

Talks – Take Me To Church – myfishbites.com

Intro

In 2015, a song was written called 'Take Me To Church' by an artist called Hozier. Sometimes it's hard to understand songs as they don't always make sense. Here's a few points from this song.

The song lyrics

*My lover's got humour
She's the giggle at a funeral
Knows everybody's disapproval
I should've worshipped her sooner
If the heavens ever did speak
She's the last true mouthpiece
Every Sunday's getting more bleak
A fresh poison each week
'We were born sick, 'you heard them say it
My Church offers no absolutes
She tells me, 'Worship in the bedroom.'
The only heaven I'll be sent to
Is when I'm alone with you—
I was born sick,
But I love it
Command me to be well
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Take me to church
I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife
Offer me that deathless death
Good God, let me give you my life
If I'm a pagan of the good times
My lover's the sunlight
To keep the Goddess on my side
She demands a sacrifice
Drain the whole sea
Get something shiny
Something meaty for the main course
That's a fine looking high horse
What you got in the stable?
We've a lot of starving faithful
That looks tasty
That looks plenty
This is hungry work
Take me to church
I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
I'll tell you my sins so you can sharpen your knife*

*Offer me my deathless death
Good God, let me give you my life
No Masters or Kings
When the Ritual begins
There is no sweeter innocence than our gentle sin
In the madness and soil of that sad earthly scene
Only then I am Human
Only then I am Clean
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.*

Worship

The first thing about the song is the admission of being a worshipper!

Although people may not see it, everyone worships something. It may be a football team, money, love, sex or a hobby. Worshipping something isn't always about bowing down like some people think! But if you go into people's houses, you'll find a black box in the main room with moving images on it – a TV! People tune in to their favourite programmes and don't like to miss things. Other people's rooms are shrines to their hobby or their sports team or to a certain kind of music or artist. So the song is good in that it admits worship.

In the case of the song, the artist is worshipping a woman and possibly in a bad way. As the song says, *"She tells me, 'Worship in the bedroom.'* In a healthy way in marriage, sex is a gift from God. It's certainly not worthy of worship.

But we worship God as he alone is worthy of worship. He is our everything – helper, friend, support, creator, comforter, encourager, healer and Saviour. Our worship and work for God will last forever and give us a reward in heaven!

Luke 4:8 – Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

John 4:24 – "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

The Cost

In the Bible (in Luke 7), we read about the story of the woman who broke a jar of perfume out and used it all up in worship at the feet of Jesus. The cost would have been a year's wages. But she felt that Jesus was more than worth it. She was right! There is always a cost to worship – it may be money, it may be time, it may even be losing friends because of your faith in Jesus. But it's always worth it.

The same isn't true for the things that people worship in the world around us. Jesus reminds us that riches can't go with us when they die, that things wear out, get lost and get stolen. In the song, we find that there is a cost to worshipping the woman – in money and buying her things, in terms of others not liking her, in terms of her demanding a sacrifice and in terms of possibly doing wrong. He also describes a weekly 'poison' which isn't personally my idea of a price worth paying!!

So the cost for worshipping Jesus is a price worth paying. In the song, the cost of the worship is not one worth paying, especially as there is more than a hint of doing something wrong.

Luke 7.37-38 – A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

Sacrifice

"To keep the Goddess on my sides, she demands a sacrifice."

It's worth thinking about this a bit harder as this is religion in the worst kind of way. You see, religion tells you that you have to 'do this, do that, be this, be that' in order to make your god happy or keep your god 'on your side.' Even if we look at people around us, they always want the latest top, the latest gadget, the latest car etc. Materialism (wanting and needing 'stuff') is the probably most demanding god of the lot!

But the amazing thing about Jesus is that there's nothing we can do to earn his favour, he freely gives it. Instead of us having to do this and do that, Jesus has already done everything! He then invites us to freely become part of what he's already done. And although we serve God and do things for God, it's not because we have to keep him on our side and earn his favour through religious rituals. Instead it's because God puts his Holy Spirit on the inside of us, changes us from the inside-out and we can't help but want to obey and serve God because of his love in us!

What a difference Jesus makes.

John 19:30 – "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

Gentle Sin

The artist talks about their '*gentle sin*'.

What the artist doesn't understand is that there is no such thing as a 'gentle sin'. The Bible makes it clear that there isn't any kind of gentle sin – there is sin! Sin is the things we do, think or say (or don't do, think or say!) that are against God's will and God's Word (the Bible). We can't possibly do everything right so that's why Jesus died and paid the price for our sins. Aren't you glad that you can be forgiven of all your sins by confessing them to God and saying sorry?!

You see, those 'gentle sins' that people think are gentle and harmless, never are! God forgives our sin, but there is sometimes consequences for the things we do. But often God puts things back in order, so be encouraged !

Romans 6:10-11 – “The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Set Free?

In the madness and soil of that sad earthly scene

Only then I am Human

Only then I am Clean

The writer of the song has just spoken about his ‘gentle sin’ but then goes on to seem to explain that it is this place that he is human and clean. This is a strange thing to say! He speaks about the madness and soil of a sad earthly scene but then goes on to say this is the place where he is clean and human.

