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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: Welcome back to the Queer Theology podcast. It is Sunday, October 20th. We are gonna take a look at Luke 18:1-8 this is episode 299, we are so close in our countdown to episode 300. We've got some really special announcements and stuff planned for next week. So make sure that you stay tuned for that until then, we are super stoked to be at episode 299. I can not believe how long we've been recording this podcast.

B: What a journey!

FS: We were looking at the text for today, and I was like, "I am pretty sure we have done all of these at least three times". And it was close to that! But today we are actually gonna do one that we haven't done before, Luke 18:1-8, I'm gonna go ahead and read it for us now. This is from the Common English Bible.

Jesus was telling them a parable about their need to pray continuously and not to be discouraged. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him, asking, 'Give me justice in this case against my adversary.' For a while he refused but finally said to himself, I don't fear God or respect people, but I will give this widow justice because she keeps bothering me. Otherwise, there will be no end to her coming here and embarrassing me." The Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. Won't God provide justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he be slow to help them? I tell you, he will give them justice quickly. But when the Human One comes, will he find faithfulness on earth?"

So what do we do with this?

B: Yeah! Well before we even jump into what this passage means, or might mean. I think it's important to preface all of that with, this is a parable, right? So by design, it is not straightforward. Some types of Christians will say, "The Bible is extremely clear. It says this or it says that." And even when approaching parables, some folks have this expectation that there's this one secret, hidden meaning that you have to get at and figure out what the one true correct meaning of this passage is. I even heard folks say like, "Well Jesus sometimes couldn't come out and say exactly what he meant because He will get in trouble for it." So yeah, he had to speak in these parables to sort of hide His message, but well if we can figure it out, so could the people who'd be getting Him in trouble. So Jesus could've given us a rule book of: do this, don't do that, do this, don't do that, but instead oftentimes Jesus tells stories. And I think stories are a

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really important part of what it means to be human, how we make meaning, form community, get inspired, get excited, get sad. Stories are really powerful. Obviously, you know that Shay, you have a whole theatre company dedicated to stories for social change. Just to start with that, this is a parable that by design, is not always clear. And it gets really cool because in a lot of scripture, you can come at it from different ways, and it's especially true for parables. There's lots of different things that you can tug at, and tease at, and pull apart. Whatever we talk about today, is just one of many interpretations. You might have a different perspective, and so if you do, we would love to hear what you think on Twitter, or Facebook, or even leave us a review on iTunes and let us know your thoughts on this passage.

But for me, one of the things that comes up is that just this constant reminder that God is a God of justice. I think justice has been perverted sometimes to people to say justice, and they mean it in a wrathful way. That like God is just, and so God will punish you. But here we see that God's justice to help this widow, and we don't know exactly what her concern is, it probably doesn't matter because it's a parable right? She wasn't real. But God is not just in the business of justice for the sake of punishing you and threatening you with hell, but that God is a God of justice who will help you resolve the things that are bothering you and is on your side. And this is another example of over, and over, and over again we see this idea of God and justice and God being-on-our-side mattering—it's not secondary to the gospel, it's at the very heart of it. I've got some other thoughts, but Shay what about you?

FS: I love this passage because I think it gives us some really, both a lot of information about God and how Jesus understood God, but also a lot of information about how to deal with unjust judges. Which I think is super helpful, right? This passage on one hand is about being faithful, continuing to pray, and that's something that I don't know, feels kind of church-y, and that's fine. But also it says that "keep praying and God will listen" and that's cute and nice. But what I love about this passage is Jesus' commentary on this judge. This judge who doesn't respect God or people, but he decides to give this woman what she wants, not just because she keeps bothering him but also because she's an embarrassment to him. I think of all of the different social movements that we've seen were like public embarrassment and in some ways, public shame have made a huge difference. Something about being so public and bringing embarrassment on people who, for instance, are not funding FDA research on AIDS. Or who aren't willing to bake a cake for a gay couple. Somehow that embarrassment forces them to then become just. Not because they're good people, we are not appealing to their morality because they have none. We're not appealing to their good hearts and if we could just be nice enough we'll win them over. It's like, No, we're gonna shame them and embarrass them so badly that the only choice that they have is to do the right thing.

I think that sometimes in the niceness of politics, especially of the LGBTQ Christians, there's this sense of "No, we just have to love people into the kingdom." And it's like, no sometimes we have to embarrass them into the kingdom. That's the work. The work is to be so loud and obnoxious that they can't ignore us. Also, embarrass them and I think that's one of the things that Church Clarity is doing so well, right? People are embarrassed because they know that their homophobia is not cool anymore, and yet, they don't want to change it. And so Church Clarity does this thing of being like, "No. We're just gonna shine a big 'ole light on to your

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homophobia and make you deal with it." I think that's a really powerful tool in our activism arsenal that I think these days doesn't get enough traction.

B: Amen. Also, for LGBTQ people who have so often been on the receiving end of shame and embarrassment, and shame-based coercion to do things. It's understandable that we're like, shame is always a bad thing and no one should ever be embarrassed into doing something. I know how painful that is and I don't want to force that upon anyone else. Going back to what we were talking about last week, and what we're talking about constantly here that in both the time of the Hebrew Bible, and Jesus, and today, power and positionality is a thing. So the dominant culture using shame to oppress, and control, and manipulate you for devious and exploitative ends is different than oppressed minorities using whatever tools they have available to them to take a stand for their humanity. You being shamed and embarrassed for doing something that is wrong and hurtful is a different experience than being shamed or embarrassed for this part of who you are, how you love, and how you relate to your body. In English, it's the same words but I think even emotionally queer people being shamed for existing experience that shame in a different way than, like you were saying, the FDA who is refusing to research AIDS, or folks who won't bake cakes for gay couples, or the CDC who is not allowed to research gun deaths, whatever that is. So that's an important thing to note. I think also, there's so much I would like to talk about so I don't want to go on and on, I know folks like short podcasts, but this is not just any character in this passage, right? It's not like Donald Trump pulling a fast one and dicking over independent contractors by not paying them. The person who's getting their way in this passage is a widow, a widow being someone who is very vulnerable and losing a spouse now is hard enough. In this context, it would be very, very devastating. God is on the side of not just everyone, but on the side of particular people, sort of a preferential sheet, preference for the poor and that jumped out at me.

FS: Yeah, I love that, right? The shame is very specific, right? It's towards the judge with power who's not doing the right thing; who's abusing his power. It's not towards the widow who is caught in this unjust "justice system". I mean that resonates today, a lot.

B: Amen! So as we approach episode 300, if this podcast has meant anything to you, if you could do us a favor by sharing it on social media or even more better would be to go and leave us a review wherever you listen to your podcast for this: iTunes, Google podcast, Apple podcast, Stitcher. When you leave a review, a rating, and you can write a little review it helps the algorithm see the algorithm in it. It also helps folks that are considering listening to this podcast, lets them know what this is about. We get reviews from haters who leave us a one star review saying that we are sinful, and don't know the Bible. So if this podcast has been meaningful to you, you could help us out by doing that. We would love to hear your thoughts on this and other episodes on social media: Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, all of the places, and we will talk to you next week for episode 300!

[outro music plays]

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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, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

**PODCAST END**