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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today on a Friday. Y'all know we love a bonus Friday episode around here, and this one is so good, so fun. If you want to go to church on a Friday, here we go.

Today I get to talk with my friend, Matt Redman. Matt is a Grammy Award-winning worship leader and songwriter who has been a leading contributor to the global Church's songbook over the last 20 years. And yes, we talk about it. I definitely cried at the end of this one while I thanked him for the years of music that have so deeply impacted me. We talked about Matt's latest album, *Lamb of God*, which is just extraordinary. If you haven't heard it yet, you're going to love it.

We've gotten to talk to a lot of musician friends on Friday episodes lately. I'm just so thankful for the way they listen to God and respond to what He's doing and saying through their music. They are giving us ways to connect with God in moments when we often don't feel like it or even know how to and maybe don't even have the words, but they do. And gosh, I am so grateful.

So here is my conversation with my friend, Matt Redman.

[00:01:18] <[Music]

Annie: Matt Redman, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Matt: Thank you so much.

Annie: I mean, what a huge honor to get to have you on the show.

Matt: It's an honor for me.

Annie: No, it is mine. Listen, the funny thing that you and I haven't discussed in our real lives is this is kind of the convergence of Matt Redman who has been leading me in worship since 1997, and Matt Redman whose wife is one of my dearest friends and who we are real-life friends.

Matt: I love that.

Annie: This is the convergence of those two worlds.

Matt: It is strange. Strange moments.

- Annie:** It's very strange and wonderful. What does it feel like now? I mean, how long would you say you've been in full-time ministry? How long have you been leading worship?
- Matt:** Well, I mean, it's a long, long time. I think probably around the age of 20 I went into full-time ministry. I was part of a church plant there and worship leading. But from the age of 15, I have been leading worship around the place.
- Annie:** There are so many Annie's out here who like picked up *Better Is One Day* in 1997 or 1996, right?
- Matt:** Yeah.
- Annie:** And have been singing your music for 30... is my math bad? For 25,30 years of our lives.
- Matt:** It's pretty crazy. Some of the songs now are getting a little old. I mean, it's funny to me a song like *Heart of Worship* is over 25 years old.
- Annie:** I could sob just talking about that song.
- Matt:** I mean, even a couple of weeks ago, though, I had a friend lead a youth event, and someone come up to them after, "I love that new song."
- Annie:** You're like, Older than you, dude.
- Matt:** I was like, Okay, that's good side.
- Annie:** I mean, talk to me because I've only been in full-time ministry... I've been doing this job full-time since 2012. So I'm 11 years. I'm a third of the way through what you're doing. What's the feeling sitting across from Annie, who... like when you know there's a generation of people who are now grownups who have been singing with you that long? Is it weird? Is it cool? What's it like?
- Matt:** I don't know. I guess, in a lovely way, I'm kind of used to it. I'm very blessed. I don't honestly go a day of my life where someone doesn't say something nice about one of the songs especially because people can reach you so easily these days with social media and everything. I don't take that for granted. I feel so blessed to be encouraged and to realize that God's trusted me with something that hopefully had been helpful in people's lives. That's amazing.

And then you get the things like... Literally two days ago, I had someone come up to me, "Hey, I grew up on that VeggieTales record that you sang on." Some of those

ones too. So you're like, "Fantastic! God's gonna use everything." I love Veggie Tales. It's amazing.

Annie: I just think it's so interesting. Like when you talk about *Heart of Worship*, that song. I mean, I have such... Cody Carnes and I talked about this, too. I have such very distinct Holy Spirit experiences with that song from college.

Matt: Oh, wow.

Annie: I say a lot that often God believes Annie at 20 more than he believes Annie at 43 because I think what you know after 20 years of walking with the Lord, there are things I would compromise on that 20-year-old Annie wouldn't. And He believes her. Right? He believes that she says that it's all about Jesus.

Matt: Yeah.

