

Annie: Here at That Sounds Fun, and at other That Sounds Fun Network, we love learning new things about podcasting and continuing to improve in the work that we do. And that's why we are so glad to learn about Anchor. If you haven't heard about Anchor, it's seriously the easiest way to make a podcast.

Let me explain, not only is it free, yeah, that means you pay zero dollars for it, but it has simple-to-use creation tools that allow you to record and edit your podcast right from your phone or computer, and Anchor will distribute your podcast for you. So people will be able to hear your content on Spotify, Apple Podcast, and all the other platforms that they love listening on.

Anchor even has ways that you can monetize your podcast with no minimum number of listeners. It's everything you need to create a podcast in one place. We hear from people all the time, who have great ideas and are looking for how to get their podcasts started. Well Anchor is what we use all across the That Sounds Fun Network, and we are just huge fans of how easy they make it to create a great podcast. So just download the free Anchor app or go to anchor.fm to get started, again, that's anchor.fm, or you can download the free Anchor app.

[00:01:01] <Music>

Annie: Hi friends, welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host, Annie F. Downs, I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store. And today on the show, it is my friends, your friends, you'll remember them from The Love Better Tour early in 2020, it's Mike Grayson and Cheryl Stark from Cross Point Music. Now y'all know that Cross Point is my church here in Nashville, and I'm humbled and honored to be a part of the teaching team there. So I get a literal front-row seat to the way that God is moving in the worship team there, and the songs that He's birthing through them.

So it's just so fun to get to share with you today about their new LP, "Never Going Back" that just released a couple of weeks ago. It's available anywhere you love to listen to music, and these songs were written, as you'll hear, during the pandemic, and they have so much meaning and encouragement for us as we listen and sing them. I think you're going to love this conversation and love that album. So here's my chat with Mike and Cheryl from Cross Point Music.

[00:02:11] <Music>

Annie: We're going, y'all ready?

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Okay. Mike and Cheryl, welcome back.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Uh!

Annie: I mean, this just feels very normal.

Mike: A little too normal.

Annie: Right? Let's just talk about it, we went on tour last year together, in '19 no '20-

Cheryl: 2020.

Annie: That's right.

Cheryl: We got a tour in 2020.

Mike: It was right before, wow.

Annie: I mean, not even right before, because we were on tour for two weekends. The Monday in between, Cross Point Church got hit by a tornado and virtually destroyed.

Cheryl: Yep.

Mike: Yeah. We left the show to go back to lead worship.

Cheryl: Yep.

Annie: Yeah, the next weekend. And then lockdown happened the next weekend.

Cheryl: That's right.

Annie: Right?

Mike: Wow.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: That is-

Mike: Doesn't that feel like forever ago?

Annie&Cheryl: Yeah.

Cheryl: I just get excited that we got a tour during 2020, you know?

Annie: I know.

Cheryl: It was like, "Wait when?" Literally days before.

Annie: Days, yeah.

Mike: Not just a tour, like my favorite tour I've ever done.

Cheryl: It was so fun.

Annie: Are you kidding?

Mike: Yes.

Annie: Oh my gosh!

Mike: I had more fun on that tour than anything-

Annie: I had, I don't know that I have laughed-

Cheryl: There were so many giggles.

Annie: Yeah, I don't know that I've laughed that hard.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: I sometimes go back, I have a folder of videos from the bus, and sometimes I'll go back and just watch them, and just scream laughing at you. Will you tell, Mike, will you tell about your phone that you used to have that connects to your phone?

Mike: I still have it.

Annie: You do.

Mike: I call it my business phone, and it's literally like an old-school phone, that you plug into your cell phone.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: That you can, it's very efficient.

Annie: So where you normally plug in your headphones.

Mike: Yes.

Annie: You plug this other phone and it is a hand-held?

Mike: Hand-held, yes, old-school, and it's amazing.

Cheryl: It's about like a rotary.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Yes, it's like a rotary phone.

Mike: My kids, literally, have no idea what it is.

Annie: Yeah, I'm sure.

Cheryl: It's landline.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: It is a landline.

Annie: I mean it is still funny that we still use the word, "Hey, when I hang up from this call." We don't-

Cheryl: True.

Annie: We don't hang anything up anymore.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Cheryl: We just hit stop or hit the red button. But we still say, "Hang up," and we teach our kids, hang up the phone, but they're not hanging anything up-

Mike: Would it matter-

Cheryl: That's so true.

Mike: ...if we started saying, "When I hit the red button?"

Annie: Right.

Mike: Instead of hanging up.

Cheryl: Or like touch 'End', "I'm about to touch 'End' on you." That sounds awful.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah, let's not do that.

Cheryl: Let's stick with hang up-

Annie: I don't want it... yeah, let's stick with hang up.

Annie: Mike, there's this one video of you singing, Adele's "Hello" into your business phone, and it is-

Mike: It is just, I mean, I'm an idiot all the time, so I can't keep track. But I mean, I believe that I did that.

Annie: Tell me... I believe you. Tell me what y'all, as we think back, we all go to the same church, are part of serving at the same church. When you think back to March of 2020, and I mean, we're back in our building, but not fully.

Mike: Right.

Annie: I have a lot of feelings about what this feels like too, I just feel like we are still barely heads above water a little bit.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Our team is working so hard to get the building back in place, and all the things. But, y'all's team can't all visit the church yet.

Mike: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: Right.

Mike: There's no offices yet. What is it, what do you feel?

Cheryl: Gosh, I think you're right when you say like, our heads are still, like, we're just keeping our heads above water. Because though we've opened the doors back to the church, we're officing remote. Some days we're together at a house in Germantown that we've been able to work out of, but some days we're working from home. So nothing feels very solid yet or stable, we're just still like being as flexible as possible, and it's difficult. I'm ready for like a home-base again, I'm ready to be like, "I'm going into work." And it's hard to get into a rhythm when every day is different, and rhythms are healthy for us. So that's probably I have trouble with that, and I'm learning, I have a three-month old.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And so I'm learning too that each day is going to have its own challenges, but each day has enough grace, and mercy for the day.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: So I'm trying not to get too far ahead, just operating one day at a time right now. And I think it's helping me stay healthy.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: I think there was a season, especially initially because we didn't have a building, and then COVID happened, and everyone's going remote. There was a season there where if, I wonder if blessing isn't the right word, but it forced us to be creative in ways that if we had a building, I don't think we would have been as creative.

Cheryl: Oh yeah.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: In just the way we did service, and the way we did worship.

Annie: Yeah, because a lot of churches got to just film on their stage-

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: ...and from the front of their church, and we weren't in our building for all of the services

Mike: Right. And, so, we kind of have this like archive of 2020, in all these different spots around our city, that I think is really beautiful.

Annie&Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Mike: I think now, as things are somewhat going back to normal isn't normal anymore, but you know what I mean. Now is when I feel the void of like, "Oh, but wait, there's still not a back to normal for us."

Cheryl: I thought you were going to say, "There's still not a back of the building."

Mike: Now, that's true too.

