

My name is Kyle Miller Shawnee.

I use he him pronouns and I'm a white cisgender queer man, living in Tulsa Oklahoma with my husband and our three adorable cats.

I invite you to join with me as we listen to the words that we call scripture reading from the first letter of John chapter 3 verses 16 through 24.

We know love by this that he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a sibling in need and yet refuses help.

little children, let us love not in word or speech but in truth and action

and by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us for God is greater than our heart and God knows everything.

Beloved if our hearts do not condemn us we have boldness before God.

And we receive from God whatever we ask because we obey God's Commandments and do what pleases them.

And this is God's commandment.

That we should believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ and love one another just as he commanded us.

All who obey God's Commandments abide in them and they abide with us.

And by this we know that God abides in Us by the spirit that God has given us.

May the spirit bless this reading

I wrestle with this text on the surface.

I feel a slight temptation to take it at face value.

We ought to lay down our lives for one.

Another says the writer of the letter.

and yet

What Liberation does this commandment get those like me whose families considered conversion therapy long before they consider addressing systemic family derived and directed homophobia.

What Liberation does this text offer our black Trans sisters who face fatal abuse from their neighbors employers their families even their spouses?

What is liberty of about this text for our non-binary siblings that confront the sin of a society created system of Oppression of binary genders?

And which are non-binary siblings?

Are erased from our world and subtle and Harvard ways in the way that they are addressed.

What chains is Christ breaking in our current context within this text?

Shortly after the 9th.

I was forced out of the closet to my family.

I was in a car accident the roads were icy and few days before Christmas.

The seventeen-year-old me did not really understand the impact of ice on roads living in Oklahoma.

We don't always see ice and snow.

As my car slid out of control.

I remember a brief powerful thought that I had for myself.

Maybe this way is just better.

Maybe the world would be easier without me in it.

As a 29 year old now looking back.

I'm horrified.

Because I know the joy that comes in that morning.

I know that in that moment.

I would rather have faced death with a mask than live in my family's disappointment.

I grew up in the Assemblies of God church, and I knew that I was anathema to my church.

to my family

and to God

it is taken years of confronting embedded theologies in seminary.

The recognize that parts of those theologies that I was broken or not enough still dug into my soul like a cancer telling me.

You are sin.

It took years of counseling dissecting the wise and attempting to understand the unknowable reason that queer people like me and unlike me strike such fear hatred and violence and some of God's other children.

Years of work that lead me to this text today wondering what does laying down my life for another actually mean.

Surely it is not the moment.

I experienced in the car when I gave in to the temptation of non-existence for a brief moment.

Surely it's not the moment any one of my queer siblings throughout the world.

I thought the world would be better without them in it.

surely not

but what if his commandment is not one of martyrdom or suicidal ideation or self-sacrifice of our very identities?

What is it is a raw queer Liberty of message from the holy of holies saying I have loved you before you even knew me.

In you in all of you.

I am well pleased.

What if it is the same God that came out of the closet to the world through the life death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ that comes out in our own world through us.

What is laying down queer lives means actually living authentically in the face of and despite oppression in the face of those that would call us broken.

and in the face of death itself

What can this be a commandment by God and God self ensuring that we do not relinquish our holy lives to the malls of death when it's Society tells us that we are broken and the only way to fix ourselves is to deny who God created us to be.

Friend, wherever and whenever you are, we are separated by Miles and minutes and yet I know in every fiber of my Essence that you are loved Holy by the holy.

And you are authentic life lived out in response to God's commandment in the first letter of John is love it is power.

Peace and it is wholeness.

The world needs the healing balm.

That is your authenticity.

When it's safe to be the holy calls each of us to truly be.

For the reign of the Holy on Earth as it is in heaven depends on it.

I invite you to take a moment to Center yourself.

And in the brief space of Silence following I invite you to take a moment to focus your attention on your breath.

as you inhale

and exhale

and as your ability and senses enable you I invite you to call
attention to the ground beneath you.

the air around you

The Sounds or sights that surround you

And breathe through these words.

Of the big crowd hashahar, we're morning by Dori midnight and Randy
fresh Stewart.

Blessed are you awake under?

Life of all worlds who removes sleep from my eyes and Slumber from my
eyelids.

Blessed are you generous creatrix?

Who stretches forth the Earth upon the waters?

Blessed are you sacred flame who illuminates and shines upon everyone
and everything.

Blessed are you holy fashion designer who Delights in the way, we
dress ourselves as altars.

Blessed are you Liberation worker who moves us to stretch and expand
towards freedom.

Blessed are you divine apple orchard who Delights in mind delight and
is praised by my pleasure.

Blessed are you nameless and infinite?

Who made us in your image and reminds us that all bodies are sacred
and they are holy.

Blessed are you wings of gold who crowns my people all people with
splendor?

Blessed are you holy breath who fills me with this gift every day?

Blessed are you abundance who helps me?

Remember?

I have everything I need.

Blessed are you the way?

Who makes me where I am?

Blessed are you Source of Life who I drawn for strength and who reminds me that rest is a sacred Act.

Blessed are you fabulous?

One who loves me just as I am.

Blessed are you Weaver of being who shaped the human being with wisdom making for us all the openings and vessels of the body?

It is known that we are Miracles and all bodies are miracles.

Blessed are you you of many names?

for revealing infinite Paths of healing

I meant