

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 and welcome back! This week we are taking a break from the lectionary again, but this is for April 15th. We are going to talk about, kind of wrap up our politics of Jesus theme and announce our new theme, so we're really excited about that. So, Brian, as we wrap up the politics of Jesus, what has come up for you this month, if anything? What do you want to leave folks with? What are you thinking about?

B: Oh, I just loved this month. The politics of Jesus is sort of where my faith comes alive. There's that passage, 'when I was a child, I felt like a child.' And I just feel like, now that I'm grown, I can see the gospel beyond children's stories and really appreciate it for the fullness and richness and the embodiedness of it and the aliveness of it. I don't think that the politics takes away from the spiritual, but I think they enhance one another. I'm just like, super jazzed that we got to really dig into it this month. And I'm excited about the webinar that's coming up tonight! If you're listening to this the day the podcast comes out [April 10], we're having a webinar about atonement to sort of wrap up our politics of Jesus theme. You can register at QueerTheology.com/atonementwebinar. What about you, Shay? Any closing thoughts for this theme?

FS: I just need to tell you, if you haven't registered for the webinar, you have to. I got a sneak preview – the Reverend Adam Rao, who's our special guest for the webinar tonight – he's a friend of mine, and he came and gave a pub theology on atonement with the church that I work at. And, oh boy, it is incredible stuff. It's eye-opening and mind-blowing and also, like, I don't want to give spoilers, but... it like so ties together our theme and makes me so excited about what the gospel means and how it applies to our lives today and what it means for us as people, and how to live out our faith in the world. I'm super excited about it. It made me excited about my faith in new ways. Every time that I think that I've learned all that I can learn and [both laugh] there's nothing else that I can learn, something

like that happens, and I'm like, oh, man. There's just so much good stuff here! And so I'm so excited to present that with you all. And I think it's leaving me thinking about, okay, if I believe all of this stuff about what the message of Jesus was, then how do I live that out in my life? So that's why I'm super excited. As we wrap up the politics of Jesus, we're announcing our new theme for the rest of April and all of May. We're going to be talking about activism. It just dove-tails so nicely with what we've just been talking about, kind of on this theoretical and theological level, and now we'll talk about, okay, so what does that mean in our lives?

B: I came out as queer in between my freshman and sophomore years of college. I pretty much took a break from organized religion for most of college. I would go to church every now and then, or I would go to Campus Crusade for Christ every now and then, but was really sort of figuring out what it means to be a queer person and what I felt and what my values were. And sort of letting go and unlearning a lot of the shame and sex negativity that I had encountered. I joined up with this organization called the Soul Force. They did this thing called the Equality Ride, which visits conservative Christian colleges and universities to talk about the intersections of faith and gender and sexuality and justice. And on that trip I was like, *oh my God!* I've been a Christian my whole life, and I thought I knew the gospel forwards and backwards, but it was in activism that I encountered the divine in a more real way than I ever had before, and found a faith that was actually alive and present and founded in relationships and community. It reminds me of one of the things we talked about this past month, with the politics Jesus – Jesus's call to 'follow me'. Faith-based activism was one of the ways in which I followed Jesus, and in doing that, was sort of like, oh, yeah! [laughs] The gospel is here in the doing, not just in the learning and the believing and the talking. So I'm really excited to explore all the ways that we can put our faith into practice through faithful activism. What about you, Shay?

FS: I love that, that our faith is in the doing. Because I think, for me, I'm someone who's really intellectual. I love to learn. But I think that the praxis, the practice of doing stuff, is where I learn even more, or where my learning gets integrated into my body and into my life. So I think it's really vital that we figure out ways to take what we learned intellectually and put it into practice. And then I also think it's really important that we realize that activism looks different for each of us, depending on our gifts and our personality types and the way we live and move in the world. So I'm excited to explore different ways to do activism that, like, stretch us but that are also in line with our giftings and our callings. I know for me, I went on this missions trip when I was a high schooler and I remember on that trip that the idea from the leaders was like, there's only one way to do faith properly. And there's only one way to do ministry work properly – and it means

being super extroverted, and outgoing, and loud and out there all the time. And [laughs] I remember feeling like such a failure that summer, because I could never seem to keep up with everyone else. I realized, though it took me years to realize, and to really unpack, the reason I felt like a failure is because they were doing something that was totally not in line with who I am as a person. Not just theologically, but like, personality type. And I had to realize that it's okay that I'm not an extrovert and there are still ways that I can do activism work, even without being an extrovert. That took me a really long time to learn, but has been so healing and so important in my own journey. I'm super excited to dig into that and to figure out what that looks like with our community.

B: Yeah, I would love to hear from you out there listening, if you have any experiences with activism or ways in which putting your faith into practice has helped you understand the divine more fully. Shoot us an email at connect@queertheology.com. That can be written out, or if you want to record a little voice memo for us so we can hear your voice, say hi, we would just love to hear from you what your experiences have been. And if you have any questions or concerns you want to make sure we dive into over the course of the next six or so weeks, you can email us there as well. I'm just really excited to get some juicy ideas going about how we can put our faith into practice.

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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