Annie: But it is true.

Cheryl: Really not.

Mike: I mean-

Annie: Still no back of the building.

Cheryl: Sorry.

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, so I think, just the last couple of months is when I've really felt what you're talking about.

Cheryl: Yep.

Annie: I feel it really profoundly every Sunday right now, because I think there will come a time probably soon-ish, where we will be back in this building, like normal.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: And we will be fine, and we will go, "Gosh, that was hard." But like we're still in the middle and most people are on the other side of their church is not meeting during COVID.

Cheryl: Right.

Annie: And most people in town are on the other side of their places being repaired from a tornado of March of 2020, and we're not. And it just, it feels very, I feel like it's a long season for our hearts.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Does that feel true?

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yeah. I think grieving is healthy, but like when you're ready to move forward to the healing, but you're still not really able, it's like, "Oh, I don't want to be here anymore."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Especially as an Enneagram Seven-

Annie: Me too-

Cheryl: ..."I don't want to be here anymore."

Annie: ..."Get me out of here, I did my term let me out."

Cheryl: Can I have a TV on the first floor, somebody, just give me an office.

Annie: That's right, that's right. And to be clear, we know our church and insurance, everybody is doing the most they can. It is-

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: ...no one is not, no one is going, "I hope this takes longer."

Cheryl: No.

Annie: Everyone's doing the very best they can, it's just not in the timing that Mike, and Cheryl, and Annie, were hoping for. Yeah. And yet in the middle of this, y'all kept writing songs?

Cheryl: Yeah. Yeah.

Annie: When y'all started Cross Point Music, you were writing a song in a season where our founding pastor had left.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Pastor Kevin, pastor of the pod. Kevin had just come and we were seeing some amazing new things, and that's really when y'all started writing songs, correct?

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yeah, I would say so, yeah.

Annie: How different are the songs you're writing now than the first ones you wrote?

Cheryl: Well, I'll say this, when, let's go back a little bit.

Annie: Okay, go.

Cheryl: To the time where we didn't have Pastor Kevin yet.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: We were realizing that our worship team was singing the same songs, but from a different place. And it felt like we were singing the same songs from a place of desperation.

Annie: Wow.

Cheryl: And anytime you do that, something's going to shift.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: So we felt a shifting already before Pastor Kevin had gotten there.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Kind of this, it was refreshing in a way that, "Man, we are desperate for God to move. We need a lead pastor, we need direction and vision for our church." And so that was like the first step, I believe. And then right around when he got there, was when we started the process of Cross Point Music, I feel like we had "Right Now"

Annie: "Right now?"

Cheryl: Yeah, "Right Now" so good, Mike sings that one. We did, "Living Hope" and that was kind of the beginning of Cross Point Music. And once he got there, I think what's been really foundational for me, is that he started these Tuesday prayer hours.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: You've been there, you've led some.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And it was in that time, that one-hour space on Tuesdays, where I felt the Lord speaking the most about what's happening in the heartbeat of Cross Point.

Mike: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Wow.

Cheryl: And I would jot down notes, and I would jot down what would eventually become lyrics.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And we had some writing retreats, where we were able to partner with some of our worship leaders and songwriters, and that was where that started. But for me, that was always a home-base, that prayer hour.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: So, and that was birthed because Kevin is like, "Hey prayer, we pray first, we pray before we do anything."

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Cheryl: So that's been really foundational in my perspective as a songwriter for our church.

Annie: Mike, I think, one of the reasons I want us to think through this as we're talking, is like the season we're in as a church is not accidental.

Mike: Right.

Annie: And the songs y'all are writing that are out on this, "Never Going Back" LP, I mean, they go hand-in-hand.

Mike: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Like, God is putting songs in y'all for our church, that we're getting to share with the world.

Mike: Right.

Annie: But you're writing them for our church first, in a season where things are unknown and things are not normal.

Mike: Right.

Annie: How has that played out on "Never Going Back"?

Mike: Yeah, so I will say it like, we never write for a record.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Meaning like an artist might say, "Oh, I need to write songs for this record." We write songs for our church.

Annie: Right.

Mike: And, honestly, we didn't know we were writing a record until-

Annie: Really?

Mike: ...probably halfway through, where I started looking at Cheryl and going, "These songs are starting to like, there's a theme here."

Cheryl: Tell a story.

Mike: You know, like we're telling a story. And I remember very specifically at the beginning of the pandemic, people calling saying, "Oh, the Lord must be filling you with songs."

Annie: Oh, really?

Mike: And like, "You have so much material."

Cheryl: And we're like, "No."

Mike: And I'm like, "I am empty."

Cheryl: "We are in the desert."

Mike: Like, I just remember feeling so much pressure to put words to what was happening, and yet I didn't know how to do that yet.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Ah.

Mike: And so we had been writing a little bit.

Cheryl: Yeah, before.

Mike: And then I remember-

Annie: Wait, tell me why you didn't have, why you didn't have anything? What was going on in your brain?

Mike: I think I was still processing all of it.

Annie: The tornado and Covid-

Cheryl: Yes.

Mike: All of it, man, we just never got a break.

Cheryl: Right.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: So it was like tornado-

Annie: Yeah, because we were on tour.

Mike: ...it was tour, tornado, pandemic. And Cheryl and I, yes, we write songs for the church, but we also lead 300 volunteers.

Annie: Yeah. Oh my gosh!

Mike: So there's just a lot of practical work-

Annie: And it's [Crosstalk 00:12:40] because of our different campuses-

Mike: Different campuses.

Annie: And y'all lead all the worship teams in all the campuses.

Cheryl: Yeah. How to navigate for them as well.

Annie: Oh my gosh, y'all!

Cheryl: It was just not the most perfect place for us to be creative.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: It's like we needed a moment to heal, and be lifted.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And I just remember just saying, "Okay, Lord, I'm okay if there's nothing, but I also know you have something for our church." And it was kind of midway through, like, the thick of being at home, socially distanced, no one leaving, that we had a write schedule that was completely on Zoom.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: And we ended up writing a song called, "Oh, the Wonder."

Annie: Yeah, I love that song.

Mike: And I remember at that write, before going into it, just being like-

Annie: Had you written on Zoom at all yet?

Cheryl: Yeah-

Mike: Yeah, a couple of times.

Cheryl: ...we had tried, with different writers.

Annie: Okay, got it.

Mike: Which was rough at first.

Cheryl: Yeah, I was like, "I don't know if I can do this."

Mike: We were like, "This is not going to happen."

Cheryl: We had not written a full song.

Mike: Right. And this was, I told Cheryl after that write, I felt like the clouds had parted.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Wow.

Mike: And I just specifically remember feeling like, okay, some of the songs on this LP specifically were for the moment.

Annie: Right.

Mike: And then some of the songs were prophetic.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And prophetic is a scary word for some people, it literally just means where's God taking us.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: That's right.

Mike: And putting words ahead of time, so that they're there when we need them.

Annie: Right.

Mike: And, "Oh, the Wonder" was one of those, where I was like, "There's going to be a time where we need to remind the church that there is joy."