Annie: Cody talks about the Holy Spirit being in songs. Can you talk about the supernatural part of what you do? Do you experience that, that there are things that happen that get sewn into songs that last forever?

Matt: Yeah. I mean, it's the unchanging power of truth really. Music in itself is an amazing part of God's blessing and His presence in this world and how He shows up in our lives. But if you mix that with truth, the revelation of who He is, as revealed in Scripture, then you've got something very, very powerful in your hands.

I think that's why you can take a hymn that was written a couple of 100 years ago. In fact, I'm writing a song right now, which is written from one of the early Founding Fathers of the Church, in like the fifth century or something. And I think this is amazing. You can take something poetic that someone said over 1,500 years ago, you know, and you can write a song out of that, and it feels relevant, and it resonates. And the reason is because it's based on this powerful, unchanging truth.

I think that's what it is. There's something about... you can sing truth anytime and it'll feel powerful. But then you have these songs which they're more than just an essay. They're not just a [00:05:42] exercise. This is truth, but it's with passion and emotion, and inspiration. I don't know what it is the mystery of music, something about singing truth. Someone once said that if you sing truth, you pray twice.

Annie: Yeah. Wow. I mean, I could still stop singing *Because He Lives*.

Matt: Love that.

Annie: And that's such an old hymn, right? Forever. And it's like, Okay, I can face tomorrow. I can still feel that true. Do you still enjoy... I mean, I know you still love writing songs because you've said you're doing it now.

Matt: Yeah, I love it. It's my favorite thing.

Annie: It's in the album from this year.

Matt: Oh, my gosh.

Annie: This album *Lamb of God* ruins... I listened to it all the time in the morning.

Matt: That honestly means a lot. And then you're very kind.

Annie: Oh, I love it. Do you still enjoy performing or leading worship?

Matt: Yeah. I won't say performing. Definitely, I feel-

Annie: I'm sorry. I did say performing. Sorry. Sorry.

Matt: I don't want to tell you off on your own show.

Annie: You can. That's the friendship part.

Matt: I mean, that's a whole other conversation because worship leading I think it's meant to look a bit different than getting up on stage in the world. And we'll even say things. Like, some will have a worship night, but they'll call it a show.

Matt: I'm like, Guys, let's not call it show because actually we're demeaning what this... you know, God has called us into the sacred encounter with Him. This is not a show. That's a whole other conversation. So sorry.

I never get tired of it because you just see God at work. You know, you're up there and you get a nice view of what God's doing. And often people will say to you after, "Oh, here's what happened to me during that song," or "This song injected some hope into my life that I needed right now."

And then just seeing the songs resonate with people. I love the whole process. I love getting that gem of an idea and then trying to wrestle with it and turn it into something usually with some friends. And then you maybe record it, and then you kind of see it start to get some wings.

And then what happens is you start getting this flood of stories back from some of these songs. And you and you actually end up engaging with some of the most inspiring people I've ever met. I think I've met so many inspiring people down through the years just because of the songs. People who are facing the toughest thing you can imagine somehow found their way to the place of praise and your little song became the soundtrack for them to do that. And that never gets old.

Annie: I mean, a unique problem you have is when someone comes to a worship night that Matt Redman is leading, you have a gazillion songs we worship and sing. How do you determine...

Matt: Well, funny enough, Beth's like, "Oh, you're not still doing *The Heart of Worship*." She keeps me in balance. She's like, "Matta, no one wants to hear *10,000 Reasons*. Stop."

Annie: It's not true.

Matt: And you can hear the tone she's telling me with.

Annie: Totally. Totally.

Matt: She's very wise.

Annie: She's like, *New Wine*. New Wine.

Matt: Yeah.

Annie: Okay. So how do you pick... because I've never been in your shoes. I've never been a worship leader. I won't be. But do you go through and ask the Lord or is there a set? Do you feel like, okay, we sit and we go through and this is gonna be the whole tour, or tonight I just have this song resonating that I think we need to add? How does it look?

