

THIS IS CHURCH.
Travis Mitchell

Part 1

I... read somewhere once
that the gates of hell, they'll
never stand against.
So then my friend from
outside these walls said
"so what in the hell is stopping
you then?"
Now those weren't my words,
they his
and he wasn't even a Christian.
But he clearly understood
something that I didn't.

The old, the new
we begin forge the two,
yet at the same time, the old
ain't all that old,
and the young ain't all that
new.
See the global church has had
us both
since the preacher invented
the pew.
And me, well I've been a
pastor's kid
for the past 22...

So I've seen most of it
what our church has been
through.
I loved the old days
and I'm looking forward to the
new.

Chances are we've probably
met
but if not I'd love to meet you.
You can catch me in the lobby
or even better catch me over
coffee.

Man we gotta be the family
that we the church still claim
to be.
And best believe
if God is in you
and likewise that crazy dude
(James Wilson, what it do?)

then you both are
the same to me.
You both are my family.

It's that transitive property.
It's transformative probably.
It's not rocket science.
And it's definitely not
Socrates.
But that's something half of
y'all already knew.
That's something you probably
taught me.

So there's no need to preach to
the choir
know what I'm saying...

(And to you)
Well, I'm here to listen.
You've got a lot to teach.
Nothing to prove
but you have a lot to be.
And I hope you still believe
you are exactly what this
church needs
(cause you're exactly what I
need).

You've been here for a minute
and in my language that
means a long time.
My friends and I
are looking to you to show us
what church is like.

Cause this is a big one
and this is my first one
so we kinda expect you
figured out how to do it right.

Whether that's true or not
I don't know your opinion
lately.
Maybe like most
you've just learned along the
way, and maybe...

Maybe like most
I'm headed for that same

journey.
I appreciate your patience
your guidance, your faith in
me.

I respect the way you hold
onto Jesus
even when the ground gets
shaky
when it seems like our friends
get flakey
and our hearts get weighty.

When I say things I didn't
really mean...
When I do things that divide
us into teams...
Still your love
is all that you bring.

I respect you.
I really love you.
And ya know, at the end of the
day
you're the church I wanna be
with when my days are
through.
So thank you.
I mean it -- thank you.

Part 2

My mind has been going back
to the e-teams
I guess most of y'all probably
don't even know what that
means

e-teams were groups of people
from this church
that went out to nearby church
plants and communities
help provided whatever they
needed
with a lot of fun, games, family
feel (it was real)

I remember watching mom
spend hours and hours
making puppets, doing drama

with the Jones, Tuckers, and
Bowers
I love looking at that treehouse
gang set
what comes to mind is all the
hours that we spent...

here in the building literally
building the kingdom
free time, overtime, with our
own money and children

the preaching was so good
but what I thought was even
better
was what we did with the
preaching
we internalized and became
better
now if you look close
if you keep your ear to the
ground
if you keep your eyes wide
open
you'll see the same is still
happening now

small pockets of people
young old and in-between
from prophets to singers
they're bursting at the seams

the very hands that built
the mezzanine beams
are itching to build more
things
for the King of kings
(ya feel me)

I know of young kids
that just wanna pray for you
gets me thinking if Jesus
requires faith like theirs
to enter his kingdom
then what on earth or in
heaven could he do
if they simply had the
opportunity to pray for you
[accidentally skipped]
I know of teenagers who just
received the gift of tongues
I love watching to see what

they've become
through high school they
matured
rising up like the sun
armed and ready to run
filled with faith and love
knowing that Jesus saved their
soul
but he sure as heck ain't done

I know a young adult or two
that want people to run with
they want the freedom to move
they want to start doing
church and
it's cool watching the ones who
do
opening up their lives, their
homes,
their time, for you... ya just
gotta ask
I know some kid-parents who
are still on mission
they don't let kids crowd out
their vision
instead they pass on the vision
trusting God for their kid's
decision
...now that's faith at work
to work hard till ya faint
and in the morning rebirth
get up and go to work
and then pray for grace to still
seek God first
(it's amazing to watch)

I know some people my
parents age
they pray up a storm
and let the storm stir them to
pray
we've become friends in recent
days
holding hands all the way
they're honest about their faith
where they fall short
never shifting the blame
but at the same time
never having to bare the
shame

I knew Miss Kisiel briefly
a legacy of love
a 99-year-old nun

with faith like a child
in fact, you'd think she was
I bet when Jesus said let the
little ones come to me
he was thinking of her in 2015
now she's gone
as we all soon will be
but she ran the race well to the
end
to truly rest in peace

I wanna be like all them
I wanna be like you
I wanna pray for you
I wanna rise like the sun
I wanna open up my home to
you
I wanna pass the good news to
my kids
I wanna stop and pray first
thing when the storm hits
I wanna run the race well with
childlike faith

I wanna be like you all
So I guess I'm in the right
place...
(ha idk, what do ya think?)
I think I'm in the right place)