Annie: Wow.

- Mike:** And I mean, that bridge, "I've got joy that's found in a heavenly hope."
- Annie:** Yeah.
- Mike:** "Peace like a river down in my soul." Like things that in the moment we were not feeling, like it felt heavy.
- Cheryl:** Yeah.
- Mike:** But it was like, no-
- Cheryl:** Let's hold on to that.
- Mike:** ...we need to remind our people that there is joy in the presence of the Lord no matter what.
- Annie:** Right.
- Mike:** And that was the write where we finished, and it was like, "Okay, God, what are you doing?" And then it started to take shape.
- Cheryl:** Yeah, show us some other.
- Mike:** Yes.
- Annie:** Cheryl, so many of our friends listening are like in the middle of that, whatever their that is, right? Like they want this season to be over. They thought the building would be back by now, whatever their building is.
- Cheryl:** Yeah.
- Annie:** They thought the pandemic of their life would be over, but it's not. And what is the thing about worship, and what is the thing about singing before you feel it?
- Cheryl:** Oh, yes, I am so passionate about this, I know you know that. Worship, in the presence of the Lord there is an abundance of, and you could fill in the blank.
- Annie:** Yes.
- Cheryl:** It's peace, joy, it's freedom. So I'm like, "Lord, I need to be in your presence, how do I get into your presence?" I believe that worship, for me and for so many people, is one of the easiest ways. I mean, literally turning up a worship song or singing an old hymn that you remember as a kid.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: In the place of worship worry cannot happen. You cannot worry and worship at the same time.

Annie: Oh, somebody is writing that down.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: You cannot literally my body can't.

Cheryl: You can't, you literally can't.

Annie: I cannot worry and worship. I cannot be dry and wet at the same time in the pool.

Cheryl: That's right.

Mike: That's so good.

Annie: You're either wet or dry?

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: So you are either worshipping or worrying, and you cannot do both.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: That's so good, Cheryl.

Cheryl: You cannot do both at the same time. And, to the critic who might say, "Well, if you worship, that means you're just suppressing what you're going through." I think you are pulling that out, you are pulling it into the light.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: And you are processing it through worship.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: And the Lord is sorting that stuff out.

Annie: That's right.

Mike: That's right.

Cheryl: So if you can just get into worship, whether it's like you turn it on the radio, or an old song, or whatever, there is no worry in worship.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: And so that has helped me through so many seasons. And I believe even if people listening, if you've never done it, or you're agreeing with me continue to do that. Because it will change the way that you even perceive your situation, your current situation.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And let's talk about like being honest, that's why we record these songs. We're not trying to be famous, or be a band, or an artist, we are literally recording songs-

Cheryl: Of hope.

Mike: ...of hope, and honestly, a weapon in that mindset. Like we are hopefully giving you bullets for your gun, to fight the enemy every day in your week, not just on Sunday.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: And that's why it's important for us, that we literally put these down for people to take with them.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yes.

Mike: It's not about anything else, it's literally, let's equip people. Because we believe, like you said, in the presence of Jesus is all we need.

Annie&Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: And how do we get there?

Annie: I mean, I remember, I'm about to show my 41-year oldness, but I remember the first time I could take a CD home, from church where we had sung those songs in church.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: And I spun that thing, I could not believe it. I could not believe that these songs that made me cry and worship as a teenager, I could now have in my room.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: I mean, like, kids, these days, they don't know any of that, but I clearly remember that switch in high school. And so Mike, one of the things when we were on tour in Dallas, with Matt and Lauren Chandler, people can go back and listen to that episode. Matt and Lauren, one of the things, Matt, he just taught Revelation, and he said, "One of the things it says in Revelation, is that we sing in the face of the enemy."

Mike: Wow.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Right?

Mike: So what is that? Talk to people about like, maybe people are brand new to worship music at all, like teenage Annie, or maybe they've been listening for forever. But what does it mean to actually like put the music on in your house, when something's going sideways?

Mike: Right.

Annie: Or in your car when you just had a meeting that broke your heart? What does it do to actually worship in the face of, because we do have an enemy, what does it do?

Mike: So, you know, we hear people use the term like atmosphere a lot in church. And I get why some people are like, "What does that even mean?"

Annie: The Christianese is shifting the atmosphere.

Mike: Right, like shift the atmosphere.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: I mean, literally what we're saying is we are inviting Jesus, we are inviting the Holy Spirit into whatever space that is. So that atmosphere can be your car, it can be your home, it can literally be your ears, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And I really do, one of my favorite songs is "10,000 Reasons".

Cheryl: That's right.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And one of that is because you're saying, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul." You are telling your soul, that means I might not feel it.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Emotionally, I might not be there, but I'm saying, "You bless the Lord my soul, sing." Because there is something that shifts, when we literally open our mouths.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And I think there is so much power, in the same way that I could think all day long, "Man, I love Annie and Cheryl, they're two of my best friends." But when I say, "Annie, I love you, you're one of my best friends." Like, what does that do for you?

Annie: Right.

Mike: But what does that do for me?

Annie: Right.

Mike: Right? Like I get to experience the joy of saying it out loud.

Annie: Wow.

Cheryl: That's good.

Mike: And so that's the relationship between us and the Father.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Is like, He might know, but like for us to literally open our mouth and tell Him, that's why it's praise and worship.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Because praise is all about Him, like, "Lord, take me out of the equation, I don't matter, it's you."

Annie: Yeah, I don't matter. I don't matter.

Mike: And then worship is open hands, like, "Lord, I am now creating a back and forth dialogue." And that is literally what the enemy tries to stop.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Right.

Mike: If he knows that there's a dialogue, there's a back and forth, that we are literally hearing from the Holy Spirit.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: That is game over for him.

Annie: That is game over, that's right.

Mike: And so that's what we're doing, we're just saying, "Literally open your mouth." Because that is, and there's songs about the highway, like the highway of the lord.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And it's that. It's like a direct connection to Jesus.

Annie: Yeah,

Mike: So, yeah, I think, it's very important to physically open your mouth and sing.

Cheryl: Yes.

[00:20:31] <Music>

Annie: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, Genexa. Genexa was started around the crazy idea, "What if we made medicine with ingredients that help make you feel better, not worse?" Genexa, is the first clean medicine company, founded by two dads on a mission to make every-day medicines with the same effective, active ingredients you need, without the dirty stuff like artificial dyes, or preservatives, and fillers.

Whether you need to manage pain, allergies, or just the common cold, Genexa, treats the same symptoms as the leading brands, because they use the exact same active ingredients. But none of the extra non-clean stuff that you don't need, it just makes too much sense. It really makes you wonder why somebody didn't do this before now, it is 2021, right?

Genexa has a huge network of healthcare professionals across the U.S. helping patients and their families join the clean medicine revolution. It's real medicine made clean. Start cleaning out your medicine cabinet today, go to genexa.com/thatsoundsfun for 20% off your first purchase. Again, that's genexa.com/thatsoundsfun for 20% off your first purchase, genexa.com/thatsoundsfun. And now back to my conversation with Mike and Cheryl.

