

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. Hey there! We are taking a look at the lectionary text for Sunday, February 18th today. We're going to be looking at Mark 1:9-15. I'm going to read right now from the Common English Bible.

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. And there was a voice from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness."

At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him.

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!" [CEB]

Okay, Shay. What does this passage stir up for you?

FS: It's just such a weird lil passage. [Brian laughs] And I love it, too, because it's how Mark decides to start his gospel, right? This is kind of right out at the beginning. We talked a couple weeks ago about the latter part of this passage, of Jesus's message and how it was John's arrest that kind of catapulted him into his public ministry, but I love that, as Jesus is beginning to start his ministry, he chooses to be baptized, and he has this kind of miraculous experience during his baptism. It doesn't say, in this passage in particular, that anyone else saw

heaven splitting open – it’s really clear that Jesus had this kind of supernatural moment with God, and saw heaven splitting open, and saw the spirit come down on him, and had this voice from heaven saying, “You are my son, whom I dearly love.” I love that we kind of get this sense that Jesus is being confirmed in his ministry. He’s feeling like he’s on the right path, that he’s doing the right thing, and God is kind of smiling down on him as he embarks on this journey. And then the very next thing is that that same spirit forces Jesus out into the wilderness! [laughing] He’s out there for forty days, hungry and tempted by Satan. I think that like, among the wild animals and angels taking care of him aside, I think that’s often the case for us. When we have this moment where we’re really confirmed in our path, we’re convinced of our rightness, and then shit hits the fan, and everything goes to hell. [both laugh] So, like, I love that Jesus’s ministry starts with a story like that, because I can really empathize with it. I mean, I’ve had those experiences of like, yes! This is what I’m supposed to be doing! And then everything gets really hard, and you start to wonder, oh, maybe I’m wrong. Maybe I shouldn’t have come out. Maybe I shouldn’t be in ministry. Maybe – whatever. But then we also see that Jesus still follows this path. He stays true to the course, and then after John’s arrested and the stakes are even higher, he comes into Galilee announcing this good news and this arrival of the kingdom of God. I think that that’s really a remarkable story. It’s amazing that, in like eight verses, we get this kind of *journey* of what it means to follow God. I think that’s really powerful. What about you?

B: There’s a lot there. You touched upon this, that as queer people, often, once we figure out who we are, we are *also* forced out into the wilderness – forced out of churches, out of families, out of leadership positions, out of ministries, sometimes out of social groups. Knowing your truth and knowing your relationship with God is not always affirmed by the people around you. Sometimes it seems like it’s going to be harder that way. And it *is* hard – but that’s where God is, and that’s what God leads us to, to be our true selves and to be in right relation with God. Also what sticks out to me in this passage is that it’s sort of bookended with John the Baptizer. It starts with, as you said, Jesus being baptized in the Jordan. I think that is so important. It’s really easy to think of Jesus as this sort of miraculous, flash in the pan, standalone occurrence. But we read in the gospels that Jesus is part of a tradition and a movement that predates him. He is joining in. And obviously [laughs] he is the most well-known person in that movement, but he comes to John and is baptized into that movement by John. And then he has to go out and find himself. In this passage, it doesn’t go into what those temptations are, but in other parts of scripture we hear more about those temptations. Jesus has to really wrestle with who he is and his place in the world and what it means to follow God – and what his values will be, what

his movement will prioritize, what he *won't* do. And then John gets arrested. The stakes are higher than ever, and it's now up to him to take on the mantle of the movement. I see that in parallel to the queer experience. You figure out that you're queer, and [laughs] that's just sort of the starting point. At first it seems like, "Oh, I've reached the end!" [laughs] but in many ways, figuring out that you're queer and being ready to come out is the start of the journey. And you have to figure out, what type of queer person will you be? How does your queerness and your faith interact? How do you develop a sexual ethic that fits? We'll put a link to some resources about that in the shownotes to this. [continues] ...Where your values are, and how you'll act and be in the world. Speaking of which, we recently did a webinar on what our queerness calls us to do and be in the world, and we recently hosted our annual synchroblog all about this 'what sort of queer person are we going to be.' So I'll put links to that below. Because, like, then the work begins. Once you know who you are and know what your values are, then it's time to do the work.

[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

Related links:

- We talked about the last 2 verses a few weeks ago: [Change your heart & your life - Mark 1:14-15](#)
- [After John Went to Jail](#)
- [Coming out](#) can sometimes feel like the "end" of a journey, but it's often just the beginning
- [Creating a sexual ethic after coming out](#)
- [The nuts and bolts of creating a sexual ethic](#)
- [Synchroblog 2018](#): what are we called to do and be in the world?