
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: Good morning! Today is Sunday, August 4th, 2019. We are going to be looking at Colossians 3:1-11, if you wanna read along we will put the texts in the show notes for this episode which you can find at QueerTheology.com/288. You can also find notes for everything we talk about over there, but I will also read it for you now. This is from the Common English Bible.

Therefore, if you were raised with Christ, look for the things that are above where Christ is sitting at God's right side. Think about the things above and not things on earth. You died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

So put to death the parts of your life that belong to the earth, such as sexual immorality, moral corruption, lust, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). The wrath of God is coming upon disobedient people because of these things. You used to live this way, when you were alive to these things. But now set aside these things, such as anger, rage, malice, slander, and obscene language. Don't lie to each other. Take off the old human nature with its practices and put on the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge by conforming to the image of the one who created it. In this image there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all things and in all people.

Shay, this has so much going on here and I can not wait to hear your LGBTQ Christian take on this passage, so hit me with it.

FS: Yeah, I feel like this is one of those passages that people read one verse, and then stop. Right? "...put to death the parts of your life that belong to the earth, such as sexual immorality, moral corruption, lust, evil desire..." and then they stop there.

B: They stop even before they even get to greed!

FS: Yeah! And then they say, see you, gay people, the wrath of God is coming upon you. Okay, so, first of all, ya'll left out greed which is called idolatry, I mean that's huge. Also, you're leaving aside anger, rage, malice, slander and obscene language and lying. This indicts all of us in some way. It's lazy reading to make this passage about gay people. I also think there's somebody that said about Paul and his clear issues about sex. I want to get Paul a really great therapist so that he can work out whatever angst he has around sex and sexuality. Because I

feel like he is writing out his own stuff unto other people and again, I think we've talked about this before, I'm pretty sure Paul would be horrified to know that his letters to specific church communities became scripture. I don't think that that was he was doing here, and I think that he'd be like, "Oh shit! I maybe should've reign some of that in." Also, the fact is I think lots of people pull out these sections and use Paul's own angst about sexuality to create their own angst about sexuality and to be anxious about everyone's sexuality. Which I don't think that's what this is about. That's like my first rant about this passage.

I do think that part of what Paul is saying here is that what it means to be a follower of Jesus is to try to imitate Jesus and Jesus' life. Part of that is figuring out how to live in the world in a just way. In a way that is kind to other people. In a way that puts the Kingdom of God first. I think that he gets at it better at the end when he talks about, "In this image there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, but Christ is all things and in all people." But he took a weird turn to get there. I think that that's more about Paul and less about God. So for me, when I'm reading this passage from a queer perspective, I'm not reading it from a sense of like don't have sex, but about what is it mean to imitate Christ? What does that look like? And not in some kind of hippy-dippy kind of way, but in concrete ways. What does it mean to follow in the path of Jesus, here and now, and in my life? I think that those are really challenging questions and those are vital and valid questions to sit with.

What does this passage do for you?

B: Amen! A few times recently, we've talked how it's important to recognize what is in the text and who should be bringing to the text. I remember when I came out, I was 18/19 and one of my friends from church, I don't know how she asked me but she basically, "If I gave you some passages to consider, would you read them and consider them about me being gay." I was like, "I probably already read them, but sure." So she sent me a letter that have 25+ passages on it. One of them was this Colossians passage, and actually most of the passages where like this where it talked about sexual immorality, or moral corruption, or lust and these are things that only mean homosexuality if you come to the table with that in mind. In fact, it only means premarital sex, or kinky sex or non-monogamy if you bring that to the table with you. I think Paul very clearly wanted no one to have sex at all, so that's just something we have to own, and name, and deal with. Also, we recognize that we're not doing that. I think that what you said earlier was so important to remember that when you look at this whole passage it indicts all of us. No one escapes this. As much as I try and be a kind, mindful person, I get angry. I've probably thrown into a rage before even. There's just like no way to escape this, so starting there is an important thing to remember. I also just can't help but notice all the ways the anti-LGBTQ Christians lie and manipulate the truth in order to try and condemn queer people, women and their bodies, and unfortunately, immigrants, right? Often times, slander us. In condemning queer people, Christians are often violating the very text that they are claiming to uphold, and it's just like "ugh".

It makes me so, so angry, but I also think that this idea of "...put the parts of your life that belong to the earth, such as sexual immorality, moral corruption, lust, evil desire, and greed." I can get behind that. What does this look like to actually ask people of faith who can not stand for rape culture, for sexual assault, for embezzlement, for objectifying people, for hoarding wealth? That

is what this passage could inspire us to do, and instead, it's just like, "Don't masturbate and don't be gay." What a terrible corruption of this text.

[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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