[00:21:46] <Music>

Why do we need new songs? Why can't we, because I love my, I mean, I learned to play piano by playing a three-octave keyboard to a hymnal.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: Right?

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: So why do we need new songs and where's the room for the old, why don't we ever sing hymnal songs at Cross Point?

Cheryl: Well, we do sometimes, but it might be like a stanza.

Annie: Okay.

Cheryl: It's like, we're going to nod to "I Surrender All".

Annie: Right. Right.

Cheryl: I think first of all, biblically, "Sing unto the Lord a new song." So you can literally just-

Annie: Oh she just dropped a Scripture on me.

Cheryl: You could just take that.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Cheryl: And that'd be enough reason.

Annie: That's right.

Cheryl: I think that language is so powerful. We were still, I mean, think about all the revisions of the Bible, right? If we were all still in New King James or King James, we don't speak like that now. We don't speak with, "Thou sayest the Lord."

Annie: Mike does.

Cheryl: A 'th' at the end of everywhere word.

Mike: Only when I want to sound important.

Cheryl: Thou sayest Mike.

Annie: Thou sayest Mike.

Cheryl: No but language is important, and it's powerful to put things in a modern-day language for people in the way that they would speak it.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Is probably how they should sing it.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Something that feels believable for them. There's some songs on the record that I'm super excited about, that actually are things that we throw around all the time at Cross Point. We've got a song called, "We're Ready" that is the last song on the record.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: And that was from a place of, Pastor Kevin always saying, "What up there, come down here."

Annie: Yes. Yes.

Cheryl: And if you think about that for a minute, it's like, "Wait, what up there, come down here." I mean, that literally is asking for kingdom to come to earth. Like the Father's, there's the Lord's prayer, like the Father's prayer, the Lord's prayer, says, "Kingdom come."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And I love that we're able to equip the church with something that makes sense, with even more words around what it means like for kingdom to come.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: "What up there come down here. Eyes to see, ears to hear. Hearts that love, hands that pray. Feet that move, hope for today. Come revive what's been dead. Fill us with the words you've said. Until we are walking with you in eternity." So that's what it looks like to have kingdom here, to have kingdom come here, is to be the hands and feet of Jesus, as the body. God, we're ready, we're ready to follow you to the promised land. So it's important that we're writing for right now.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: We're not just leaning on the times of the past. I love a good nod to the past, girl, I love hymns.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: But it's important that we're writing for the now.

Mike: Right. And it's the difference between like, do you have those, this is what I love about music. I can put on a record from 10 years ago, and it takes me right back-

Annie: Right there.

Mike: ...to like a specific moment, even a season. Like there are certain records, where I'm like, "That's fall, for me." or "That's summer." Or "That's whatever."

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And I think there are those moments where it's like, "Okay, Lord, remind me of what you've done in my past." Right?

Annie: Right.

Mike: So that's a hymn. Like, "Remind us Lord." But then that is riding on somebody else's faith, in a way.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: Of like, okay, new songs are, "Lord I trust you with what's next."

Annie: Wow.

Mike: So it's about remembering His faithfulness, but then also trusting Him with what's next.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Annie: I'm having that experience right now. Because randomly on my Spotify, the old Vineyard "Hungry" album came up from '98, '99-

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: ...when I was in college, I was just starting college. And I was on my vacation, just like crying with these old songs, and being like, "I have not sang this **[Inaudible 00:25:24]** Lord, since half of my life ago."

Mike: Right.

Annie: "But she meant it and so do I."

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Like that's one of the reasons I, even so many of our Cross Point Music songs do that to me, because of the seasons we've been in.

Mike: Right.

Annie: That's why I wanted us to start talking about where we are right now as a Church, and where our building is, and what we've experienced? Because so many of these songs, that y'all have out now are a direct results of choosing faith when we couldn't see.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Annie: And we got to keep doing that, right?

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Okay, so when I look through the track list of this album, the good thing is we have other EPs, and people can go back and get the ones that y'all were writing before 2020.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Mike: Right.

Annie: But these are 2020, 2021 songs, like "Better" like I can't with "Better". It's one of the best things I've ever, I mean, I've ever heard. And y'all wrote it with Jarrod Morris-

Cheryl: Yes

Annie: **[Inaudible 00:26:15]** And Kristy, right?

Mike: Yeah, Kristy Nordhoff, yeah.

Annie: I mean, okay, tell me about writing that song, because it makes me have all the feelings.

Cheryl: Yes.

Mike: Cheryl, you are going to tell this one.

Cheryl: So we had been in Zoom mode for months, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: We're in the middle of the pandemic, and there was like a little bit of a lift, we had been quarantining enough to go, "Hey, let's write in person."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And I will never forget showing up, and I was like-

Annie: At someone's house? Where do we write songs?

Cheryl: Oh yeah, we wrote this one at Kristy Nordhoff's house.

Annie: Okay, I was about to say to y'all, "Did y'all have to go to a studio?" I've never written a song."

Cheryl: No. You could write it anywhere.

Mike: You can write them anywhere.

Annie: Okay.

Cheryl: So I walk in, and I remember giving Jarrod a hug, and it was like, I latched onto him and could not let go, and I just wept. And he was like, "You're hugging too much for too long." He's like, "You okay, you okay?" And I think I was just completely overwhelmed with seeing my brothers, and Kristy in person again.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Because you just see Zoom, it's like neck up.

Annie: Right. Right.

Cheryl: It's like, you're real, and I'd missed relationship, and I'd missed in-person creative time.

Annie&Matt: Yeah.

Cheryl: So that was, I'll never forget that day, it was overwhelming for me to say the least of just being in-person again. And then Mike, you could probably tell a little bit more about it. But in that moment, when we were writing that song, Mike had shared about a friend who had been really hurt by the church that he was working in.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Cheryl: And it was like, "Man, but what does Jesus say to those people who have either messed up or been hurt?" God welcomes them, He welcomes them because His love is so much better than the love that we, as humans, can offer.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: We give a conditional love. The love of the Father is unconditional. So let's write a song about that, let's write a song about how welcoming He is, come as you are. So that for me was like a pretty huge day in the pandemic creatively.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah. And I mean, I wrote on almost all these songs.

Cheryl: You wrote on all seven.

Mike: But this one is, I think, my favorite.

Annie: Really?

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: It's pretty personal.

Mike: And I can't really put my finger on it, except for the fact that it is just such, I love a simple truth.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And it is just that. And the way that the song ends, it says, "For this generation and all those to come, to Him, be the glory for all that He's done. His name is Jesus and He won't be outdone, His love is better."

Cheryl: Yes.

Mike: And I'm just like, "U-huh." Like I don't know-

Cheryl: That's when you throw your shoe?

Mike: **[Inaudible 00:28:44]** like, I don't know, it's a very different song for us as far as lyrically and the way we wrote it, and it just, it feels like such a beautiful thank you note to the Lord.