Matt: That's a great question. Because, you know, I've been doing this so long, it's really hard to like... I'm trying to hear God for the flow of the night. How often it happens for me is I just have one thing. Like, I feel like there's one song, this is the landing point, or this is the focus. And I'll start building the rest of the time around that.

Annie: Wow.

Matt: And quite often that is the thing. And sometimes you'll have a theme on your heart. Like, for me, reverence is a big one. Always trying to figure out, okay, how can we lead people into a place of reverence? It's really important.

Everything in our culture is going in opposite direction. It's less mystery than ever in our culture and there's less wonder and reverence. But we can't afford to lose those things in worship. They're an essential ingredient of what it means to worship. You can admire, adore, appreciate, applaud without, you know, wonder. But there has to be wonder. There has to be something beyond all those things that says, okay, what we're doing right now is different. He's not like us. He's high and holy, completely off the charts of anything we could fathom or imagine. And you've gotta lead people into that.

Annie: Okay. Teach me about that. Because I haven't really thought about the mystery that needs to stir in me during worship.

Matt: Oh, yeah.

Annie: I'm thinking about Sunday at church. The three songs we sang—we think everybody sings three songs—they were about God, which I really appreciate that people have kind of gotten the memo that we don't want to sing songs about us, we want to sing songs about God. But what should I be doing on my insides during worship to stir up the mystery and reverence?

Matt: Part of it could be our responsibility is worship is coming, and part of it is responsibility to the pastor or the worship leader to try and lead us into mystery. And of course, we're gonna need the help of the Holy Spirit too.

Annie: Right.

Matt: But I think it's so essential. I mean, for me, it starts in that songwriting place of, okay, paradox is a huge part of the gospel and of the truth of who God is. You know, He's the lion and the lamb. He's the one who thunders and whispers. He's the God who terrifies and yet befriends. I like to say He's the king whose footstool is the earth and yet He knelt down and washed the earth off the feet of His disciples. He's the one who hung in agony on beams of wood that He Himself had called into being. So are we drawing people into these mysteries?

So the thing about paradox is if you only have one side of it, it can still be powerful to a degree, but you're missing the full force of it.

Annie: But it feels easier.

Matt: Yeah. So if you only sing about the friendship of the Lord, you only sing about the Father heartbeat of God or the grace of God, the kindness of God, and all those themes, they are powerful. But if, first of all, you paint Him as Creator of all, the

maker and sustainer of all things, the one who holds all things together, He is high and holy, He's magnificent and majestic, and then onto that, you project kindness, friendship, then you've got a mystery on your hands, then you've got an explosion in the soul.

Annie: Wow.

Matt: So that's what we're trying to do. What tends to happen in many streams of the church in this day and age, we are missing out on that reverence side. We are missing out on the-

Annie: Fear of God part.

Matt: ...the holiness, the fear of God. So we are selling ourselves a little bit short because we are missing the full force of the explosion sometimes.

Annie: Wow. We have a button here that's a mind-blown button.

Matt: Oh yeah.

Annie: It says, wowie zowie. And that is how I feel about what you're teaching. I mean, that blows my mind.

Matt: That is the most American thing I've ever seen. I mean, that's...

Annie: Great. Great.

Matt: I'm gonna bring those to England.

Annie: I know. I mean, it's a very important button for us here because we keep getting our mind blown with guests.

Matt: That is absolutely fantastic.

Annie: So what I even hear you saying to me as an Annie who just attends a church, if I'm not teaching, I'm just sitting and listening and participating in worship, is I need to come with God is all powerful and all loving. I need to come with God is the One who thunders and whispers. And then whatever we're singing goes through that filter, then I go, I don't understand [inaudible 00:12:46].

Matt: I mean, think about in the Old Testament. They're coming towards the temple or the Tabernacle, and there's so many pointers even before they get there who is they're gonna worship. You know, the kind of majesty of the temple or the whiteness of the

tabernacle. And they get inside and the geography of the hallway things are laid out, told them who it was. And He's holy. And you can't just rock up here. You know, you have to recognize who it is we're coming before, and you have the fear of the Lord.

