

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 hello! We are taking a look at the lectionary for February 11th. The lectionary calls for 2nd Corinthians 4:3-6, but we think 1-6 is pretty snazzy, so we're going to do the whole thing. I'm going to go ahead and read it for us. This is from the Common English Bible.

This is why we don't get discouraged, given that we received this ministry in the same way that we received God's mercy. Instead, we reject secrecy and shameful actions. We don't use deception, and we don't tamper with God's word. Instead, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God by the public announcement of the truth. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are on the road to destruction. The god of this age has blinded the minds of those who don't have faith so they couldn't see the light of the gospel that reveals Christ's glory. Christ is the image of God.

We don't preach about ourselves. Instead, we preach about Jesus Christ as Lord, and we describe ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. God said that light should shine out of the darkness. He is the same one who shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
[CEB]

B: *Oh* – my God. [Shay laughs] I wish y'all could see my face. [laughing] I was smiling so big the whole time Shay was reading. Because, like, every sentence –

I could make a podcast about every sentence in this passage. We just did Paul last week. He said some funky stuff. But like, when he gets it, oh goodness, does he get it. So – ooh, I don't even know where to start. First off, I just love that it starts with, 'we received this ministry in the same way that we received God's mercy.' The ministry is wrapped up in God's mercy – God's mercy is at the heart of it all. It's just so easy to get wrapped up in justice as distorted to mean God punishing you, or judgement, or shame. And this passage starts with God's mercy and ends with shining a light in our hearts the glory of Jesus Christ. That's just awesome. And then this whole bit about rejecting secrecy and shameful action, using deception and tampering God's word – I just think about how you have to twist scripture to oppress LGBTQ people, and I just think that the question is not "Can you be queer and Christian?", it's "Can you be queerphobic and Christian?" Because just the length that you have to go to to twist scripture, to twist the message of God and Jesus, to be anti-LGBTQ, is just shameful. We have to start calling that shameful. It's just not right. And you see that so often at Christian colleges and universities, at the denomination level. There's just so much stuff that happens in back-door decisions, press releases are issued that use double-speak. They won't *really* condemn things, or they halfway condemn things, but there's a lot of shameful actions and deception happening in order to hold up a queerphobic Christianity, or white supremacist Christianity, a Christianity that exploits the poor – that's just not at the heart of the gospel.

And also one more thing, and then I'll let you talk, Shay – this passage references the gospel a few times. It's really easy, as modern Christians, to hear the word gospel and translate that into 'Jesus came and died for our sins so we could go to heaven', but that's not what the gospel is as described by Jesus in the gospels. And that's not what the gospel is as proclaimed by the early Christians, and Christians throughout the ages, honestly. I think we need to recognize that yes, for many people in the modern era, the gospel just means say a prayer, get out of jail free. But when we see 'gospel' in the text, they're referring to the good news, and Jesus in his ministry laid out what that good news was for us. We need to remember that. And I'll include a link to a few different places that we've talked about the gospel of Jesus Christ in the show notes. [see end of transcript] What about you, Shay?

FS: I'm really struck by verse 3 – 'and even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are on the road to destruction.' I think that growing up, I would have interpreted that as, people don't really believe that Jesus is the son of God and the Messiah because they're going to hell.

B: Yep.

FS: I think about what you were just talking about, this idea that the gospel is about the kingdom of God being here and now. It's about the least of these being centered, and marginalized bodies being centered, and everyone having enough. And I think about all of the people who proclaim a gospel in the United States that is heresy, that is supporting the rapist that is currently in office, that is supporting racism and white supremacy, that is supporting islamophobia and xenophobia and all of these really horrific things – calling that the gospel. And I think about how the gospel is veiled to those people, and they are on the road to destruction.

B: [excitedly] Yeah!

FS: In a literal sense, this isn't about condemning people to hell or saying that they're not quote-unquote real Christians to discount them, this is about saying, you are choosing to move towards destruction because you cannot look outside of yourselves, because you are chasing wealth, because you are chasing power, because you are chasing white supremacy. That is not the gospel.

B: Yes!

FS: You cannot see the light of the gospel that is revealed in Christ because you are preaching about yourselves, because you are choosing to chase things that are leading to destruction. If I could preach one thing, it's that. I think that this passage is, like you said, a counter to that. "We reject secrecy and shameful actions, we reject deception." I mean, come on. Like, let's talk about deception in the church and who's using it! "We commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God by the public announcement of the truth." We're not defending white supremacy and racism and sexual assault in our churches, because that isn't the gospel. People who are doing that in their churches are not preaching the gospel of Christ and are not following Christ. There is a simple line to be drawn in the sand, and that's it! [laughs] This isn't about judging someone's faith. It's about, simply saying, Christ has set out these things about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. If you are not doing those things, you are literally not following Jesus. That's pretty simple to understand. And so, I find a lot of comfort in this passage, and I love this first line, "This is why we don't get discouraged, given that we received this ministry in the same way that we received God's mercy." I think it's really simple to say, this is the calling that we've received, this is the gospel that we've received, and we're right. And it's okay to stand in the truth of that rightness, and to take comfort from that.

February 11, 2018

LGBTQ Christians reflect the glory of Jesus Christ
2 Corinthians 4:1-6

4/5

B: Oh, A-men. I want to close this podcast with the last verse of this passage, which is: “God said that light should shine out of the darkness. He is the same one who shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” And I want to leave us with, LGBTQ Christians are shining bright all over the world. Through our light, we reflect the glory and the face of Jesus Christ. Folks can know of God’s good news through us. And I’m so excited that tomorrow, February 7th, is when this year’s synchroblog is. It’s all about queer calling this year. And I’m so excited to see all the ways in which LGBTQ Christians from around the world are moving through their queerness and through their faith to do and be amazing, prophetic things in the world. I just can’t wait to read all about the ways in which our queerness and transness is calling us to act in the world. If you are listening to this, either it’s happening tomorrow or it’s happening today or it just recently happened. Go to queertheology.com/synchroblog to get all the details and read all the submissions. It’s going to be a great year, I think.

[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

Referenced links:

- [This is God's good news](#)
- [This is my good news...](#)
- [Change your heart & your life](#)
- [Building a Bible-based faith that isn't terrible](#)
- [Why “Have you accepted Jesus?” is the wrong question](#)

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