matter what I did, I was never going to make people happy. No matter if I waited to have sex until I was married, or only dated one person and got married right away, if I went to church with my spouse, if I followed all of the rules. There were still going to be people that weren't going to think that I was moral, or righteous enough. It

Subscribe to the podcast by [email](#) or on [iTunes](#)
Connect with us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Instagram](#)



July 9, 2017

Queer Christians' burden
Matthew 11:16-19, 28-30

3/4

became this exhausting process trying to make people happy, and trying to live up to standards that, like you said, kept changing. The goalposts kept moving.

B: Yep.

FS: What I love is this first part of the passage coupled with this part about Jesus's yoke being easy and the burden light. Because I think that so often, especially as queer people, we take on this extra-heavy burden of not only defending ourselves to other people, or having to know scripture like seven hundred thousand times better than anti-gay Christians, or tying ourselves in knots trying to be the 'right kind of queer' for the Church. We do that and we think that that's what Jesus wants from us, that because we're queer that Jesus somehow requires more from us and we have to live this life of suffering and that's our burden to bear, right – and we've heard people in the church tell us that. That being queer is our burden to bear. Having to be extra-righteous is part of our jobs. Or that we have to be celibate because we're queer, and that's our burden to bear. And so this passage comes in and blows that up and says, if the burden that you're carrying is heavy, then it's not from Jesus.

B: Amen.

FS: Jesus himself says "My burden is light, and you are supposed to come to me and find comfort." If what you're coming to is causing you a heavier burden and not causing you comfort, then it's not Jesus. And it's not the gospel. And it's not what God wants for you. If that's your church putting a heavier burden on you, if that's your parents putting a heavier burden on you, if that's other people that you're in relationship with...

B: If that's other LGBTQ Christians, right?

FS: Yes! Yes. Yeah. Yeah, like shake that off and carry a lighter burden, because that is not what God wants for you.

B: Oh. Amen. So, this could be one of our foundational scriptures for Queer Theology. This sentiment informs so much of what we do. If you're listening and you're like, "Oh my god, yes, more of that!" – we have just a ton of stuff for you. Over at QueerTheology.com, there's a button for resources, or you can go to QueerTheology.com/dashboard. You can get, for free, a guide for recovering from fundamentalism, which helps you unpack negative messages from Christianity and move to one that's healing. There's letters of love, which is this beautiful back-and-forth between our friend Micah, who came out as trans, to his

Subscribe to the podcast by [email](#) or on [iTunes](#)
Connect with us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Instagram](#)



July 9, 2017

Queer Christians' burden
Matthew 11:16-19, 28-30

4/4

fundamentalist Christian mom, and sort of navigating that dialogue with grace and love while maintaining boundaries and finding liberation for himself. There's a bunch of videos. If you join Sanctuary Collective, we have an LGBTQ Christian guide to self care, which will really be helpful for you in this work. And then you get access to our webinars, archives which include some stuff around finding a faith that fits, and purity culture... There's so much to join, to dig into around. Not jumping through the hoops that straight people set for you, for finding a faith that works for you, for setting boundaries, learning to love yourself, and really reveling in God's love for us and embracing the gospel and allowing it to transform our lives with that. An easy burden. Queertheology.com/dashboard is where you can access all this information. A lot of this is free, and if you are interested in Sanctuary Collective, you can get the links to join that there. We would love to see you. As always, you can always email us at connect@queertheology.com if you have any questions. We will see you next week!

[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