Many things inside the embroidery, the tapestry, the furnishings, they were so ornate and detailed and sometimes expensive, and they told you something about beauty and splendor. And then a few hundred years ago we were building cathedrals and they did some of the same things.

Annie: I love cathedrals.

Matt: Yeah. Amazing. And they help you feel small, which is great in worship, and they help you look up and just... So we have to think, how can we do that in our day and age? We're not building those kind of buildings and we don't have those layouts in the same way.

There's a difference to the Old Testament. We're living under this wonderful new covenant and the grace. But so we do get to come boldly and confidently, but we still have to tread with reverence. And we still have to... You know, He's just as holy as He ever was. Didn't decrease His holiness. He's just given us a greater measure of grace. And actually, if we draw near to Him, we should experience more grace and kindness and love. Actually, if you're really near, you'll experience more holiness too, right?

Matt: Yeah.

Matt: Doesn't that make sense?

Annie: Right.

Matt: That if you draw near to God, your sense of His grandeur, righteousness, wholeness, they're gonna increase, not become less. There's these guys called Olson and Grenz, they wrote a book, *20th Century Theology*, and they said this. Slightly complicated phrase, but I'll break it down. They said, "God is imminent within human experience as the transcendent mystery that cannot be comprehended in spite of His absolute nearness."

And what they're basically saying is, if you draw near to God, and when you get there, all you're finding is a manageable, tame, comforting God, you might not be as close as you'd like to think as you think. Because when you draw near to Him, yes, you are gonna feel that heartbeat of grace, of mercy and absolute generosity,

patience, kindness. But you are also gonna go, Whoa, I'm in the presence of a holy King here.

Annie: I sat at dinner with a friend last night and we were talking about the fissures we feel in our lives. How there's areas that you're like, "This is going to be my Achilles heel." It's not a sin thing, it's a "why don't I do this better?" And she said, "I think my friends who aren't believers don't experience this." Tell me if we're wrong. You can. We were talking about maybe God reveals fissures in your life and areas that you need His grace more to people who are willing to be in relationship with Him. Because I think what you're saying is as I get closer to Him, the Lord goes, "Yeah, you're actually never gonna be perfect at that, and that is why you need Me."

Matt: I love that. You know, there's so many ways of looking at it. I heard someone say God comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. He's always stirring us up. And it's out of love. Actually, it's just love. You know, if you realize that the reason He wants you to be more like Him is out of love.

And God has this... it's an interesting thing, isn't it? Because He's easy to please, but He's hard to satisfy. So He's easy to please. You can do the smallest thing. You can walk an old lady across the road and I think God's smiling over that. But at the same time, He has this insatiable appetite for holiness in our lives and for us to become ever more like Him. It's a wonderful thing to be in, but at times it can be uncomfortable.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. That's right. And the invitation feels so gentle from the Lord of like, "This is who you get to be. Being in relationship with Me means you get this." This isn't a drawback. But it still scares me sometimes. It still feels too much.

Matt: Absolutely.

[00:16:46] <[Music]

[Lauren Daigle Music playing]
*I don't know who I'd be if I didn't know You
I'd probably fall off the edge
I don't know where I'd go if You ever let go
So keep me held in Your hands*

Annie: Y'all, that song! Okay, have you heard the whole thing yet? My gosh, it is so good. It is my girl Lauren Daigle's new song, *Thank God I Do*, which is featured on her latest self-titled 23-song album titled *Lauren Daigle*. The album features hit songs like this one and *These Are the Days*. I have the whole thing playing on repeat. So I need you to check it out wherever you consume music. Or you can visit

laurendaigle.com to buy the entire album. This is her first album in five years, y'all, following her last one *Look Up Child*, which included the hit song we all know *You Say*.