Cheryl: Oh that's sweet.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: So I don't know, I just, I really liked that one.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Let's sing Jarrod Morris's, "Praises" for a minute.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: I mean-

Mike: That guy.

Annie: ...incredibly good songwriter, a worship leader who has been faithful to our church for over 15 years.

Cheryl: A generation?

Annie: Yeah, a generation?

Cheryl: A 100 years.

Annie: Give him a lot of credit.

Mike: Okay, he is not that good.

Annie: Yeah **[Crosstalk 00:29:18]** is what I meant. 15 years probably, right?

Mike: 15 years-

Cheryl: Over 15 years.

Mike: ...or more, yeah.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: How does that play in when someone like that sits down, to write a song for a church he served for 15, 16 years, plus. How does that play in, when someone like that sits down to write a song for a church he's served for 15, 16 years, plus. How does that play into the kind of song that comes out?

Cheryl: Well, I tell you what Jarrod Morris is one of the most selfless people that I've ever gotten to know well. He continually teaches me what it looks like to servant-lead people, to do things without regard for if it benefits self.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: And he's one of the best coaches, and he will not take the praise, he'll be like, "Stop, stop, stop." And he will just serve relentlessly. And for somebody like him, who has been with the church that long, and is still so selfless, I'm like, "How is that even possible?"

Annie: Right.

Cheryl: You have so much equity with everyone, you know the ins and outs of everything in process, but yet he holds it so loosely. I'm like, "I'm so grateful to work with him."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And to see how he does it.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Because it influences me so much.

Annie: Me too. Me too.

Mike: But it's also, I mean, Jarrod was the OG, like he was the original worship leader, was there for a very long time. And there, there was a season, a couple of years

back where he kind of stepped off the stage, so he wasn't necessarily leading. And I know for him, it was kind of like, "All right, Lord, how am I supposed to lead?"

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Mike: And it's so cool for me now to see him still leading our church.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: Even though it might not be like onstage singing-

Cheryl: He's really pastoring a lot of our volunteers.

Mike: ...he is speaking into what is on the lips of our people, and I think that's so beautiful.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Mike, when you're talking about those lyrics from, "Better"

Mike: "For this generation and all those to come."

Annie: Keep going.

Mike: "To Him be the glory for all that He's done. His name is Jesus and He won't be out done, His love is better."

Annie: I just wonder there, none of the three of us, have the exact lives we'd thought we'd have.

Mike: Right.

Annie: None of us have everything we've prayed for. None of us are getting exactly what we want, and all of us have dealt with tragedies, and sadness. So for our friends listening, who think, I mean, "I want to believe that Jesus is better."

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: "And doesn't feel like that." How do we dance that line of what our feelings and experience is telling us, and what that song says is true?

Mike: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: Man, I think we take a moment to pause because there's no perfect answer.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: And we've all been there.

Annie: Right.

Cheryl: Yeah, we've all been there.

Mike: You know what I mean? That's the thing, I think the thing that I've found always to be true is, and that's why I say like singing out loud is important.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: Because worshiping through the unknown is one of the most beautiful gifts, I think, the Lord gives us. Meaning if we always knew, we always knew how it was going to turn out, we always knew the ending, there's no trust involved, there's no dependence involved.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: There's no clinging to what He's done before, trusting that He'll do it again. Like, so where, when you get through, I mean, what a beautiful moment when you go, "Ah, I see it, I see it, Lord." You know what I mean? And so I think I've gotten to a place in my life, and I'm literally in the middle of it now, where trusting the Lord in the unknown is a gift.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: It's a gift, and it's like, instead of seeing it as an attack or seeing it as-

Cheryl: An obligation.

Mike: ...yeah, the Lord not showing up, it's just like, "Okay, like, Lord, this is a gift because I know, because I've seen you do it before." That there will be the moment where I can look back and say, "For this generation and all those to come, to Him, be the glory for all that He's done, His love is better."

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: To that I also think, in my opinion, I think not believing is the easier way out. I think when you believe it's going to be hard, because it's going to be hard to choose Him every day.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: But 2 Corinthians, says, "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" Which if you think about you're like, "What the world doesn't teach that when you're weak?"

Annie: mm-mm.

Cheryl: Nothing is powerful, you just feel weak, right?

Annie: Right.

Cheryl: And it says, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." So when you are weak, His power can rest on you.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: "That is why for Christ's sake I delight in weakness, and insults, in hardships, in persecutions, and in difficulties." That is so opposite-

Annie: Yeah, I don't like any of those.

Cheryl: ...to what we want to do. Like, "I don't want to do that."

Annie: Yeah, I'm not interested.

Cheryl: What do you mean "rejoice in suffering"? What do you mean?

Annie: Right.

Cheryl: So don't run from that, choose that, seek the Lord in that, and His power will rest on you.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: His strength will rest on you, and you can't understand it, right? It surpasses understanding, but it is true and it will happen, and it will fall on you. So just keep choosing Him in those tough moments and His power will be made known.

Annie: Yeah, yeah.

Cheryl: Yeah.

[00:34:53] <Music>

Annie: Hey y'all, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about another one of our amazing partners, Olive & June. Listen, you know this about me, I am here for a good manicure. I love having my nails done. The challenge is that I would definitely call myself an amateur at painting my own nails. I mean, I do my best, but they end up looking so messy, and chipping within like a day. But then the alternative is paying a lot of money to get regular salon manicures. Olive & June's Mani System is our new best friend, y'all. Now we know that DIY manis that looks salon perfect, and last over a week are possible. Olive & June's Mani System comes with everything you need, for a beautiful DIY manis on one box, and even better it is only five steps. It comes with a Poppy, that's like flexible, easy-to-grip brush handle that you can change out on all the bottles of polish. It's comfortable to hold, so it steadies your hand and makes it so easy to paint with both of them.

That means both hands end up looking good, with a smooth manicured nails instead of one looking great, and one not so much. The Mani System, with six polishes breaks down to \$2 a manicure, y'all. I mean, listen, I used to spend a lot more than that on just one manicure, and Olive & June's polish is amazing. I love the color options, including glitter and their polish is so shiny, it looks like gel and it does not chip, y'all, and lasts over seven days. I couldn't believe it, this never happens with polish, and my nails look great, and I did it myself.

The Olive & June's Mani System is the secret behind salon and perfect nails at home. All-in-one, no guessing, no messy nails, no salon price tag. And as one of my friends, you get 20% off your first Mani System at oliveandjune.com with my code THATSOUNDSFUN, your new nail life is here, y'all. So get 20% off your first Mani System, when you use the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN at oliveandjune.com. We're done with the expensive, bad manicures, this is the new us now, you guys. Again, that's oliveandjune.com and the promo code is THATSOUNDSFUN. And now back to finish my conversation with Mike and Cheryl.

[00:36:55] <Music>

Annie: My counselor this week said, "Yeah, I guess if the situation was going the way you thought it would, that'd be pretty boring, wouldn't it? And I was like, "Yeah, that's not fair." You can't say it, but yet she's right.

Cheryl: Sometimes that'd be so great though. Can we just have that?

