

## 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: Welcome! This week, we're taking a look at the lectionary text for January 21<sup>st</sup>. We're going to look at Mark 1:14-20. It's pretty short, so I'm going to go ahead and read it from the Common English Bible.

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God's good news, saying, "Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!"

As Jesus passed alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him. After going a little farther, he saw James and John, Zebedee's sons, in their boat repairing the fishing nets. At that very moment he called them. They followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers.  
[CEB]

Alright. So what do we do with this?

B: I love this... so much. [both laugh] It's funny because, just last week, I was like [affects voice] "Oh, it's so nice to not be so political and just have some, like, pastoral comfort." And this week I'm like, no. [claps between words] Gimme – that – active – gospel. [Shay laughs] Where it's like, here comes God's kingdom; change your hearts and lives and trust this good news. It's just like, what a punchy opening line to this section here. For me, what I just love is that it's two

things. You're changing your heart and you're changing your life. I think that it can be really tempting for evangelical Christians to focus on, "It's all just sort of about your personal relationship with Jesus, and you just have to, like, accept Jesus into your life." And also, sometimes with liberal Christians, "Oh, my faith is just my personal spirituality." But it can also be tempting sometimes to be all about the work and the social justice and the activism and the policy change, which – all those are important, but I think here we see that it's both together. You have to change your heart and change your life, and in doing so, trust this good news. And the good news isn't like, Jesus is here and now he's going to die and then you get to go to heaven when you die – but, you know, in Luke 4, Jesus announces why he's here and what his ministry is. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." [Luke 4:18-19 CEB, quoting Isaiah 61:1-2] In this passage, when we're called to trust this good news, that's the good news that Jesus is asking us to trust. Good news for the poor and release of the prisoners. And to do that requires you to change your heart, to look and see biases that you might carry, hate that you might carry, scars or harm or hurt, trauma that you might carry, and to work on changing your heart, and allow that to change your life, so that you might be co-creators in this good news. Because, right after this sentence, Jesus calls his disciples and they *literally* leave their professions and their lives and their nets behind them to go *literally* follow him. [both laugh] In Jesus we see, we understand the divine to be incarnate, and to follow Jesus means to participate in an active faith. This little few sentences just sums it all up just so lovely, and it makes me so happy. Aw, yeah. This is the gospel that I'm excited about. What about you, Shay?

FS: I love the Gospel of Mark. It's my favorite of the gospels because it's so – well, first of all, it's the earliest, so I love that. It's the shortest, which is nice sometimes. [both laugh] And we get in Mark this really – it's just about the barebones. There's no superfluous stories. It's like, let's get on with it. The Gospel of Mark is all about action. It's like action to action to action. We don't see any of the birth narratives. Just right out the gate we get into Jesus's ministry and Jesus comes to us as a full-blown prophet, which I appreciate. And I love that the Gospel of Mark starts with this story of John the Baptist getting arrested.

B: Mm. Mhm.

FS: That John's arrest is what tells Jesus that he's ready to step up and take on the mantle and follow in John's footsteps – I think it's interesting to think about Jesus as a disciple, Jesus as a disciple of John. He's a follower of John. When

John gets arrested, Jesus steps up and says, alright! Now it's go-time. And I think it's interesting, too, that John gets arrested and the text says, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God's good news. Here comes God's kingdom; trust this good news. And I'm sure that people were like, "Um, John just got arrested and is probably going to be murdered. Where's the good news in this?" And Jesus is like, "Here it is! It's among us, it's amongst us doing the work. This is the kingdom here." I think that that's really beautiful, and it's a reminder that, even when the world is really really shitty, as it kind of is right now, the good news of God's kingdom is in us doing the work together. It does require a heart change and a life change. Part of what I think that heart change is is that we have to find a way to trust again, to trust one another, to trust the work, to trust God. I think that there's also, we have to find a way to be hopeful again, even in the midst of a world that does not look very hopeful. And that's something that I struggle with. I'm kind of a pessimist by nature, and can easily find, like, the downside of things. This is a challenge to me of like, what is the heart change that I need to be hopeful, to be trusting, to love other people? And not in a happy-go-lucky, cheery, I'm just gonna love everybody no matter what – but the deep love that comes from community and that comes from working together and that comes from being in the struggle together. So I'm kind of sitting with that, of like, where am I finding hope and love, what are the practices that I need to put into place in my life to better find those things.

B: Oh, God, yeah. This heart change has been really resonant with me over the past few months in particular. If you've listened to the podcast before, you've heard me talk about my questions when it comes to the nature of God. And over the past few years, sort of settling on, I don't think that there's this God up in heaven, in the sky, looking down upon us in the way that many of us were taught growing up, right? I sometimes think that the traditional understanding of God just doesn't exist, or at least doesn't exist for me. And then I've been sort of leaning into this social justice Jesus, and being like, well, these are the parts of my faith that really resonate with me and still speak to me. And over the past few months I've just felt this conviction in me that, like, it's not enough to just do the work. That, a, is usually not sustainable and will lead to burnout. And that just social justice and just changing policies is insufficient in transforming the world in a way I feel is necessary and a way I see in the Bible and that resonates with me. When I think about the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven, yes, it's activism and policy change and social justice, but there's also this heart change and this transformation of the world that goes with it. I've been trying to lean back into that sort of more heart-change, hope, love, community – finding that divine in myself and in each other and in the work again, so that it's not just this cold justice work.

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FS: Yeah, and we would love to hear what you feel your queerness and transness is calling you to do and be in the world, and how that interacts with your faith. We're getting ready to launch the queer theology synchroblog for 2018 that's going to go up on February 7<sup>th</sup>. You can go to QueerTheology.com/synchroblog to find out all of the information for that, but that's our prompt for this year's synchroblog. What are you feeling called to do and be in the world, both from your spiritual life, your spiritual impulse, and also from your queerness and transness? How is that impacting your calling in the world? We would love for you to interact with that prompt and share that with us and with the rest of the community.

[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