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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](http://QueerTheology.com) and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns

B: And I'm Brian G. Murphy.

FS: Hello, hello. Welcome back to the Queer Theology podcast. This is the podcast for Sunday, March 15th, 2020 and we are super excited to be back with you again. So Brian, what is new in your world?

B: I am serving botched carpenter realness these days. So my good friend who I used to be boyfriends with, who I no longer boyfriends with, and we don't have a good word for it because we still love each other dearly, Matt. He is an amazing metal worker. He makes artisanal, brass lighting and also, home textures like knobs, hooks, and apron holders. They're beautiful. He's got his own study and he sells some stuff on Etsy: [mattalfordstudios.com](http://mattalfordstudios.com). He made my cross and triangle necklace for me. But so he is making me some lamps to go next to my bed that are wood, metal, and rope. That just looks really cool. So yesterday we went to Home Depot to pick out the wood that we're gonna make the stuff out of. Then cut it up and sand it. I wanna help him but he's not letting me help him much because he's afraid I'm gonna mess things up. So I'm providing moral support while he is making this beautiful lamp. So I'm just really excited about it and it feels cool to have --- to me it's gonna be functional, and look pretty, and also be meaningful to me. So that's sort of been my crafty Nick Offerman weekend. What about you Shay?

FS: Yeah, it's a big submission season for playwriting. I just ended up opening two shows for Uprising Theatre Company. Well, one show for Uprising - a beautiful new piece called "Doctor Voynich and Her Children" by Leanna Keyes and then opened up a show that I was assistant director on at Mix Blood Theatre. It was a trans and queer pop-rock musical, super fun. So now that both of those shows are open and running, I can focus a little bit on my own writing again which feels really good. And it's submission season which means putting your work out there to a million different places, so you can get told "no" a million different times. So that hopefully, you can get one or two "yeses" in the mix. So I'm doing a lot of that.

I also just finished reading a trilogy of books that I wanna shoutout. It's called The Truly Devious series it's by Maureen Johnson. It's a young adult trilogy of novels. And it's a great, fun, mystery story. But what I love about the series is the most casually inclusive series I think I've ever read of different body types, different abilities, and a non-binary character, and queerness, and the main character has panic attacks. It's all presented so matter-of-factly and doesn't feel like inclusion for inclusion's sake. It very much feels like, yeah! This is the world we live in. Some people use canes to walk, and some people use they, them pronouns. It's not a thing. It's just presented in the book. So I love this series. The whole series is out now which is great because I did not realize it was a series when I started reading it. And book 1 ends on a cliffhanger and I

was like, "You've got to be kidding me!" I had to wait a year for the next book and it sucked! Anyway, the whole series is out now, Truly Devious by Maureen Johnson. Get it. Love it. It's super fun.

B: That sounds so awesome. And also Maureen Johnson makes me think of rent.

Before we dive in, this is just a friendly reminder that this podcast is made possible by over 125 supporters on Patreon.

FS: Our patrons not only help to keep this show on the air but also support all of the free resources we create over at [QueerTheology.com](http://QueerTheology.com). Articles, videos, PDF guides, courses, and all sorts of stuff. So thank you to all of our Patreon supporters.

B: And in keeping with our tradition, we have another Patreon supporter shout out this week. This week our shout out goes out to Emily England who has been a supporter for a couple of months and is also a close friend of Shay's! Thank you so much, Emily! It's great to see our name on there. You rock!

FS: If you enjoy this show and want to support it, you can that for as little as \$2 per month at [patreon.com/queertheology](http://patreon.com/queertheology). You can learn more about why we need your support and check out the perks, at [patreon.com/queertheology](http://patreon.com/queertheology).

Okay, on to the show!

B: Our question today comes from Forest who asked: *"How do you cope with your Christian friends not accepting who you are? And how can I refute their claims that homosexuality is a sin?"*

Shay, what do you say to that?

FS: This is a really tough question because I think there are two different things happening here, right? There's this question about how can I convince my Christian friends that their views about homosexuality are wrong? So I'm gonna tackle that one first and say, honestly you can't. If your Christian friends are not in a space where they're willing to be challenged on their theological beliefs, having that conversation over and over again is actually not gonna be helpful to them or to you. I've talked about this before on this podcast about going into the Rob Bell communication workshop. One of the things that people had asked Rob was "How do you convince people who think you're wrong?" And he's like, "You don't. I don't spend or waste time on them." I think that's an important thing to remember. That it's not our job to convince people, it's not our responsibility. That work can also really be toxic for us to be stuck in. So my first answer is unhook from that work and stop trying to do that work.

But the coping piece is different. These are people that you care about and that you presumably want to stay in some kind of relationship with. I think that you need to figure out for yourself where your boundaries are around that thing. How close can you actually be with these people if they don't accept all of who you are? Can you maybe go out to dinner with them and talk about things you all agree with. But if you're gonna talk about relationships that's off the table, right?

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Figuring out for yourself what some of your boundaries are to protect your own heart and soul, I think, is really important when interacting with people who don't accept all of who you are.

Brian, what about you?

