
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 there! Today we are taking a look at the lectionary text for Sunday, November 26th. We're going to be looking at Matthew 25:31-46. It's a little bit long, but I'm going to read it for you anyways. This is from the New Revised Standard Version.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?"

And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?”

Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. [NRSV]

This is the word of the *Lord!* [Shay laughs] Praise be to God! Shay! Give us a queer take on this.

FS: It is not a mistake that in the church that I grew up in, when they talked about salvation, they did not talk about Matthew. They talked about the Gospel of John. [Brian laughs] Right? Because you cannot get from this passage – well, just say a prayer and ask Jesus into your heart, and then you’re good to go. It’s just not here.

B: *A-men.*

FS: It’s not here!

B: That’s not how it works.

FS: It’s not how it works. I mean, we have this really clear passage that says, if you want to be a part of the kingdom of God, get your shit together and start visiting prisoners and feeding hungry people and giving drinks of water and clothing naked people. That’s it. That’s where it is. And I think that, one of the things that is so striking to me is that when I think about where I’ve experienced community like that, a community where people feed the hungry and clothe the naked, I think of the trans and queer community. The trans community in particular, who step up for each other and take care of each other even though many of us have not much extra to spare. I think about the ways that people

have crowd-funded their chest surgery in like five dollar increments from other trans people, or when someone's gotten their chest surgery, they've given away all of their binders to someone who couldn't afford them. The ways that trans folks do clothing swaps, where trans men bring all their girly clothes that have been inflicted upon them, and trans women bring all of the masculine clothes that they had to wear for years, and these communities swap clothes so that people have the clothing that they need. We're literally clothing naked people, and helping them live into their true identities. That, to me, is where the kingdom of God is. That's where the gospel is found. That's how we live out the gospel in our lives, whether we claim to be Christians or not. That's the other part of this passage, right? It's not about even what religion you claim to be. It is all based on actions. If you do these things, you are part of bringing about this kingdom, and if you do not do these things, you're not. If you claim to be a Christian and you don't do those things, you're out. Like... it doesn't matter.

B: [laughs] Yeah, you're not part of the kingdom.

FS: It doesn't matter what you claim to believe, what intellectual things you ascent to. If you're not doing right behavior, you don't get to be a part of it. I think that's really important. And it's important that we sit with that and wrestle with that and acknowledge that, that so many of the people who claim to be Christians, by this passage, are not. And we've got to deal with that. What comes up for you?

B: I know that, for so many queer and trans Christians, this fear that we will suffer eternal punishment for who we are, is like really, really real. I know I get a little annoyed when straight people say, "Well, have you thought about this?" Yeah, of *course* I've thought about every little thing, because I'm actually worried that my eternal soul will literally burn for literally forever. [laughs] So, like, I've thought about it all. In lot of the questions and the messages that we get at Queer Theology, that fear of 'if I do the wrong thing, I'm going to burn in hell forever because I'm trans or because I'm gay or because I had sex and I don't want to do that' – and I think this passage is so important. In here, God is definitely separating folks out, but it's not separating people out on, "Did you have sex before you got married, or not?" or "Are you gay or not?" or "Are you trans or not?" It's like, "Did you welcome the stranger? Did you feed the hungry? Did you clothe the naked?" God isn't sending to people to punishment because they're trans. God is setting aside and casting out the folks who don't welcome trans people, who kick trans folks or queer folks out of their houses, who abuse trans people. And so, the question isn't really, "Can you be trans and a Christian?" The question is really "Can you be a transphobe and a Christian?" The answer in Matthew is... no. Queer and trans people can let go of the need to ask, "Can we

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Can you be anti-LGBTQ and a Christian?

Matthew 25:31-46

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please be let in?” We’re already in. It’s all of the people who are anti-trans and anti-queer who should be worried about what God thinks of them. This passage from Matthew has some pretty harsh words for those folks.

[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