Annie: Sometimes that would be great, but also I mean, the gift in trusting. I mean, Mike and I were talking this week about this song that Shane and Shane just released called, "Catch Me Singing" did y'all listen to it yet?

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Oh, it is. Because the whole idea is I want God to catch me singing, when He does the thing.

Cheryl: When He does the thing.

Annie: I don't want Him to catch me moaning, though I do moan and complain, and we're allowed to feel a whole range of feelings.

Mike: Right.

Annie: But I do, I mean, I am trying to be found faithful.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: And for Him to catch me singing when the, it says, "When the springtime comes."

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: I mean, it's just beautiful.

Cheryl: That's beautiful.

Mike: I mean, how many times do you have those moments, where you assume something, you did something you were complaining, and had such a nasty attitude. And then something happens where you go, "Oops." Like chewing

mouth, like "I kind of ruined the ending because I just complained my way through it."

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Where it's like, "Man, to have that moment where you go, "I knew it, I knew it, thank you Lord." You know what I mean? Like that "Catch Me Singing" like, that's, I love that.

Cheryl: A simple truth that I'm holding on to, redefining right now, as a 33-year-old woman, is walk by faith and not by sight. That's like a pretty known verse, but I think I've always just said it, "Walk by faith and not by sight."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And to literally not walk with vision means you are blind.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: And if you are blind, I mean, I can't imagine it, so if anyone blind is listening-

Annie: Yeah, I'm sure.

Cheryl: They know how to navigate it, and it is with grief, but also with joy, I'm sure. But I cannot, I'm learning that right now. What does it look like to really be blind, to not know where tomorrow is? Because as much as I think I know what tomorrow is going to bring, and the plans I have, I'm just holding on, till I feel like the visual is that I'm holding onto the arm of this big strong Father.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And He's just like, "Just lean into me, and I will direct your path.

Annie: I'll walk you.

Cheryl: Because I don't know where tomorrow is leading. But walk by faith, but my faith is in Him that He will lead.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: So I don't know, as a long-time believer I'm redefining that for the first time.

Annie: Yeah, I have a big thought in my head that I haven't spiraled down to an actual thought yet. So this is high-level what I'm saying to y'all. Not high-level smart, but just like top of the funnel-

Mike: Are you about to say thous?

Annie: Yeah, I'm going to say a lot of thous right now. We really don't talk about faith very much, like in Christian life. I mean, I know we say, "Walk by faith," but we don't talk about like, are you actually believing for what you don't? I mean, faith is being sure of what you hope for-

Mike: Hope for, yeah.

Cheryl: Right, what you cannot see.

Annie: I mean that's like, y'all want to write that down for a minute? You want to like talk about just that one sentence, faith is being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you don't see? I don't do that, right? Do you all do, I mean, I don't do that as a regular practice? I'm not sure of what I hope for?

Cheryl: Right. Right.

Annie: And so I'm just having these, when you bring up walk by faith and not by sight, I'm like, "That's why we need worship."

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: It's because otherwise I'm worrying. But if when I worship I walk by faith, and I get sure of what I hope for, and certain of what I can see-

Cheryl: So you can choose, you are either going to walk by faith, or you're going to walk by sight. If you walk by sight, you're holding on tight, you're trying to control.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And the truth is it's not going to happen the way you want.

Annie: Right.

Cheryl: And it's going to be a lot harder, I think.

Annie: Okay, so talk about, "Everything Changes" because I feel like this song kind of speaks right into this.

Cheryl: Yeah. You want me to go for it?

Mike: Yeah, you can start, yeah.

Cheryl: Okay, so, "Everything Changes" was actually written right before the pandemic.

Annie: Really?

Cheryl: Right before was where we started it, let me say that.

Annie: Wow.

Cheryl: This song on the record was the one that we probably put the most time into finishing. We started it right after Cross Point Church had done a 24-hour time of prayer in our auditorium.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: We'd never done that before.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: And when-

Annie: Is it when we read the Scripture? No.

Cheryl: No, no.

Annie: No, that was a different time, okay.

Cheryl: This was just a time where there was music throughout-

Annie: That's right-

Cheryl: It was kind of open to the public 24-hours of just prayer and even fasting. Mike, myself, Jarrod Morris, and Kiley, got together the morning after it ended.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And Jarrod Morris and I got to close up that final hour of the 24, and I think it was like 4:30 in the morning. Pastor Kevin was there and a couple of other people, I mean, that is like, "Ooh, twilight zone."

Annie: Right.

Cheryl: And as we finished, in the final moment, we finished a prayer and a time of music.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: It was so still in that auditorium. And I'm talking, I couldn't say a word, I didn't want to open my eyes, I started to cry, and I was experiencing a very tangible presence of the Holy Spirit, and He was in the room. And I think some of us we've never felt that before.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And for me, it has been probably a decade since I felt that thick, heavy presence, that the Lord is right here. And Pastor Kevin came over, and I was thinking, "I think the Father is just delighting in what we just offered to Him." And Pastor Kevin came over and said, "I think the Father is delighting."

Annie: Okay.

Cheryl: And I was like, "What?" Like I just cried. And I looked at Jarrod, and Jarrod and I always tell jokes, and like crack each other up, and we just looked each other and it was felt, it was felt amongst the people that were there.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And so when we came into the write, sometimes you have themes you want to write towards. Sometimes we're writing for a series that Pastor Kevin's going to preach about, but in that moment-

Annie: Or anybody in the teaching team, aha!

Cheryl: Or anybody on the teaching team.

Annie: Cheryl?

Cheryl: Annie, that's right.

Annie: ...I'm right here, Cheryl.

Cheryl: Listen, we could not start that write without saying, "Man, let us tell you what happened this morning."

Annie: Wow.

Cheryl: Everything changed. Everything changes when we invite Jesus into our situation.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And so that's where it kind of was created from, was that moment in the room. Where that tangible presence was felt, and it was, I mean, it was like talking about awe and wonder. I was like, "I can't move." Like, "If I move, I'm going to mess this up." So I just stayed there and I was like just crying, but it was beautiful. And, you know what? I haven't felt that again, and that's been over a year now, so just grateful for that moment, and it helped us create, "Everything Changes."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: And literally until the night before we recorded this song, which was-

Annie: Over a year.

Cheryl: ...well, I think it was about nine months in total.

Annie: Oh, like a baby.

Cheryl: Yeah, nine, 10 months, hello, we were reworking the melody-

Annie: Wow.

Cheryl: So it never sat just right, so that one we wrestled with for a while, and it ended up being one of the ones on the record.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: Mike, when we talk about, this is a theology question, so put your pastor hat on.

Mike: Okay.

Cheryl: Scary, don't look at me.

Annie: So get ready.

Mike: Thou it's ready. It's, I don't know if that's one of the ones, but okay.

Annie: Wow that's not, no you're not leading this right.

Mike: Okay, so this is not, then that's foreshadowing to what is about to happen.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: You can change your podcasts to Thou Sounds Fun. Thou Soundeth Fun.

