

## 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. Hello hello hello! Today we're taking a look at the lectionary reading for Sunday, July 8<sup>th</sup>. We're going to be looking at Mark 6:1-13 today, and I will read it to you now from the Common English Bible.

Jesus left that place and came to his hometown. His disciples followed him. On the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were surprised. "Where did this man get all this? What's this wisdom he's been given? What about the powerful acts accomplished through him? 3 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't he Mary's son and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" They were repulsed by him and fell into sin.

Jesus said to them, "Prophets are honored everywhere except in their own hometowns, among their relatives, and in their own households." He was unable to do any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. He was appalled by their disbelief.

Then Jesus traveled through the surrounding villages teaching.

He called for the Twelve and sent them out in pairs. He gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a walking stick—no bread, no bags, and no money in their belts. He told them to wear sandals but not to put on two shirts. He said, "Whatever house you enter, remain

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there until you leave that place. If a place doesn't welcome you or listen to you, as you leave, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them." So they went out and proclaimed that people should change their hearts and lives. They cast out many demons, and they anointed many sick people with olive oil and healed them. [CEB]

Okay, Shay, what does this bring up for you, and especially, what do you think it has to say about LGBTQ folks?

FS: Yeah. I – man, I love this. I'm really fascinated by this first section, verses one through six, where he's in his hometown and people are, like, come on now. We know this guy. He's full of it. I love this idea that, like, he was actually *unable* to do miracles there, not because he lacked the power, but because people didn't believe him. I think about how often I've been in situations where I'm well known by people, whether it's like, the church that I grew up in, or a community of people who have known me for years. There's this sense of, if you try to do anything good, who do you think you are? Like, we know who you are, we know who your parents are, why are you trying to pretend like you have something to say to our community? And how often the work that could be done doesn't get done because of, kind of the lack of willingness of the community to chip in and do the work.

And I think of how often that happens in our churches, too. This sense that something could happen, something new could be born, something could be redeemed out of a dying congregation, but people won't be a part of that change because they either don't believe that it can happen, or they don't believe in the person who is giving advice. And I love the juxtaposition of like, Jesus does this thing in his hometown, and then he leaves, and he gives his disciples this instruction of like, now it's your turn to go out and do amazing things, but if people don't welcome you, just keep it moving. Don't waste your time and your energy on people who don't want to be a part of what it is that you're preaching. I think that this is really good advice. [laughs] Right? Like I was saying about last week's passage, it's one of those moments where it's really both disheartening [laughing] that we're dealing with the same issues, and it's also kind of nice, that like, oh! I recognize this situation and I'm being told what to do about it, and what to do about it is keep it moving and go to the people who want to be a part of it.

I think that there's so often – right now, there's all of these conversations about like, how do I win over people who don't agree with LGBTQ issues? How do I

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convince my fundamentalist family that my life is okay? How do I get my church to move? And I think that we spend sometimes so much energy on people who are really far to the right, that we miss out on the people who maybe are receptive to the message. That if we spend less time trying to convince the yahoo Franklin Graham on the right, that we could *maybe* push the needle far enough to make actual change happen by putting our energy into places where people *want* to hear the message and *want* to be a part of the good work.

So, I don't know. That's a lot but that's what's coming up for me.

B: Yeah, you know, when I've looked at this passage in the past, I think I focused more in on the part where Jesus is like, "If people don't listen to you or don't respect you, just shake it off." And from my perspective, I focus moreso on, you gotta do what you need to do to take care of *yourself* and if people aren't listening to you, don't respect you, then it's not worth it. Just leave, to take care of yourself. And also sort of what you were saying, about if instead of wasting our time, or spending all of our time and energy, trying to convince [laughing] – what did you say? – the yahoo Franklin Grahams of the world, if we spend less time trying to move people who are digging their feet in and don't want to be move, and more energy working with communities who are eager to learn, who want to learn, who want to do better, and focus on creating art and lives and thriving ourselves – that's sort of a good on the big picture level, greatest good for greatest number of people.

But I think what I'm seeing today, what's sticking up to me today – and a little bit of what you said made me think of this – is that, you staying and fighting and pitching a fit and being committed to that community or that church or your family, doesn't even necessarily serve them, right? It says, "prophets are honored everywhere except in their own hometowns, among their relatives and in their households." You know, there's this sort of truism or this thought that we need to stay and change the community, stay and change our church, stay and change our family from within because we're best suited to do that, is sort of the idea. That people who come from that community, who grew up in that church, are best suited to make a change. And if I leave, then who will change this community?

Sometimes, the people in your community at your church or even in your family are just never going to listen to you because you're from there. You being from there, we sometimes hear that that is sort of a benefit to the movement. But I think I see sometimes that it's not – that you being from there actually makes it harder, and that sometimes what folks need is for an outsider to come in and

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shake things up. So I think it doesn't serve anyone – it doesn't serve you, it doesn't serve the community, to stay in a place and try and do work that isn't welcome and isn't honored.

And not to say work is always easy [laughs] – that, you know, if the red carpet isn't rolled out, go away. But I think it's important for us to take a real, hard, honest look at ourselves and the work that we're doing and the folks that we're trying to impact. And if they're just closed, it's okay to dust your feet and move on. You will better serve another community, your time will be better spent serving another community in another place, and your community might be better served by not having you there and by listening to a new voice that comes in.

We've talked about this passage in the past, and so I'll link to that in the show notes to get another perspective. And also, before we close, I quickly wanted to sort of call out that, towards the end of this passage, it says, "So they went out and proclaimed that people should change their hearts and lives." That reminds me of another passage that we've looked at, awhile ago, on the podcast, where John the Baptist was the one proclaiming that people should change their hearts and lives. So this is like a fun little rhetorical reminder that the disciples are being sent out by Jesus, and Jesus has situated himself in this ministry of John the Baptist.

Christians today are a part of that same legacy. It spans time. We don't invent new things. So, you know, as Christians, it's important for me to remember that – and also as a queer person, it's important for me to remember that the queer movement dates to before me and will continue after me. So as both a queer person and a Christian I am situated in a movement and I need to sort of pay honor to that legacy and be a good steward of it, and to do my part to keep things moving forward. I will also put a link in the shownotes to the passage about John the Baptist. That is all for now. Bye!

[outro music]

B: The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at [QueerTheology.com](http://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](http://QueerTheology.com). You can also connect with us online on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

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Transcript by Taylor Walker

## **Referenced links**

Mark 1 episode of the pod: <https://www.queertheology.com/mark-1-14-20/>

Mark 6 episode of the pod: <https://www.queertheology.com/mark-6-1-13/>