

Queer Morning Devotion

Malena Tara and Johanna Waubke

Topic: Can I accept my sexual/gender identity as a gift from God?

Required equipment: Possibility to show YouTube videos (internet, speakers, screen)

Duration: Approximately 10–15 minutes

Stage directions: in *italics* below

Person 1 starts the >Psalm 139 music video, posted by Shiri Regev; Hebrew audio, Hebrew and English subtitles. They are singing verses 2–10. 545 Regev, Shiri: Psalm 139/Tehilim 139, 01.12.2022: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pcyiN_KpC4 (last accessed: 10.05.2024). Person 1 gently fades out music when instrumental part starts in 01:51, while person 2 reads:

And the psalm continues:

»If I say, ›Let darkness surround me, let the light around me be night‹, even darkness like this is not too dark for you; rather, night is as clear as day, darkness and light are the same. For you fashioned my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I thank you because I am awesomely made, wonderfully; your works are wonders – I know this very well.«¹

Person 1 pauses music video and continues (the person giving the sermon can either refer to this story or replace it with a personal story dealing with their struggles with embracing their queer identity):

The psalm tells us that God is always with us, no matter where we go.

God knows us, deep down in our hearts.

And God made us.

God made us >awesomely< and >wonderfully<.

Quite often though, it can be hard to believe. Just recently, I talked with a friend about my sexual orientation. That I love multiple people. In a way, I was also complaining because it has led me to being in love with people who do not love me

¹ Complete Jewish Bible: Ps 139,11–14.

back in the same way. Seeing people as God made them: ›awesomely‹ and ›wonderfully‹ – lovingly.

But at the same time, they do not love me back in a similar way. And that can be challenging at times.

And then the friend of mine was asking me a question which I think is so important! He asked me:

›Do you think it is a privilege? To being able to love so much?‹

›Privilege‹ might not be the right word, he said, ›maybe ... a gift?‹, I jumped in.

Do I think it is a gift from God that I am poly-amorous?

Do I think it is a gift having this kind of sexual orientation?

Person 2 takes over:

In the bible we can read the story of Jona. He is being called to prophecy to the people. But he fears ›the gift‹ of prophecy, so to speak, and tries to run away from it.

But God is calling him back. Convinces him that his gift is good. Still – maybe because things are not going as smoothly as Jona would have liked – Jona is unhappy about it. You could maybe even say ›devastated‹. Just very slowly he is learning to live and accept what God has given him.

God has given us a straight or queer identity, a straight or queer orientation.

Can we believe, can I believe that God is looking at me and saying: ›This is good. You are wonderfully and awesomely made‹?

When have there been times it was challenging for you to accept the gift of your sexual orientation or gender identity?

Did you maybe also try to run away from it like Jona did?

Where are you standing today?

Are you loving your own body today, your own sexual orientation, your own gender identity?

Where are you on your journey to see yourself as God has made you: ›wonderfully and awesomely‹?

Person 1 starts the instrumental part of the Psalm 139.547S. Regev: Psalm 139 (note 1), from minute 1:51 on. After the video person 1 continues:

No matter where you are currently on your journey with God, your gender identity and your sexual orientation: You are beautiful!

You might be a little tired and exhausted from the last days but that does not change who you are: Created in God's image. Wonderfully and awesomely!

So let us celebrate this day and our queer community. Let us thank God for the diversity we are living in! Diverse individuals but still connected. One prayer that connects all of us and that can powerfully remind us that we are all connected is the Lord's Prayer. There is a beautiful version in Swahili. Let's listen to it together, praying together for God's presence in our lives and during this day.

Person 2 starts the >Baba Yetu< music video, composed by Christopher Tin, Swahili audio, Swahili and English subtitles. They are singing the Lord's Prayer twice. Therefore, the video can either be stopped at 02:02 or be played until the end in 03:29.548Tin, Christopher: Baba Yetu, 02.10.2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=or4IKVG2zAA> (last accessed: 10.05.2024).

Person 1 starts the >Psalm 139 music video<, with Hebrew and English subtitles. They are singing verses 2–10.549S. Regev: Psalm 139 (note 1).