Sleeping around doesn’t make a person clean. Doing what is wrong doesn’t make a person clean. Only Jesus can clean us up. He’s the only one who paid the price that we deserve for all the wrong things we do. Jesus makes us clean (1 John 2.1-2) when we ask him to. It’s a bit like asking your parent or carer for money. You haven’t earned that money but it’s yours because of what your parent or carer have done. But you only get it when you ask for it.

The other incredible thing is that it was in the ‘madness and soil of that sad earthly scene’ (as some people may have seen it) that Jesus began his work on earth. It was in a stable in Bethlehem. But this was no sad scene. This was the beginning of God’s plan to make us clean and set us free.

1 John 2.1-2 (NIV and Message) – My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One... When he served as a sacrifice for our sins, he solved the sin problem for good—not only ours, but the whole world’s.

No Masters or Kings. No absolutes

“My Church offers no absolutes...”

One of the big lies that satan puts about is that we are our own master and that this is a good thing. But the truth is that there is a ‘master’ operating behind what people do that is against God. People can’t see it but they are being deceived by satan who treats people like a puppet on a string before throwing them away. But God is exactly the opposite. He picks us up, loves us, believes in us and he restores us.

The lie that goes along with this is that there are no ‘absolutes’. This means that there’s no real right or wrong – we all have our own beliefs and each belief is as good as another one. If you think about it, this can’t be true – there has to be a truth! We know that truth is a person – Jesus!

John 14.6 – Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’

Heaven

"The only heaven I'll be sent to is when I'm alone with you."

One thing that's quite hard to understand is how amazing heaven will be. We have some ideas from the Bible about heaven and about how God will reward us and create a new heaven and earth with no pain, sickness, disease or tears. This is amazing – but we know heaven will be so much more than we can even imagine. We have some people who have 'died' and gone to heaven and their accounts are also mind-blowing.

But if your heaven is simply being alone with another human then eventually you're going to be disappointed. No human can give us happiness or make us truly happy. But Jesus does offer us real life that will be forever. Life starts the day we invite Jesus into our hearts and will carry on outside of your life on earth and into eternity.

Church

It's hard to know whether the writer is having a pop at church and God. Read the lyrics again...

*If the heavens ever did speak
She's the last true mouthpiece
Every Sunday's getting more bleak
A fresh poison each week
'We were born sick, 'you heard them say it
My Church offers no absolutes....*

The writer says that *"if the heavens ever did speak, his lover is the last true mouthpiece."* The Bible tells us in many places like Psalm 19 that the heavens declare God's glory. Romans 1 says creation points to God so people are without excuse about knowing of God's existence.

"Every Sunday is getting more bleak, a fresh poison every week". If this is a quote about church then it's not true. I don't know about you but the only thing that gets more bleak each week is the mad state of the world around us with debt, terror, poverty and injustice. The only place that has the answer to this poison – is the church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the only hope for the world as Jesus is the only one who changes people! *"We were born sick."* The Bible tells us that this is basically true. Romans 3 tells us that everyone has sinned but that hope is found in Jesus to set us free from sin and darkness. If you are sick, you go to a doctor or hospital etc. If you're spiritually sick, there is only one Doctor (Exodus 15.26) and that is God!

Romans 3.23-24 – Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.

The Message

The Chorus

Take me to church

I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies

I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife

Offer me that deathless death

Good God, let me give you my life

In the chorus, if the writer is pointing towards church (I think he's talking about worshipping his lover). But if he's also talking about the church then he's wrong in what he says and right about other things.

Worshipping like a dog is a strange kind of image! A dog worships food mostly – plus walks and fuss! It's an instinctive creature and doesn't really think. Sometimes people talk about 'leaving your brain behind' when you go to church. But this isn't true. God made us – body, mind, soul and spirit. He gave us minds to think with. Actually modern science started with this revelation – that God has created an amazing world and given us amazing minds, so let's use them!

"The shrine of your lies". Many people think Christians are horrible or backward or controlling. But this is very rarely true and is put about because people don't understand. But there are no lies in the Bible or in the nature of God.

Finally, the writer offers up some kind of hope and prayer. He says, *"Offer me that deathless death. Good God, let me give you my life."* This is the first thing that he's got right! If you haven't seen it, the movie or book, "Heaven Is For Real" is a pretty good watch and good read. We know from the Bible that heaven is real and that when we give our lives to Jesus (say yes to him being the boss of our lives), we immediately step into 'everlasting life' – so our lives don't end when our earthly bodies die! We go to be with Jesus for ever in an amazing new heaven and earth.

"Good God, let me give you my life." This is the only real hope for people today. Everything else will fade away and die. Only God remains. He existed before time and he is beyond what we can understand. But he offers you eternal life – a real life – a good God-life. He's waiting for you to ask him today. Will you ask Jesus to come into your life and change you? Your hardest day with Jesus will be better than your worst day without him, even if you find it hard to believe.

Psalm 34.8- Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see—
how good God is. Blessed are you who run to him.

The Message

Just say these words as if you're speaking to God

God, I'm sorry for my sins and all I've done wrong. I turn from them and ask you to change me. Come into my heart and life Lord Jesus. I ask that you fill me with your Holy Spirit, I turn from all the past and know that you have forgiven me. I believe that you died and rose again and that you have given me new life. Amen!