Billy Porter reveals his church told him he would ‘never be blessed’ if he ‘chose to be gay’

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Pose star and queer icon Billy Porter has revealed that when he was young, his church told him he would “never be blessed” if he “chose to be gay”.

In an interview with The Guardian, Porter described his earliest memory: “Singing a solo at my Ascension Baptist church when I was five or six. There were already fears that I wasn’t masculine enough.”

However, he said: “When I sang, all of the fear in the adults’ eyes went away.”

When he was growing up, Porter said he dreamed of becoming “the male Whitney Houston”, but faced disapproval from his religious community.

Asked what was the worst thing someone has ever said to him, he responded: “When I was young, my church community said that I would never be blessed as long as I chose to be gay. And we all know it’s not a choice.”

Billy Porter grew up Black, Christian and gay in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Porter grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and has previous spoken about the struggles of growing up Black, Christian and gay.

In a 2015 piece for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, he wrote: “Being Black, gay and Christian in Pittsburgh during the 1980s made me a target for the kind of oppression that literally kills people and destroys humanity.

“Government and religion-sanctioned homophobia permeated the culture here.

“From the moment I could comprehend thoughts and ideas, the well-intentioned adults closest to me — loved ones, preachers and educators — took turns trying to silence me. Sometimes unconsciously (or so I tell myself). Always aggressively.

“‘Abomination’ was the word most used to describe me in the structure of my family and religion. ‘Faggot’ was the term of choice in most other circles.”

Now, having found success as a Broadway star, actor and activist, Porter refuses to let religious homophobes put him down.

In a 2020 interview with ESSENCE magazine, Porter, 50, discussed the Black Lives Matter movement, and how it needs to be extended to all Black lives, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Addressing Black conservatives, he said: “You all want to act like you’re concerned about our salvation, but don’t worry about my salvation.

“Let me do that. If you think I’m going to hell, you keep that s**t to yourself. I don’t need tolerance. I don’t need acceptance. We demand respect for our humanity, too.”

https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/01/10/billy-porter-church-religioin-gay-black-christian-pittsburgh-pennsylvania-pose/