Lauren's currently out on the Lauren Daigle Kaleidoscope Tour. So make sure to check out dates and see if she's visiting a city near you by visiting laurendaigle.com. That's [Laurendaigle.com](http://laurendaigle.com) to learn more. Y'all go listen to the album, go see her show, tell her how much you love her. You are going to really, really love this new music from our friend Lauren Daigle.

[Lauren Daigle Music playing]
I don't know who I'd be if I didn't know You
I'd probably fall off the edge

[00:18:22] <[Music]

Annie: Side question. My favorite cathedral in the world is Durham Cathedral.

Matt: Oh, I love that.

Annie: Do you have a favorite cathedral in the world?

Matt: Wow. I mean, I have a few. I love Winchester Cathedral. It's very beautiful. I've led worshiping in there. My favorite is St. Paul's Cathedral in London. A lot of people would know it because some of the royal occasions, even like Diana and Charles' wedding way, way back, they were in there. I've got to lead worship in there a couple of times and it's just a stunning place to lead worship.

Annie: I hate that we have stopped building churches like that only because when you go in cathedrals you're like, for hundreds, if not thousand plus years, people have said the same thing in here. There is no confusion about this building. It is about one thing. And one God. Not even like any gods, but our God.

Matt: It's pretty amazing.

Annie: It's beautiful. I love it. Okay. This is probably a weird question, but being with you is being with Beth to me and I'm like, let's talk about the weird Holy Spirit stuff too.

Matt: Let's do it.

Annie: Do you write songs to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit separate?

Matt: That is a great question.

Annie: Thank you.

Matt: Well-

Annie: My dad loves when people say that. So he's pleased to hear you say that. So thank you.

Matt: Fantastic. So the thing is, when it comes to Trinitarian theology, I think everyone gets a bit freaked out.

Annie: Yeah, you're right.

Matt: You know, we feel like we don't really know what we're talking about. It sounds like higher mathematics are being initiated.

Annie: Right

Matt: Especially when it comes to writing worship songs, I think there's been some comments and even some studies done. Prof. Lester Ruth from Asbury Seminary years ago did a look into this. Like, well, the top 75 songs sung in the USA church over the last 25 years, how Trinitarian in nature are they.

Annie: Wow.

Matt: And he found out not very much at all. I mean, we are singing mainly to Jesus, now and again the Father gets a look in, and if you're lucky, maybe the Holy Spirit.

Annie: We don't worship the Holy Spirit, we just ask him to do stuff.

Matt: Hardly ever all three of them are in a song. And only one of them mentioned the fact that his Trinitarian nature is one of the reasons He should be worshiped and adored. I think we're getting a little bit better since then. That was about 15 years ago. But there's still a challenge. And the truth is, though, that once you or I became a Christian, we became Trinitarian theologians without knowing it because the Holy Spirit illuminated us to who Christ was, and then we went with Jesus and in Jesus and through Jesus to the Father. So we are caught up in it the whole time. Sometimes we find it maybe hard to wrap our words around it.

But yeah, you could write a song, you could have verse one to the Father, verse two to the Son and the Spirit. And that's one way do it. There's a guy called Robin Perry in England. He talks about actually sometimes our worship songs Trinitarian

theologies like the grammar in the sentence. So it's like always there in the background, it should be shaping and informing things, but it's not always like in your face. And I thought that was a lovely way to look at it too.

Annie: I was thinking about it because when I'm thinking about your new album, *Lamb of God*... I mean, well, I already told you it's wonderful. It's unbelievable. But *Son Of Suffering*, that song... I mean, that is a Jesus song.

Matt: I love that.

Annie: But it is so deep to me, Matt, which said so much about you as a human, but it's such a very deep song. Will you talk about the writing of *Son Of Suffering*?

Matt: Yes. So I was carrying this theme for a while. I was trying to write a song about blood, sweat, and tears.

Annie: Ah.

Matt: And to me, the sweat element was Jesus overturning tables in the temple. I was trying for a couple of years, kept trying to come around it, I wasn't really quite figuring it out.

