

Alysha Laperche ([00:00](#)):

Hi there. My name is Alysha Laperche and my pronouns are they, them and theirs. I'd love to open this week's podcast by reading a poem by Pdraig O Tuama called, "Is it working?"

Alysha Laperche ([00:13](#)):

"When you've been alive for only 5,829 days, The pathways are rarely clear here, where the roads keep changing. What makes sense on one day makes no sense the next and so to avoid exhaustion and to deepen rest, ask yourself these questions. How would you describe today and have you seen anything interesting on the way and is it working? Is it working always? Is it working?"

Alysha Laperche ([01:03](#)):

The passage this week that we'll be engaging with is from Philippians chapter two verses five through 11 and I will be reading from the new revised standard version.

Alysha Laperche ([01:20](#)):

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born into human likeness and being found in human form. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God.

Alysha Laperche ([02:20](#)):

I've heard this passage several times before and find it to be meaningful. This reflection about the humility of Jesus and the example which that sets for us about how we might interact with others and the world around us.

Alysha Laperche ([02:39](#)):

And still, when I was pondering it more deeply for the podcast this week, I decided to look into Greek, and see what some of the words maybe saying beneath the surface of how we typically translate them. What stood out to me first and foremost was in verse eight this word for obedient, where it says that Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. The Greek word in that verse eight for obedient is "hoop-ay'-ko-os", which an addition to obedient may alternatively mean listening to attentively listening or giving ear. So when I think about Jesus not considering the power that may be available to him or what that might translate to teach us to not consider the power, they may be available to us as something that we ought to grab, but like Jesus rather humble ourselves and attentively listen and thinking about humility as a queer person can be difficult at times because so many of us have experienced humiliation and the lines become blurred between what it feels like to humble ourselves, to turn an attentive ear, give space to others, and deeply listened to them when we have been so often humiliated, meaning dehumanized or marginalized, cast out from spaces and rejected from belonging.

Alysha Laperche ([04:35](#)):

But in pondering this concept of humility, a quote from CS Lewis comes to mind where he says that "humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less." And so I appreciate that distinction between what we might characterize as humiliation, thinking less of ourselves and this more positive attribute of humility, thinking of ourselves less. In other words, de-centering ourselves and yes, even for myself as a queer person and even those of us in the LGBTQ plus community who are members of a marginalized community, it's an important lesson for us and a call to embodiment, particularly for white folks like myself, to de-center ourselves, to think of ourselves less in some terms or to humble ourselves as we see the example of Jesus in this passage. And it is in this way that I feel that this week's passage illuminates for us how necessary it is to study and have conversations around intersectionality and intersectional justice.

Alysha Laperche ([06:00](#)):

Kimberlee Crenshaw describes this sort of intersectional subordination which occurs in her writing titled "Mapping The Margins", and she states that "intersectional subordination is the consequence of the imposition of one burden that interacts with preexisting vulnerabilities to create yet another dimension of disempowerment." An example of folks who experience these dimensions of intersectional subordination are queer peoples, or LGBTQ plus peoples, of color. So therefore following Christ's example in this passage, I as a queer white person, even though yes, I do deal with difficulties and marginalization, which comes with being a queer person because I do not have those difficulties or the intersectional subordination of being a person of color, I have a responsibility to deliberately the center myself.

Alysha Laperche ([07:18](#)):

I have a responsibility to not grasp for and use power, which is available to me as a white person, and I have a responsibility not only to not grasp for the power, but to not use the power which I have in ways that dehumanize others as a follower of Christ, I have the responsibility which I can see from the model of Jesus in this passage of Philippians two listen attentively to the experiences of those whose lives have more and different dimensions of difficulty and marginalization than my own, and to think of myself less, to humble myself, to turn an attentive ear to their experiences rather than centering myself in those conversations and reaching for power in those spaces, in considering the ways in which this week's passage and my engagement with the text as a queer person may connect with the color that we are focusing on this week, which is pink and the theme or the title that Gilbert Baker assigned to this color in the original LGBTQ plus rainbow pride flag and Gilbert Baker assigned the word sex to the color pink. I was able to what my a queer perspective on this passage through the lens of sex in particular look like and what came to my mind is this idea of consent, which is so much of what was motivating to me to select the poem which I read at the opening, which is literally called "Is it working?" And that spoke to me deeply about the concept of consent. Both consent in our relationships with one another, consent in our relationship with the divine in our spirituality.

Alysha Laperche ([09:42](#)):

Because while some of us may have experienced dehumanizing things in our faith or with the church, we still believe that God is a loving presence, which is ready to hear us and attentively listen to us and not see power as something to be exploited but rather as useful for cultivating an authentic closeness with us. Something that has been redemptive and a meaningful handle for me in my spiritual processing and continued evolution of my faith has been to come to understand the presence of God or of the Holy one, not as one who is arm wrestling me into a particular way of living or a will that they would like to impose upon my life, but rather as a co-creator one who loves me and wants to work alongside me and

collaborate with me and consider me turn ear to me and not use the power which they do have to force me or to try to manipulate or convince me of something which does not feel authentic.

Alysha Laperche ([11:07](#)):

And so to transfer this idea of consent into my spiritual life has been really life-giving for me. And empowering when it comes to interpersonal relationships and the concept of consent or sex as a queer person, I was able to think about how our society is and historically has been heteronormative and has understood gender as a binary construct. And so LGBTQ plus folks are not at large necessarily taught a comprehensive sexual ethic or educated comprehensively about our sexuality or about what consent or sexual expression gender expression may look like. What is interesting to me is that LGBTQ plus folks who are in relationships have shared with me about their open and direct honest and ongoing conversations in their relationships about consent and sexuality and it seems to me

Alysha Laperche ([12:31](#)):

almost distinct from many heterosexual relationships because there is more intentional deliberation which embodies as more intentional, honest and direct communication about consent, particularly because in LGBTQ plus relationships there is an inherent understanding of the unique distinctions in their sexual relationships. Distinct meaning different from what a societal norm may be for those people, the same assumptions, standards and imposed roles, gender roles, et cetera are not as pervasively present as they may be in heterosexual relationships where neither or none of the folks in the relationship are LGBTQ. Plus through my queer perspective and consideration of the theme of sex, this passage in Philippians reminds me to continue to ask myself, is it working? It is important to ask ourselves if it is working about so many things in life. Who am I surrounding myself with and how am I engaging in conversations around social and racial justice? Is it working and how am I embodying my sexuality and who might I be doing that with?

Alysha Laperche ([14:09](#)):

Is it working and am I considering the consent of others, turning ear to them and de-centering myself to truly hear them? Or am I reaching for power? And is it working? In closing of this week's podcast, I would like to invite you to join me in prayer, Holy God, and companion in our process. We thank you for mercy that renews each day. Thank you, your closeness to us as we journey through life. Looking at Jesus for an example of justice, equity, and humility. May we remember to pause often and ask, is it working in our engagements with our spirituality, our faith, and our interpersonal relationships may intimacy be cultivated in Holy ways, based on foundations of trust, dignifying love, and seeing the divine, which lives within all of us. In the name of Jesus we pray today. Amen.