

PODCAST START:

[intro music]

Brian G. Murphy: Welcome to the Queer Theology podcast,

Fr. Shay Kearns: Where each episode we take a queer look at the week's lectionary readings. We're the co-founders of QueerTheology.com and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns ...

Brian G. Murphy: And I'm Brian G. Murphy.

Hello, hello, hello. Today we are taking a look at the lectionary text for Sunday, February 3rd. We're going to be looking at Luke 4:21-30. I will read it to you now from the Common English Bible. Before I do that, just to give some context. This passage picks up sort of right after where the passage we looked at last week on the podcast left off. Jesus has just sort of come back to his hometown and read from the Torah that passage from Isaiah, sort of, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim, release the prisoners ..." All that jazz. I'll put a link to last week's podcast in the show notes for this one. So, here goes, Luke 4:21-30 from the Common English Bible.

He began to explain to them today this scripture has benefits filled just as you heard it. Everyone was raving about Jesus. So impressed were they by the gracious words flowing from his lips. They said "This is Joseph's son isn't it?" Then Jesus said to them "Undoubtedly you will quote this saying to me 'Doctor, heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we've heard you did in Capernaum.'" He said "I assure you that no prophet is welcome in the prophets' hometown." I can assure you that there were many widows in Israel during Elijah's time, when it didn't rain for three and a half years, and there was a great food shortage in the land. Yet, Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to a widow, in the city of Zarephath, in the region of Sidon. There was also many persons with skin diseases in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha. But,

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none of them were cleansed. Instead, Naaman the Syrian was cleansed.

When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was filled with rage. They rose up, and ran him out of town. They led him to the crest of the hill on which their town had been built, so they could throw him off the cliff. But, he passed through the crowd and went on his way.

Okay. Shay, what resonates with you in this passage? And how is it a little bit queer?

Fr. Shay Kearns: I love this passage. First of all, it's just so ridiculous, right?

Brian G. Murphy: Right.

Fr. Shay Kearns: Like Jesus says this stuff, and the people try to throw him off of a cliff, which, y'know, Facebook comments are not the same thing as people trying to throw you off a cliff, but it does feel like when you speak the truth that people don't want to hear, that their immediate response is anger and rage.

Brian G. Murphy: We're definitely familiar with that.

Fr. Shay Kearns: Yeah. I'm also really struck by the context of this passage. Jesus has been away from his hometown. He's an adult now. He has started to gather followers. He's been doing some miracles. He's been traveling, and preaching, and teaching. He comes back to his hometown as a grownup. Declares the start of his ministry, and people are like "This is Joseph's kid. Who the hell does he think he is? He's going to be a big shot? What the hell?"

I think that I know that for me, I remember going off to my fundamentalist Christian evangelical college. And starting to think for myself, as hard as that was in that kind of oppressive atmosphere. Coming to new understandings of myself both as a person, but also as a thinker, and a follower of Jesus. And that work continued on past college, of growing into adulthood. But, after college, I had to move back home. Even going back home from college on breaks, I remember this sense of everyone back home sees me as the same little kid I was

when I left. But, I've had this transformative experience, and I know more now. I really felt like you can't go home again. These new things that I wanted to share with people were not being ... not even, not heard, but were being actively oppressed, and put down.

I think lots of us, who are queer folks have that experience, queer and trans folks. We'll be like ... go back home, and we try to express the new love we've found, the new relationship with our bodies, our new understandings of the world, and gender, and people from our hometowns are like, "Who the hell do you think you are? You don't get to come back here and tell us that the way that we're living is wrong." I know that sometimes, especially as younger folks we come back with arrogance. It's unintentional, arrogance. Right?

Brian G. Murphy: Yeah.

Fr. Shay Kearns: We're just trying to share this thing that we're excited about. And it comes off as big city learning, or whatever. I grew up in a rural area so that's what it came off as to my family. I take comfort in this passage. It happened to Jesus too. Like he says "A prophet doesn't have honor in their own hometown." That doesn't mean that you've stopped being a prophet. It just means that maybe you need to leave your hometown. Maybe it means you need to leave that conservative, Evangelical church you grew up in, because if they're going to beat you down, and they're going to take away the faith and the joy that you found, and you need to go somewhere else, where your message is going to be received, and where it's going to be heard.

Let someone else be the prophet to your conservative church. It doesn't have to be you. I think that was a huge thing that I had to learn, and that really saved my life. Had I tried to stay in that church, I probably would have lost my faith completely. And frankly, would have been super depressed and not okay. This passage brings up lots of stuff for me. And that's kind of some of it in a nutshell. What about you?

Brian G. Murphy: Yeah. I think that there's this really important line that we have to walk between when we follow the way of Jesus, people are going to want to throw us off a cliff, right? And also, not seeking out persecution for the sake of being persecuted to make us feel more holy, or more righteous, or as like "I'm so persecuted.", and that is an indicator of my faithfulness, or my woke-ness, or my progressiveness, or whatever it is, my holiness. Like you were saying, Jesus passed through the crowd, and he went on His way. He left. He didn't stay and let them continue to beat up on him, and actually throw him off the cliff, or try, and throw him off a cliff. At some point you have to be "Okay, I'm going to move on, and try something new."

We talked about in previous episodes of the podcast recently scripture, and metaphor, and different things meaning different things, at different times. This one passage isn't the whole of the Bible. Sometimes, we can see in the Bible that following the way of God, leads to persecution. But, we also see elsewhere in the Bible that even with Jesus, that I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full ... The Lord is my Shepherd. Laying down in green pastures. God also wants us to be happy, and healthy, and fulfilled. That doesn't mean we have to constantly going around seeking out persecution for the sake of our faith.

But, sometimes leading a faithful life will lead to persecution. Then how do you respond to that? Is the question of the day, I guess.

Fr. Shay Kearns: One of the things that I've really loved about being a part of Sanctuary Collective and being able to facilitate that space is that it's a space for people who are navigating this kind of stuff all the time, from folks that are trying to deal with going back home on college breaks, to people that are struggling to bring all of themselves to their church, or their job, or trying to figure out how to have conversations with their families. I love being able to be with people, and walk with people as they wrestle through this stuff, and to watch the community come alongside them, and offer support and advice and resources.

February 3, 2019

How to be a more effective prophet

5/5

Luke 4:21-30

If you're interested in learning more about that, and being part of that community, and getting some support, as you navigate some of these things, you can go to QueerTheology.com/community. Find out more about Sanctuary Collective, and see if it might be a good fit for you. We would love to have you in the community, and to be a support for you, as you navigate doing life like this.

[Outro music]

Brian G. Murphy: 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.

Fr. Shay Kearns: 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.

Brian G. Murphy: We'll see you next week.

PODCAST END

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