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Advent: What Are We Waiting For?

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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.

B: Hello there! It's Brian G. Murphy, I'm one of the co-founders of QueerTheology.com and one of the hosts of this podcast.

As you may know, the Queer Theology podcast has been around for a long time and so this year for Advent, we're digging into the archives and republishing some of our favorite and most popular Advent and Christmas-themed episodes. So we've got that coming for you shortly. We also, as you may have heard, recently launched a Patreon campaign to make this work more sustainable.

So thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who has donated. It has made a huge difference in our lives and warmed my heart. I'm super thankful and grateful for that. We still have a bit of a ways to go to reach our goal, so if you're interested in keeping the podcast, and the website, and the articles, and the emails, and all that good stuff alive we would treasure your support. You can go to patreon.com/queertheology to make a pledge. But we are not wasting any time even though we're not quite at our goal. We're getting started on the work of re-working this work, [laughs] lots of work words there. So we're taking December to do some behind the scenes work. We're regrouping here on the podcast and we're redesigning the website, so even though these are old episodes we are still hard at work, and we're looking forward to sharing all that with you soon. But for now, sit back, relax, and enjoy this Advent-themed episode.

This week we're going to break away from talking about one particular text for the lectionary. Instead, just tackle about Advent in general. So Shay, it's Christmas time, it's Advent what resonates for you with this time of year in general, and also from a queer perspective?

FS: I've been thinking a lot and preaching a lot about: the fact that Advent is really this time of waiting. But not just waiting for happy things, but really that there's almost this anguish waiting in all of the passages leading up to Christmas in the lectionary. I think that with everything that's going on in the world, with things that are happening in Ferguson and Ohio, and the marches that are happening all over the country. There's something really poignant in this idea of an anguish waiting and cry for justice that really resonates with me. I'm so thankful to be part of a church tradition that makes space for some of these uncomfortable emotions, and allows us to sit with our pain and our grief,

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allows us to rail at the fact that things aren't the way that they're supposed to be. Then at the same token calls us to believe that a new birth is possible. I think that phrase "another world is possible", there's so much of that that resonates at this time of the year especially as we think about the way that Jesus' coming brought about a shift in the world. Also, if we have our own awakening and get on board with justice that we can also create a shift in the world. So yeah, that's what's been going through my head the last couple of weeks.

What about for you?

B: This year in particular, I'm thinking a lot about what this first Advent was really like. In the past, we've talked about what was the first Palm Sunday really like. I had never applied that to Advent until, I guess I have, but extra much this year. Especially in the wake of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Black Lives Matter. The first Advent and the first Christmas wasn't Mary in the suburbs and Jesus was born to live a chill life, and then die, and then magically our sins are forgiven. Right? Jesus was born in an occupied land to an oppressed people, armed instructions were not uncommon. This was a chaotic time and looking back obviously, the Gospels were written after the life and mystery of Jesus. But looking back on it, they have said it all began - this is our origin story right? It all began here. It's easy to look back a hundred years later and say this was the beginning. You never know when you're in it. Is this the beginning of the next big thing or is this just a --- on the radar. But earlier before the podcast started, we were talking about it feels like "pregnant" with the possibility in the world right now. I'm particularly excited that I've over the years learned that there are areas in which I can lead, and I'm gifted in, called to that. And there are some areas and some times where I'm called to follow. When it comes to racial justice and police brutality, I'm glad that over the years I've learned to follow. What an honor and privilege it is to join into this movements, as a person who cares about my community and who cares about justice to say, I get to be a part of something bigger, but also it's not just academic philisophical bigger thing; real lives hang in the balance. And we get to be a part of that.

I think that was the same for Jesus right?

The Advent story, real lives were affected by the coming of Jesus, that set off this whole amazing ministry. We're not in the throes of His ministry yet, but something is entering into the world. It's really cool to see that - as queer folks, and as people who are inspired by the Jesus story. That we have a place in that also.

FS: I've been loving watching the leaders of this movement are all really young which is really exciting to see. To see fierce, young activists who are really setting the stage for this new movement. That's awesome. I've also loved watching how queer-inclusive they are. Many of the organizers in Ferguson and the ones that started the Black Lives Matter hashtag on Twitter are queer. That's been really cool to see. The fact that they're calling for inclusion of queer folks in the movement is really heartening and it's exciting.

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To me, it seems like this is the moment where if we can all understand how our struggles are connected and support one another. For white folks to really follow and be a part of this movement, I think that that's really exciting. These folks are doing amazing work and it's awesome to see.

B: My friend Asher that I do Legalize Trans with - one of the co-founders of Legalize Trans, he's from Ferguson. His dad still lives there and he's at Vanderbilt Divinity, he goes back to Ferguson every second he can. And yet, these are, I like what you said Shay that we're all already a part of this. It's not like destiny is happening out there. We're already a part of it, so get with it.

If you enjoyed this episode we would love to hear from you. We would love to hear your new thoughts on this old episode, so find us at any of the social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, all of that jazz. Send us a message, tag us in a post, whatever floats your boat. Remember we still need some more help on Patreon to make this work possible: to continue the podcast; to continue the articles and the videos; the workshops and all that. If this work has been meaningful to you and you want to make sure that it survives, and thrives, and continues to touch lives. You can help us by pledging your support at patreon.com/queertheology. Thank you so much 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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