B: I was gonna say something similar and that the answer to one is, I don't know. It's gonna be really hard to cope if you're constantly trying to convince them that it's okay to be LGBTQ. Everything that Shay just said about sometimes you have to walk away when you can't convince people, it's not our job. We've talked about that twice on the podcast: Jesus in two different places or two different gospels in Mark 6 and in Luke 10. Instructing his disciples to go and spread the gospel but then if the people there aren't willing to hear the news and are closed down to it, then they're just gonna leave and shake the dust off your sandals as you leave. Figuring that out is so important that some people wanna engage, wanna learn, and wanna grow, and we should absolutely be investing our time and energy in those relationships. And some people are closed down, they don't care, or they're asking questions but it's not in good faith. It's to trick you or to wear you down. It's our job to suss out that difference. All the time that we spend running in circles with people who have no interest in actually learning or hearing, is time that we can't be spending either with people who do genuinely want to learn and grow, or with people who nourish, and feed us, and support us. So that we can grow. So that we can be better equipped to move out into the world. We'll put links to both of those in the show notes for this episode at [QueerTheology.com/320](https://QueerTheology.com/320), but figuring out those boundaries is the work. We also have a little mini-series on self-care and figuring out boundaries around people who are unaffirming. So we will put a link to that in the show notes of this episode, again [QueerTheology.com/320](https://QueerTheology.com/320) or you can pop right to that series at [QueerTheology.com/selfcare](https://QueerTheology.com/selfcare).

FS: Just a reminder that if you've got a question for the podcast, we would love to tackle it. You can send it to [connect@queertheology.com](mailto:connect@queertheology.com). You can either send it as just an email with the question in there. Or if you want to record your question on an audio recorder, you can do it on your phone, you can send us your audio clip and we will put into future podcasts. If you need or want to remain anonymous with your question, just let us know that when you send the email.

B: Okay! Let's open up our Bibles and queer this text.

Today we're taking a look at Exodus 17:1-7. I will read it to you now from the Common English Bible.

The whole Israelite community broke camp and set out from the Sin desert to continue their journey, as the Lord commanded. They set up their camp at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people argued with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses said to them, "Why are you arguing with me? Why are you testing the Lord?"

But the people were very thirsty for water there, and they complained to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?"

So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What should I do with this people? They are getting ready to stone me."

The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of Israel's elders with you. Take in your hand the shepherd's rod that you used to strike the Nile River, and go. I'll be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Hit the rock. Water will come out of it, and the people will be able to drink." Moses did so while Israel's elders watched. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites argued with and tested the Lord, asking, "Is the Lord really with us or not?"

Okay, Shay. There's some stuff in here that I think is really interesting. What do you make of this text and how does queerness inform it?

FS: I love this text! I mean I love how snarky and crabby Moses is, pretty much all the time. I especially love this text because here we have, the people of Israel have just spent generations in slavery. Legit slavery. They have been freed and in their very first bits of freedom they are pissy and cranky because it's hard. From the outside, I'm "What the hell? How can you not understand that you are free now! This is better than what you had just left." And also, I see some of myself and the queer community in this text as well. We talked a lot in the Faithful Sexuality Course of: it can be really difficult to change, and grow, and confront stuff about yourself that you don't like. But also grow into a new way of being - that can be a painful process. It can feel the stuckness that you were in is better than the pain of the growth that you are experiencing. So that strikes me about this passage: that this is part of the human condition, is that we would rather stay stuck and miserable, and be familiar with our stuckness and miserableness than we would go through the work and pain of actually growing and getting to the promised land. So that's the first thing that comes up for me in this text, and sitting with that in myself, and also making that observation about community as well.

What about you?

B: So I studied Religion in college and in one of the first classes that I took, we looked at the Exodus. My professor was a Rabbi and he said to us something very in passing - about how the Exodus didn't historically happen. And there was no archaeological evidence to support it, and there was no other corroborating census or historical records. It just - never say never, but almost certainly didn't historically happen. And I had my mind blown! I was like, "What are you talking about? That's not true!" His point was it might not be historically true, but there is still truth to this text. I remember being, "You're a rabbi, you're supposed to believe this even more. What do you mean?" It blew my mind - stick with me for a second, that I think that I come back to that often and I think it's important to remember here that there's one way to read this text: which I think you can get some value out of. By reading it as if it happened or as if you're a character in the story. To say, "What might I learn from this text as it happened?" Then there's another way that you can approach it to try and get some more information out of it. To say, "If this is a story, why does this story matter? Why did this community tell this story, and how did this story end up in the Bible? And what then does that tell us about ourselves? And about God?" And sometimes, the answer is the exact same thing, as if it was historically accurate. Sometimes it just sheds new light on this. One of the things that sticks out to me that there is

this - when I'm approaching from that second angle, there is this unmistakable truth that God cares about our physical well-being. That God cares about the here and now. And earlier in Exodus, God led Israel out of slavery. And here God is like, you need water... we're gonna get you some water. The here and the now matters and God is in the business of taking care of our needs. There is something there about Moses' snarky about this, and they decided to call it this place, but there is something of asking, "Is the Lord really with us or not?" In this text, the Lord's answer to that question was: "Here's water. Yes, I am." So I think that later in a Christian scripture, Jesus talks about - and I always say this, judging the tree by its fruit. That the proof is in the pudding. So as we're in various communities, it also relates to folks who are in conservative Christian or un-affirming communities. And our question from earlier today, it's worth asking, "Is the Lord really with us?" What do we see that testifies to sort of the work of God in our communities? Yeah, so I kinda dig that.

FS: As we're getting ready to do a course on queering a Bible, we've got a fun five-day challenge coming up. It's gonna be a really cool interactive photo challenge on Instagram. All of the details are gonna be at [QueerTheology.com/challenge](https://QueerTheology.com/challenge). So you can head on over there, find out more about what it is and how to participate. But basically, you're gonna take a photo each day for five days as part of this challenge. We're gonna join together as a big community to do this. So it's gonna be a whole lot of fun. So go to [QueerTheology.com/challenge](https://QueerTheology.com/challenge) and sign up for that, and get more details in your inbox.

B: Looking forward to going through that, and hanging with you on Instagram, 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](https://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](https://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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