Part 3

Jesus asked his father for one
thing, not two,
and that's unity between him,
me, and you
I know we're all different
we sing in different ways
sometimes scream when we
pray
or dance a lil cray
or read a Bridges book in a day
or believe for bigger things
but at the end of the day
we're all just saints

but we're also sinners
I'm reminded everyday
but we're also saints
would you remind me every
day?

can you remind me
what heaven is going look like?
that I'll be standing shoulder
to shoulder
with people I don't look like

or sound like, or talk like
or think like, or believe like
or vote like, or hope like
or follow our leaders like

please remind me about the
first thing Jesus prayed
when he taught us to pray, I
think I remember him say

"Father...
Hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will
be done,
on earth *as it is in heaven*"

so remind me that this church
is his
and should be
ideally
just as diverse as heaven

And PJ's right,
a whole roll can be ruined with
a little leaven
but also Paul charges us to
bear with that leaven
charges us to love each other
with absolutely no condition
in the words of someone I
respect "to love hard is hard
living"
and I might add, on this side of
eternity,
"that hard living that's the
good living"

cause to live is Christ and to
die is gain
even Jesus endured that pain
but if we too have been
counted worthy to suffer
we too will be given a reward
like no other (that's the real
gain)

Part 4

I've been looking in the mirror
more
I don't know who I'm
disappointed in more
the leaders I've tried to
become
or the person I've become
instead

thoughts in my head
start flooding with fear
fear of what you'll think
fear of what they'll hear

fear of never being able to
figure out church
fear of never being able to
truly keep Jesus first
fear of any call to leadership,
it's a trap to fail
fear of dropping everything at
once to bail

but then my man big T told me
something that really helped
when I asked how could I ever
get it right? how could I ever
do it well?
he said why does it matter?
why you always need to get it
right?
that kinda pressure ain't on
you
remember, that's why Jesus
died.

and so I realized that I thought
God was my master
but instead I was slave to
doing it right, better, faster,
whatever

my new goal is to give God and
you all my love
not to reach that perfection I
started chasing after

I'm free to release, I know
the pressure ain't on me

to keep leaders in line
to keep my friends in the seats
to even make sure I'm as close
to perfect
as I can possibly be

it was truly shocking when I
realized
whom the son sets free, he is
free indeed
and it's amazing man
to think that's me

(yeah I'm free from fear)
free from fear of finances
free from fear of process
God sure lets us control the
input
but he sure controls what the
result is

yeah he does that with his
church
I'm mediocre at my worst
and still mediocre at my best
but that hasn't stopped God
yet

I'm watching God use our very
participation
to build a perfect building on a
messed-up foundation
that gives me confidence for
the long road ahead
to run it with people I'll like
butt heads with

to encourage the folks building
up a separate building
but in the same kingdom...
because we're in the same
kingdom
I love the ones I run with, the
ones that are here
I love the ones I pray for, the
ones who are near

I've been chatting with my
man Jack Smyth lately
I see you're on fire and on
mission, go get em baby

I see my mom itching to use
her creative gifts
God's been preparing you for
this with all the work you do
with the kids

I see Morrie, David, and others
praying for revival for a long
time
truly thirsting for
righteousness, and like Simon
you'll be satisfied
I see Sidney as the fierce lion
to be reckoned with
a force of fierce love,
protection, and new initiatives

I see the Depps, Stephen
Payne, Mary, Emily, James
Gui
y'all have been a steady stream
of love, encouragement, family
I see that only continuing
with more following your lead
(keep going)

I see Aunt Sherry
and I see Uncle Van
to count the ways, the people
you've loved
I'd need a couple dozen more
hands

I see people who've been
pushed to the side and under
I see you hurting on levels I
couldn't begin to speak
you know who you are and if I
could just say what I see
I see you shaping the
compassionate culture we're
about to be

I see the many misfits in our
midst
I see your quirks, your
obsessions, your ticks
I need you to know right now
something big
God looks to people like you as
his earthly champions

I see the people on staff in
support roles
Lisa being a backbone, hashtag
relational goals
Howard is kind, and the kinda
guy you'll miss
so if you ever see him, please
never take him for granted

I saw Eryk doing the most
what most could probably
never do
our talks were deep and real,
sometimes with tears, but
almost always about you
he was funny and quick, he
was witty and cool
I learned a lot about politics
and Jesus too

I see God keeping a hand on
my generation
but I think he wants to show
us first that we can never run
too far from him
that his eyes will never turn
away out of impatience
he's sticking with us, not the
other way and...

I see from those who are older,
a massive download of
knowledge
I'm not talking life tips — I'm
not talking like college
I'm talking divine impartations
of heavenly wisdom
straight from the lips of God,
through you to my spirit

I see the goldmine that we're
sitting on
the entire spectrum of spiritual
gifts
once we tap into yours
who knows what will give

maybe more light in MoCo
maybe lifelong heaven-
pilgrims
only one way to find out

and maybe I'm here to help
out with that somehow

so many things and people I
see, I just can't believe
that I get to be you with while
I'm here living in the burg,
and now I know that the gates
of hell, they'll *never* come
between,
you and me... cause... this is
church.

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