

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.

B: Hello, hello, hello! Today is Sunday, September 29, 2019. We are going to be doing something a little bit different this week. We're gonna be actually reading three different passages: 2 from Psalms and 1 from Amos. As we were looking over the text over this week, we found that they just went really nicely together. Sort of came at same idea from a few different angles. We wanted to talk about them all. So we are going to do a little popcorn back and forth. I will read to you right now, Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16.

Living in the Most High's shelter,
camping in the Almighty's shade,
I say to the Lord, "You are my refuge, my stronghold!
You are my God—the one I trust!"

God will save you from the hunter's trap
and from deadly sickness.
God will protect you with his pinions;
you'll find refuge under his wings.
His faithfulness is a protective shield.
Don't be afraid of terrors at night,
arrows that fly in daylight,
or sickness that prowls in the dark,
destruction that ravages at noontime.
God says, "Because you are devoted to me,
I'll rescue you.
I'll protect you because you know my name.
Whenever you cry out to me, I'll answer.
I'll be with you in troubling times.
I'll save you and glorify you.
I'll fill you full with old age.
I'll show you my salvation."

FS: And I'm going to read for us Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Doom to those resting comfortably in Zion
and those trusting in Mount Samaria,
the chiefs of the nations,
to whom the house of Israel comes!

Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16; Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146

who lie on beds of ivory,
stretch out on their couches,
eat lambs from the flock,
and bull calves from the stall;
who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp,
and, like David, compose tunes on musical instruments;
who drink bowls of wine,
put the best of oils on themselves,
but who aren't grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
Therefore, they will now be the first to be taken away,
and the feast of those who lounged at the table will pass away.

B: And this is Psalm 146

Praise the Lord!

Let my whole being praise the Lord!
I will praise the Lord with all my life;
I will sing praises to my God as long as I live.

Don't trust leaders;
don't trust any human beings—
there's no saving help with them!
Their breath leaves them,
then they go back to the ground.
On that very same day, their plans die too.

The person whose help is the God of Jacob—
the person whose hope rests on the Lord their God—
is truly happy!

God: the maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
God: who is faithful forever,
who gives justice to people who are oppressed,
who gives bread to people who are starving!

The Lord: who frees prisoners.
The Lord: who makes the blind see.
The Lord: who straightens up those who are bent low.
The Lord: who loves the righteous.

The Lord: who protects immigrants,
who helps orphans and widows,
but who makes the way of the wicked twist and turn!

The Lord will rule forever!
Zion, your God will rule from one generation to the next!

Praise the Lord!

This is the word of the Lord! Amen!

FS: Yeah! I'm so struck by, I mean, you have this passage, freeing prisoners, protecting immigrants, helping orphans and widows, and this idea that Bible isn't political. It's just blown out of the water, right? We see this over and over again. That you can't say that the Bible doesn't talk about politics. All three of these passages are about kings, and people with political power, and people with a lot of money, and who God is on the side of, and God is clearly on the side of the people who are most oppressed and marginalized. And so, we have this beautiful reminder of that in all three of these passages.

B: Yeah, so a few weeks ago, we posted a graphic on Instagram that said: "The gospel is good news." The caption talked about how the Bible has often been used against us, but that we see in it, from Genesis to Revelation, a good news. That God is with us and for us. And someone commented, and this isn't the first time we've gotten a comment like this, that there's just so much bad stuff in the Bible and it's been used against us so much. How can you say that it's good news? It's passages like these right? It's important to remember that these are three passages, we haven't even looked at Luke 4 or Isaiah. There's other parts of Amos and all of Exodus, right? The entirety of the gospels that, you know, it's not these isolated, there's not like one verse, right? I think there are six verses that people point to and say that homosexuality is a sin and there's one or two about trans folks that people sometimes try and twist and point to. I think that those are really stretches, we don't spend a lot of time talking about the clobber passages because, a) it's been written about *ad infinitum* for decades, and that we get stuck in those cycles of missing what the Bible has to say about us. If you want to take a look about those clobber passages in particular, we have some resources at queertheology.com/apologetics. But I think it can be tempting to say that these political passages are the exemptions. No! The political passages are sort of the heart of the Bible. What I love about this is that God is our shade, our refuge, our stronghold. God is our shield, God will protect us from terror at night. It's not queer people who should be scared about God. God is on our side and it's not just everyday folks that are like, maybe I didn't say the prayer the right way and God hates me, and then I'll go to hell. No! God is on our side. It's people that are sort of, puffing themselves up, profiting off of the masses while the rest of us are suffering. It's people who are, you know, camps at the border, it's people who are supporting ex-gay ministries, I'm looking at you Bethel. So, God is very clearly on our side both on a personal level and on a political level.

FS: And this is another of those times where I think it's really important to understand that pretty much the entire context of the Bible is, it was written by people who are in oppressed communities. It was written by them for their communities. Trying to make sense of the bad things that were happening. Trying to encourage and lift up those communities. I think it's really dangerous when the Bible becomes a tool for those empowered to further oppressed people because that was never who it was written for, that was never how it was intended to be used. It's really important that those of us from the marginalized and oppressed communities, remember that we are the intended audience for these passages of hope and comfort. That they were written to people like us in another time. Obviously, also then be willing to confront the

Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16; Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146

places in our own lives where we are people in power who are oppressing others, right? That's a both/and. But you know, like you said, it's not queer and trans folks that should be afraid of the judgement of God. It's the people that are oppressing queer and trans folks and making laws to take our rights away and to make us unsafe. The people that are hateful towards us all the time.

B: Yeah, so we are exactly halfway through this journey into the Bible course on How to Read the Bible that you are leading. It's been really exciting to dive into the Bible with these group of students. We're looking at stuff just like this. In this course, we talk a lot on this podcast about the political context and looking at it in its time and we get these sort of glimpses of it... We're doing a different verse every week and our episodes are relatively short. It's been exciting to dive deeper into what is that context specifically, and who specifically was it for, and what was happening, and what else is going on there. I have done a lot of studying, I study religion in college, and have been doing faith-based activism for the past 10 years, and studying under pastors and theologians, and even I am learning new stuff in this course. That's been really exciting. Obviously, it's in session but it will be coming back probably next year. We're also going to be doing one that looks specifically at queering the Bible. So if you're interested in learning more about that, getting on the waitlist, finding out when it comes back. You can go to queertheology.com/biblecourse. We will keep you posted on when we're doing this bad boy again, it's been so much fun and such a blessing to go through this with you Shay, leading it and with all the folks inside the Sanctuary Collective.

[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, Tumbler, Twitter, and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

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