Annie: So like you'd sit in co-writes and be like, "Blood, sweat, tears, and then it wouldn't happen."

Matt: Actually, it wasn't even in co-write. I was just trying to figure out, how do you do this in a song?

Annie: I get that.

Matt: And then I was in a songwriting retreat and I was walking to the room and I realized, "you know what? If I drop that sweat bit, things get a lot easier." No one wants a sweaty worship song anyway. So I realized if I drop that bit, the song's blood and tears, and then it becomes about how God identifies with our pain and suffering, how He shows solidarity with our struggle. He's faced this stuff Himself. And then it started to come crystal clear [interview?]. I had a few lyrics already, wrote a few more down, went in the room, it was with three people I've never written with.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Matt: I only knew one of them vaguely. I'd met him the day before.

Annie: Wow.

Matt: And these guys, Aaron, Moses, David Funk, and Nate Moore. So we had two hours. We spent the first 30 minutes chatting because we don't even know each other.

Annie: I heard that's what happens in co-writes, though.

Matt: Yeah. But I was, all the time, thinking, "Yeah, I want to get to know these guys but the clock's ticking too."

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Matt: But it was so great because I said, "Look, I have this idea." And then we all resonated with the theme and just we had a lift-off. We wrote that song in not much more than an hour, honestly.

Annie: Wow.

Matt: And I had a good bit of the lyric, but actually it did feel like, you know, a special moment. I walked out of there thinking, "Oh, I can't wait to lead this song." I just think, to draw us into mystery again, there's a God... Don't ever overlook this. Don't ever get used to this. There's a God who weeps. I mean, you wouldn't make up a God like that. I mean, not only does He weep, but He bleeds and He chooses to bleed. That's just a phenomenal thing that we will never really get used to.

Annie: Right. Right. Even in your heart, He does sweat too. So we'll give it to Him. We'll give Jesus. It is all three.

Matt: I'm gonna write a separate song.

Annie: That's right. You owe it to yourself. You owe it to yourself. So I'm thinking about it with book writing. Because I'm not writing a book right now. But do you know that thing in your head where something's happening?

Matt: Yeah, something's stirring.

Annie: Yeah, something's stirring. So I have a notebook in my purse as far as I know because I don't want to miss little-

Matt: Is it still with pen and paper when you say a notebook?

Annie: Yeah.

Matt: Oh, wow. Old school. I love that.

Annie: I'm so old school about that, Matt. We were literally just in a meeting and I have the calendar on a piece of paper and I write everything on it. I know.

Matt: I love that.

Annie: Because I'm very visual in remembering things. So I need to remember what my handwriting did.

Matt: Fantastic.

Annie: So I'm connecting with you in that. I have the things spinning and I've gotta get some of the words out and I know a phrase. So I'll write down the phrase. Do the lyrics come to you before the sound of the song? Or do you go around humming melodies for *Son Of Suffering* and then you find the words?

Matt: For me, almost always lyrics. But I'm built a bit more like that. I do have friends who show up to co-writes and they've got melodic ideas. For me, though, I kind of need to know what I'm singing about before I get the melodic idea. I need to get excited about that and then the melody starts to flow.

For often, it sounds like with you, it's just this little seed of a song, it's just this little seed of an idea. It could be just a word. Sometimes it's literally one word. Sometimes it's a phrase from scripture. It could be something someone said in a conversation. It could be a sermon that you heard and you think, "Oh, we need a song on this." But you kind of have your songwriting antennae up the whole time.

For me, that was the biggest progress I've ever had as a songwriter is realizing, Oh, I'm not a songwriter just when I sit down, get my guitar out of the case, and start strumming away. I'm a songwriter all the time. I don't think I go a day without writing down some kind of idea. And then, you know, sometimes next week you'll jump on that. Sometimes a year later you're looking for a bridge idea for a song, and you think, "I don't have a clue where to go," you look through and you find that phrase or that little couple of lines, you think, "Oh, it's that." It's amazing.