Annie: That's right. Mike when we talk about, I just want us to take a minute, like God is everywhere.

Mike: Right.

Annie: So what's the difference when we feel the Holy Spirit or when we feel a room feel different. I mean, it happens at Cross Point pretty frequently in the middle of a worship service. Sometimes Kevin and I, will like look at each other and be like, "Something feels different."

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: And I think the Holy Spirit uses our feelings like that. So if God is everywhere, how does worship also bring about this presence, this feeling?

Mike: Right. Well, so in the same way Scripture talks about two or more.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: And when we unite around prayer, there is something about a collective of people joining together in one thing, calling out to the Lord.

Annie: Aha.

Mike: I think there is something that's why we sing the same song together.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Mike: Because there are moments in worship where, depending on your setting, a worship leader might say, "Sing your own song in." And the room, erupts in a symphony of different songs, right? So there's moments for that. But when we

come together and we sing the same melody, and the same lyric, that is us joining our hearts together-

Annie: I've never thought about this-

Mike: ...in praise or plea to the Lord, right? And so the beautiful thing is this, the Holy Spirit, the Lord is everywhere. This isn't unique to one church, one setting, this is literally at all times, at any time, right. But I do think that He delights in that His people coming together, and joining hearts. And whether that's praise, or plea, or prayer, there is something that you tangibly feel when that happens. That you don't get on your own, which is why I think it is the body is so important, that's why corporate worship is important. Your prayer time, your worship time on your own is very important-

Cheryl: Vey.

Mike: But doing that with others, is a completely different expression.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: That is also just as important.

Annie&Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: That's why, I mean, everybody listening, all our friends know that I'm real pro-church, I'm pro-church.

Cheryl: Yeah, everybody,

Annie: Everybody needs to go. Because I know that we have a lot of friends listening, who've been very hurt by a church experience in their lives.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: Yes.

Cheryl: And we, the three of us sitting at this table, had a pretty traumatic church experience in 2016.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: I mean, there are, we have friends who we can call on the phone, who will not go back to church because of what happened at our church in 2016.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: And it makes me furious.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Annie: But, so, we've been through it too. But you're right, Mike, there is something about sitting around all these people and going, "Man, I don't know what went on in your week, but we're all singing." Hope is awakened when you walk in the room to the Lord. Like we're all singing the same thing at the same time.

Cheryl: That's right.

Annie: And it matters.

Mike: It matters, but it also, this is what I love, yes, you have people on stage, who have microphones that are called worship leaders. But I feel so passionately about the fact that every person in the room is leading.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Mike: Meaning-

Cheryl: Leading the person next to them.

Mike: ...I might be standing next to you.

Annie: I can lead as an alto then, is that all right?

Cheryl: Yes, girl.

Mike: Right. Because you know what-

Cheryl: Altos represent.

Mike: ...the girl next to you might be thinking, "I got a low voice, I can't sing." And she hears you singing-

Annie: She gets my alto too?

Mike: ...she's like, "Yes, Lord, I'm going to lift up this baritone voice I got."

Annie: She is like, "If Annie is a tenor, I can come however I want."

Cheryl: She is like, "Everything changes."

Mike: We are leading the room. We are leading the people around us and it's people are like, "Hey, your faith for that day, let me link arms with you in that."

Annie: Yes.

Mike: And so everybody plays a role and it's awesome.

Cheryl: Yeah, it's important. Online church is great, but being-

Annie: And I'm thankful for it.

Cheryl: ...yes, we are too, so thankful. But being in the presence of other people, you are borrowing people's faith and you're giving faith by your obedience.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Cheryl: And that does change everything.

Annie: Yeah. I think about this record and I mean, when y'all were deciding the first LP that comes out, so LP, full-length album.

Cheryl: That's right.

Mike: That's right.

Annie: Versus EP, shorter album, those letters don't make sense.

Mike: They don't. They don't.

Annie: But it's what we know.

Mike: Extended play and long play.

Cheryl: Right.

Annie: Oh, come on! Extended is shorter than long play?

Cheryl: ...it should be like an SP, yeah.

Mike: Right, it doesn't make any sense.

Annie: Simplified.

Cheryl: Long play, yeah.

Annie: What is your hope for this? I mean, you wrote them for our church, and our church has been singing them for months. But now the world gets a hold of them, why? What's your hope?

Cheryl: I mean, our hope is simple that the songs help people's walk with Jesus, be a little bit closer, and a little more intimate every day. I think shooting for anything other than that we're missing the mark.

Annie: All right.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: These songs are just for, this is like Mike said, this is a weapon against the enemy.

Annie: That's good.

Cheryl: We've written and we're releasing these songs, to equip the people of the Lord with songs that they can sing back to Jesus.

Mike: Right.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: I do believe there are songs like, "Better" that people that have been hurt need to hear, and then it might just heal something in them.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: Right.

Cheryl: I think that there's a song called, "Just That Good" where people don't understand all the ins and outs of why God is who He is, but the answer is He's just that good.

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: That's really it, He's just that good. I think there's songs like, "We're Ready" where people are wondering why the Christian body is not either more active or more loud, like louder when it comes to political situations, racial division, feeding the hungry, helping the poor. I think, "We're Ready" is the response song for the body. We're ready and we will follow you.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: So help us, help our hands, feet, our eyes, our hearts, that's the song, to me, when you go to the first line of battle, and you sing it. And you say, "We're ready, ready for the change, we're waiting for the commander to tell us to charge."

Annie: Yeah.

Cheryl: So I think each song has its own purpose, but we simply just want to help people in their walk with Jesus on a day-to-day basis, that's it.

Mike: And the reason why we, so there's a song called, "Never Going Back".

Annie: Oh, I love it.

Mike: But the reason why we-

Cheryl: Oh, talk about it.

Annie: Yeah, talk about it.

Mike: ...the reason why we called the record, "Never Going Back" was simply, we're never going back to 2020, so praise the Lord.

Annie&Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: But at the same time, there was so much that came out of 2020, and some people are still in it. Some people are still like, "All right, Lord, I'm, I'm waiting for..." One of the things Kevin has said in the past is, "Don't waste your wilderness."

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: Mh-hmm.

Mike: And I remember very clearly at the beginning of the pandemic going, "Lord, I don't want to waste this. I don't want to waste this wilderness."

Cheryl: Yeah.

Mike: And that's kind of the heart of where these songs came out of. But in that time, specifically for us, even our worship team, like the Lord moved in ways that I haven't seen in a long time, amongst just us and our people.

Cheryl: It's like, we got down to the heart of the matter.

Mike: Yeah.

Cheryl: Why do we do what we do?

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: It was a beautiful reset.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: And because of that, it felt like all these songs kind of fell under the banner of never going back. Meaning, we never want to go back to complacency in our worship.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: We never want to go back to turning blind eyes to what's happening in our world. We never want to go back to not thanking God for being good, and who He is. We never want to, I mean, like I could go through every song and say, we never want to go back to like, there was so much that happened that it's like, we can't go back.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: Like, how do you go back? And when people would say, "Oh, I'm just ready for things to go back to normal." I'm like, "That's gone." Like normal isn't normal anymore.

