

## 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. Hello hello! Today we are going to take a break from our regularly scheduled lectionary-Bible-queering-passage podcast to talk a little big picture about the month ahead at Queer Theology. This month we're dedicating the whole month to 'back to the basics.' It's September, it's back to school month for a lot of folks. For those of us who haven't been in school for a long time, and don't have kids of our own, September still makes me think of back to school time. We're going to take you back to the basics of Christian faith, of queer theology, of building a faith that fits for you, that works for you. Shay and I both grew up conservative, evangelical, fundamentalist Christian to varying degrees. That faith that we used to have looks very different from the faith that we have today. We put in years and years of work. Shay went to seminary, both of us have done a decade of activism to come to figure out how to make faith work for us. We want to make it a little bit easier for you and spare you some of the heartache, put you on the fast track to figuring out a faith that fits. This month through articles and webinars and some resources that we'll be creating, it's all about getting back to the basics and finding a faith that fits and that gives life. Shay, what does that mean for you?

FS: Yeah, I think one of the big things for me is when I first left fundamentalism and even evangelicalism, I looked around and I had a lot of trouble finding resources for people who had done that journey before. There were a lot of memoirs, and I think even more memoirs now, of people who had left fundamentalism. But there hadn't been a lot of memoirs and resources out there of people who had left fundamentalism but still retained faith. And for me, staying in the church or staying in a faith practice was still really important for me. I couldn't figure out what that looked like, or what that meant for me. Now that the simple rules of, "say a prayer to accept Jesus into your heart, convert as many people as you can by getting them to also say that prayer, go to an evangelical church, participate in a small group, read your bible every day" – now that those things were maybe not the litmus test, what did it look like to follow Jesus? What did it look like to have a faith that was life-giving and that was holistic, that embraced my sexuality and gender identity? Like you said, we put in years of work trying to figure out what that looked like. I think we still get a lot of questions at Queer Theology, not just from folks who are leaving fundamentalism and

evangelicalism, but also folks who are coming out and are trying to figure out, “How does my sexuality integrate with my spirituality?” Folks who are part of mainline and liberal churches, trying to figure out, “Is there a space for personal spiritual practice in the midst of all this justice work? What does all of this look like?” And I think those are the things we’re going to tackle this month. Figuring out, okay, what are the basics for each person, each of us, as we create our own faith journey? As we really dive into what it means to be a follower of Jesus and an LGBTQ person – what it means to be an ally to the LGBTQ community, and still be a follower of Jesus. That’s a lot to sum up on one podcast, so we’re going to dive deep into that this month.

B: You know, when I was growing up, my faith was very cut and dry. It was the pastor’s job to tell me exactly what I was supposed to believe and exactly what every different passage in the Bible meant, and it was my job to accept and believe and internalize that. When I started to come out, my sexuality was sort of the first crack in that whole worldview. I wrote an article for Spit & Spirit, which is also available as a preview on our website which I’ll link to in the show notes of this episode – that figuring out that I liked guys was the first crack in this worldview, and eventually it all came tumbling down. When that was happening, for me, I didn’t have Queer Theology to turn to. But you’ve now written a book called *A Guide to Recovering from Fundamentalism*. So if you’re brand-new to this whole process of moving out of the conservative faith, and you need some help with that process, we’ll put a link to that in the show notes. It’s a free book that Shay wrote which is remarkably helpful. But, I got the part in that process where I had sort of let go of a lot of my conservative faith, but I hadn’t yet replaced it with anything. It was very much anything goes for awhile. It was a little bit like don’t ask, don’t tell. Don’t think about spiritual questions too much because I don’t have the answers for them yet, and they’ll just cause me angst, so I’m just going to put pause on these big questions about life... and it was actually really learning to love and accept my queerness and my body and my sexuality and my desires, and integrating that into my life – to find LGBTQ activism that engaged faith in a meaningful and authentic way – that I began to realize that I had never quite left Christianity, and Christianity had never quite left me. Being able to, from where I am in my journey, from a queer perspective and a justice perspective and a liberation perspective, ask questions about Christianity – what does my faith say about original sin now? What does my faith say about salvation and resurrection and redemption and grace? And bearing crosses, and prayer, and repentance. I think that these ideas that have been sort of coopted and distorted by conservative Christianity can actually be really beautiful, empowering, powerful things for LGBTQ Christians and for straight, cisgender allies to engage with. I’m really excited to dive in, over the course of the next month, into how we can begin to put back together a faith that is faithful,

that's biblical, but that's also rooted in our lived experiences and is relevant for who we are today.

FS: Yeah, and if you've got questions as you are walking this path along with us, we would love to hear what kind of resources would be helpful for you, and what questions are coming up for you. If you want to send us an email to [connect@queertheology.com](mailto:connect@queertheology.com), we would love to hear from you and hear what you're wrestling with. If you're really looking to dive deeper into this, we would love to have you over into Sanctuary Collective. We have this awesome Slack community where people can talk and share what they're going through and share advice and tips and reading suggestions, and just be in community with one another. We're going to be having these conversations all throughout this month over in the Sanctuary Collective Slack channel. We're also going to be releasing an ebook called *Resurrecting Faith*, which is all about how to do this work and how to build a faith that is life-giving and holistic. You can get that as a member of Sanctuary Collective, and you can access all of that information on [QueerTheology.com/sanctuary](http://QueerTheology.com/sanctuary). That'll tell you how to join. We would love to see you in that community.

[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