Annie: Oh, it is amazing. With *Son Of Suffering*, I've been thinking about that. We just had a friend on who we talked about Man of Sorrows. These descriptions of Jesus that are... that same balance. You're talking about the mystery of God where Jesus is on the white horse.

I don't know if you know this, but we have a Gospels podcast called Let's Read the Gospels, where I'm literally reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, John every month. So we did two episodes this morning before you got here. And we're reading about how Jesus said the lightning will fill the sky. So that's Jesus. And also He's the *Son Of Suffering*. So if we're gonna be like Him, we are both of those things too.

Matt: Yeah. I mean, I just love that we worship a God who gets in the mix with us. He's not just looking down from above going, "Oh yeah, that looks hard. I feel sorry for you."

Annie: Tough.

Matt: It's not even just compassion, it's full-on empathy. He absolutely knows what it feels like when you wake up and there's terrible news on the news or in your personal life or there's grief, or maybe there's abuse or maybe this thing. He absolutely resonates with that. He gets it. He understands it. It's amazing that you worship a God who He's completely perfect and could have been just completely... you know, not made Himself vulnerable. But He did. So He gets it when we are in these moments. I don't know of a more comforting thought. I agree with you.

Annie: We've both experienced the church not being who she was meant to be and being hurt by the humans and the internet and all the things. So I had this conversation with a friend Sunday at church of like, what we feel about Jesus versus what we feel about the church-

Matt: Which is two different things, for sure.

Annie: It's two different things. So will you talk about, for all the ways and all the years you've done ministry, there's a lot of reasons you could've gone, "You know what, forget y'all. I'm good. I'm good. I'm done with the church and I won't be done with Jesus because He has all these things and He feels the pain I feel." Why do we stay with the church? Why do you still love the church? I assume you love the church. Sorry, that's an assumption. Do you still love the church?

Matt: I do. Very much.

Annie: Okay. So why do we stay committed to the church when Jesus is the perfect one, the church is not?

Matt: I mean, I think so many people listening would resonate with that. They'd be like, "Oh yeah, I know what you're talking about now." We're going into familiar territory. I think so many people... just in this world in general, no one escapes pain.

And that's also true in the church. And most of pain comes through people. And that's also true in the church.

Some of it is very hard to understand. There's times where you see something where they weren't really a real Christian, you know. So I get why they behave like that. That's easier to understand. What's hard to understand is maybe it's a leader or someone who you've looked up to or maybe someone, you know, seems like they're trying to walk with God, and yet somehow they're hurting people or they've, you know... maybe even worse than that. Maybe an abuse of authority in some way or another.

And that's terribly hard to understand when someone who was meant to be representing Christ to you ended up doing the complete opposite and was a terrible ambassador for Christ. So there's that side of it where we've all gotta work on our stuff. We want to keep our own side of the street clean, for sure.

But there is some very real moments, and we've seen them in recent years where even well-known leaders have been found out to be bullying people and all sorts of stuff like that. We are in days where actually these things are starting to get held to account a bit more. I'm actually encouraged by that.

Annie: Me too. I talked to a bunch of college students last week and I said, "Here's the good news. You don't have to go to bed at night wondering if you're gonna get exposed next week." And there are a lot of leaders who are wondering that right now.

Matt: That's interesting.

Annie: Get clean now. Get your secrets out now and then you can sleep great for the rest of your life.

Matt: I mean, I heard someone years ago talk about as a leader, don't ever let your psychological junk undermine your leadership. If you've got some issues, you get them dealt with. Because what happens is, by the time you get on a stage, you are not motivated to get stuff dealt with anymore.

Annie: Right, Matt.

Matt: Because it's hard for a le... I went on a retreat, a men's retreat and it's like, you know, some counseling happens and different things. And the guy running it said to me, "I'm encouraged you're here. Do you know who never comes on this retreat? Pastors. Because we have every person from every walk of life, but we hardly ever

have pastors. It's like they won't let the guard down sometimes." Now, in this role, they've got to be a certain something."