Annie: That's right.

Mike: And there's so much of it that I praise God for.

Annie: Yeah,

Mike: You know what I mean?

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: And so that's kind of the heart of this whole project is let's not go back to 2019, because that was what it was.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: It was good for its turn.

Mike: 2021, 2022, the Lord's doing a new thing.

Annie: Yeah.

Mike: So let's not go back to that. Let's thank Him for what we've had, but let's, man, let's charge on for what is next, and what is next, I've been telling our team recently, like I believe is going to change the world, I really believe it.

Annie: I think an important thing, whenever we have this conversation, when Jesus resurrected, Mary didn't even, Mary Magdalene didn't even recognize Him in the garden. So life and resurrection do not look the same. Life, death, and resurrection, all look different. When we ask for resurrection, we are actually asking, give me life back.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Annie: Give me back 2019, but God says, "Okay, I will resurrect this, but it will not look the way, right? So that's true for relationships, and jobs, and your own experience, in your own body. I mean, resurrection is not going to look like life, and when we expect it to look like life we're going to be disappointed. Because God never said He would hand us back 2019, He said, "This is 2021."

Mike: Yes.

Cheryl: That's right.

Annie: It's going forward. And I am thankful we have this album going forward with us.

Cheryl: Yes.

Annie: It is so good, y'all.

Cheryl: Thank you.

Annie: I would not have you on this show because I, as you said, I love you, and you're one of my best friends. I love you, you are one of my best friends. I would not have you on the show just because of that, I have a lot of friends, I want people to know this album. And so y'all have done, if it was not good, you would not be here.

Cheryl: Thank you, I'm grateful.

Annie: It's very, very good, y'all have done a beautiful job on it.

Cheryl: Thank you.

Annie: So is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to make sure we cover?

Cheryl: I'll say this, we videoed, every song that is on the record we have a video for.

Annie: Let's go.

Cheryl: Which is pretty cool. And we did those over the span of two days here in Nashville.

Annie: Exhausting.

Cheryl: At the end of 2020.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: Everyone had to be COVID tested or quarantined, one of them, you had to pick. Poor Mike here somehow was the one that got COVID-

Annie: That's right.

Cheryl: ...right after the video shoot, our fearless leader, we were like, "Wait, what?" No, back to the recording of it, I'll never forget when we finished, we've got a photo of everybody, we were just like, "Let's take a photo." And Mike and I have worked, I mean, he's a brother to me, and God's been so faithful in our friendship.

Annie: Yes.

Cheryl: We've worked, been able to work so well together. And I just looked at him and we both teared up, we were like, "We did it." Because it felt like we were climbing the mountain, all of 2020 was climbing the mountain. And so I believe we were able to delight in the work, in the songs, in the video, and everybody being healthy enough to participate. And man, we are just really grateful to be the ones that get to help steward this for our church.

Annie: How do we watch those videos? Are they on Cross Point Music's Instagram?

Cheryl: Yes, on YouTube.

Annie: Yeah, on YouTube, okay.

Cheryl: And on YouTube-

Annie: We'll link to all that in the show notes.

Cheryl: Full videos will be on YouTube.

Annie: Right. Anything else we forgot for you, brother?

Mike: Mm-mm.

Annie: No. Well, the last question we always ask, because the show is called, That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Cheryl: What sounds fun to me right now is, again, I have two under two.

Annie: Yes, you do.

Cheryl: Two babies under two.

Annie: Two dudes.

Cheryl: So I would just love some time alone, that sounds real fun, literally, that sounds so fun. And then I'm an adventurer at heart.

Annie: Aha!

Cheryl: I went skydiving five years ago, and I'm afraid of heights, so that was a big faith thing for me. But man, I have always wanted to do like, is it après-ski, where they kind of drop you at the top of a mountain, from like a helicopter and you just zoom down the mountain, that sounds fun to me, let's go.

Annie: You are insane.

Cheryl: I know.

Mike: Okay, you're literally going there.

Cheryl: I will do it. I will do it.

Mike: Literally mine, if anyone went to Annie's recent tour.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: I was in the video and I talked about how my hobby is eating out.

Annie: It was, do you know how hard people laughed, I think I sent you a video, did I? I meant to.

Mike: Actually, you just showed me.

Annie: Okay, I mean, people laughed their heads off every night at that point.

Mike: Well, I mean, literally what sounds fun is going to lunch.

Annie: Yes.

Mike: So let's go to lunch.

Cheryl: From après-skiing, to time alone-

Annie: That's right.

Cheryl: ...to just lunch

Mike: Yes, that's all I need, that sounds fun.

Annie: And Cheryl, we were in the pool, me and two of my non-married girlfriends, we were at the pool last week, and these girls were playing, like high schoolers were playing with the volleyball. And the volleyball bounced out and landed by us, and the girl is like, "Hey, be careful, don't hit those moms." And we go, "Oh no." But you could tell those girls were like, "They're having their alone time." It's like, "Don't hit those moms."

Mike: Don't ruin their time.

Cheryl: I still feel like I'm their age, though. So it's crazy-

Annie: That's the problem.

Cheryl: Yeah, and I'm like-

Annie: They have two strikes against them, I was like, "I'm one-minute older than you 12-year-old, also not a mom, not a mom, don't assume."

Cheryl: And what's wrong with a mom?

Annie: They wouldn't be so sweet. We didn't, like we couldn't say anything except laugh. Because we were like, "They're just trying to make sure these moms who are having their alone time, are getting their alone time."

Cheryl: Yes, I literally will show up and ask Adam, "Do I look like a mom?" He's like, "I don't know how to answer that." I'm like, "You know what I mean?" And he's like, "No, I really don't."

Annie: I don't.

Cheryl: And I'm just, I'm with you, I'm 16 in my heart, so-

Annie: That's right, it's what we are, we don't have a calendar. Oh man, I love you all very much.

Mike: Love you.

Annie: So proud of you, thank you for how you've led our church, I'm not going to have all my feelings about it, but man, I don't want to go anywhere else.

Cheryl: Yeah, we thank you Annie.

Annie: So we thank you for how you lead our church, I am very thankful.

[00:58:04] <Music>

Annie: Oh, you guys don't you love them? I just adore them so much. Be sure to grab Cross Point Music's new album, ["Never Going Back"](#) and make sure you're following them so you can stay up to date on what they have going on, and tell them thanks so much for being on the show.

Annie: If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find, Annie F. Downs on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), all the places you may need me that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends go out or stay home, and do something that sounds fun to you, and I'll do the same. Have a great weekend, and we'll see you back here on Monday, with my friend Hosanna Wong. Oh, y'all are going to love it, can't wait for y'all to hear her, so we'll see you then.

[00:58:47] <Music>

Podcast Resources.

- Cross Point Music links.
- o [YouTube](#)
- o [Spotify](#)
- o [Facebook](#)
- o [Twitter](#)
- o [Instagram](#)
- o [Official Website](#)
- o [Linktree](#)