

September 1, 2019

What It Means to Honor Marriage (and other important lessons) Hebrews 13:1-8

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PODCAST START:

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 co-founders 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 to the Queer Theology podcast this week we're taking a look at the text for Sunday, September 1st. We're gonna look at Hebrews 13:1-8, and I'm gonna read it for us now.

Keep loving each other like family. Don't neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this, some have been hosts to angels without knowing it. Remember prisoners as if you were in prison with them, and people who are mistreated as if you were in their place. Marriage must be honored in every respect, with no cheating on the relationship, because God will judge the sexually immoral person and the person who commits adultery. Your way of life should be free from the love of money, and you should be content with what you have. After all, he has said, I will never leave you or abandon you. This is why we can confidently say,

The Lord is my helper,
and I won't be afraid.
What can people do to me?

Remember your leaders who spoke God's word to you. Imitate their faith as you consider the way their lives turned out. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

So let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise through him, which is the fruit from our lips that confess his name. Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.

B: Oh man!

FS: There's a lot in here!

B: Yeah. We're reading this passage and I'm like, yeah, love each other like family, this is going to be great, we're gonna talk about queer chosen family, open up your homes to guests, yes! Remember prisoners, the mistreated, and then I can almost hear in my head this record scratch, eerrr eerrr talking about marriage and I realize in myself that despite being a Christian my whole life and openly queer for over a decade --- oh my God, 15 years at this point — closer to 2 decades than 1 — and I've been open and polyamorous for eight-plus years. I'm finding that sometimes my instinct is to clench up a little bit whenever marriage or relationship are talked

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about in the Bible because I don't always trust it. And then I realize, oh wait! Marriage must be honored in every respect like no cheating on the relationship. I was like, oh yeah! I actually do take relationships and commitment in a relationship very, very seriously. I think sometimes even more serious than people who are monogamously married. And there is no cheating in my relationship, and I don't know, I can't say for certain whether or not, the author of this passage intended to be endorsing queer-polyamorous relationships to millennia in the future. But I do know that if you look at the spirit of this, that actually queer & polyamorous relationships fit right into this and are not so antithetical to it as folks might assume on first brush. So that was the first thing that jumped out at me, what about you Shay?

FS: Yes, there are two things for me, kind of going off what you just said. I think part of this too, is understanding the historical context about what these writers were trying to do and who they were trying to protect, right? In a setting where women were able to be practically discarded, to say that you had to respect your marriage relationship and that you shouldn't commit adultery was really protecting someone who was marginalized and oppressed in that community. I look at so many heterosexual and even heterosexual-Christian relationships today, and I think, well jeez, you're still not respecting women and you're still oppressing and marginalizing people who are vulnerable. So that kind of comes up for me in reading about this passage. And the other thing is that I've heard a lot about sexual immorality and adultery in the Christian communities. I have not heard very much about prisons and prisoners, and respecting those who are mistreated and opening your homes to guests, and you know...

B: Not loving money.

FS: Not loving money!!! So it's like, again this idea that gay and queer Christians are the ones that "cherry picks" scripture is just not true. I think evangelical Christians do it all the time. I think that often they read this passage, even when they are talking about prisoners, they are talking about prisoners so they can convert them, not so they can actually be in solidarity with them, and treat them well in prison. So I think that this passage still really speaks today, and I think often queer and trans-folks are the folks that are the ones who are opening their homes to guests, and paying attention to people in prison, and paying attention to the oppressed and marginalized, and probably be more responsible and faithful in their relationships than even a lot of heterosexual Christians. I don't see this passage as an indictment against my own queerness and transness. But it is a good reminder of where the places I could still be doing more.

B: Yeah. And you know, I think that when I was first figuring out my queerness and how that fits into my faith. I felt like progressive Christianity or queer Christianity was this modified version of the real Christianity which I had grown up with. And it's important for me to remember when you were saying all this stuff about not honoring this, and this, and that, queer Christians and progressive Christians have just as much of a claim, if not more of a claim to the Christian tradition than conservatives, evangelicals, prosperity gospel, anti-gay Christians, right? It's not like they are the real ones and we are the modification of it. We are both laying claim to this and I always love going back to Matthew 7, "Judge the tree by its fruit." We're both saying that we're Christians and we can't say that we're the real ones and they are not the real Christians. We're all making Christian theological claims, but "judge the tree by its fruit", and what fruit are our

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faith bearing. I just look at my life and the lives of other queer Christians that I know. There's some tasty, tasty fruit there and I'm so excited to be part of this movement with all ya'll.

We talked about the historical context and Shay was talking about you have to understand that this was intended to honor women, and all that. So we are in the midst of registration for a [How to Read the Bible course](#), we also recently did a Christianity and Polyamory course, and we are gonna be doing one about sex coming up. If any of the stuff that we've talked about in this podcast episode is resonating with you, you can learn more about the various courses and groups that we're putting together at queertheology.com/courses. And add your name to the list of any ones that catch your eye that you might be interested. Again that's queertheology.com/courses and we would love to dive even deeper into these topics if we have time for in this short podcast episodes. That is all for now and we will see you next week.

[outro music plays]

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, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

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