And what I've realized even through ministry myself, if you're not careful, you can use the stage as a barrier. You can use it as a way of stopping people speaking to your life or maybe even stopping God speak into your life. Who knows? And that's a dangerous thing. So we've gotta have these ruthless heart checks and we've gotta have systems of accountability.

Even for worship music, there was a guy pastor years ago who said the real test in these days is not gonna be in the writing and producing of new and great worship music. The real test is gonna be in the godliness and the character of those who deliver it.

Annie: Wow. Wow.

Matt: I mean, that's so true. We can come up with new songs and new sounds and all that, but sometimes that is a challenge. But the real challenge is gonna be to live well and to not... You know, God's given you this entrustment, this sacred entrustment as a pastor or as a leader, as a worship leader or, you know... I mean, He's entrusted with all sorts of things. But I'm particularly talking about the church.

And what I'm realizing is there needs to be a higher standard with that. It's like if you get mistreated in a church context by someone leadership at church, that is not the same as getting treated badly in a workplace. In a workplace it's terrible, it's awful. But in a church place, that's someone who was meant to be a shepherd—they weren't just meant to be an administrative boss to you or something. They were meant to be someone who was charged with taking care of the sheep.

So, I think it's a different thing and I think we need an even higher standard for that. So it's a huge conversation. But like I say, although sometimes it's discouraging to wake up to bad news, or this leader has done this or this thing's happened, this person's fallen, there is a side to it also realizing, well, the good side is that maybe there's some cleaning up happening. That's gotta be good, right?

Annie: On Monday, we had a young church planter named Noah on the show. And I said, I'm watching my peers blow up their lives and hurt the churches they're in. It's my friend. So I'm having this grief. You've experienced this too. I'm having this grief that my peer is the one who has hurting everyone. And I said, what is your experience as a 20-year-old? He said, "They're my heroes." I mean, it sucked the oxygen out of this room.

Because I thought, "Oh my gosh, I'm grieving my friend's making mistakes that hurt the people I'm co-shepherding with them, or that I'm watching them shepherd. He's watching and it just like... It raised the accountability in me. Where I went like, Okay, does my mentor... does Beth know? Does Nancy know? Does everyone know everything? So that I can do everything I can to not blow up my life. How have you not blown up your life?"

Matt: I mean, partly because I do believe in the church and I do realize, okay, the reality is we're in a broken world. So that means there's gonna be also brokenness within the church. And don't ever excuse stuff. We want to keep getting better together. But that is just the reality of it. I do believe when Jesus said He's gonna build His church, and I do believe He's wanting a beautiful bride. So you hang in there for that. Also, you hang in there because He's the good shepherd.

Annie: That's good.

Matt: So when other shepherds are letting you down, He's never let me down. I can think of times where in the moment He felt like He did.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

Matt: And then I look back five years later and I realize, "Oh, what You did through that was amazing."

Annie: That's every breakup of my life, Matt Redman. In the time I think Jesus is letting me down and about eight days later, I'm like, "Oh, that was a rescue. That was a rescue."

Matt: Yeah, it's amazing. Yeah.

Annie: Jesus has never let us down.

Matt: Yeah. So He's a perfect and He's the good shepherd. And He's good in every degree.

[00:34:41] <[Music]

Annie: When you wrote *Lamb of God*, I mean, this whole album, *Lamb of God*, so Jesus-focused, was there a reason why He was the center of your thought process for this whole album?

Matt: It's just much better than when I'm at the center.

Annie: Hey, say that. That's right. That's exactly right.

Matt: It's better content, right?

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Matt: Seriously though, I love writing worship songs because the subject material is so good. I mean, there's always something to say. If I was just to write about me, I'd get bored very quickly.

Annie: Same.

Matt: In fact, there's an old pop producer from England, he said, You can only write four types of song: I love you, I hate you, go away, and come back.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Matt: I know that that's funny. But when it comes to writing about Jesus, just look through some of the old hymn books and all these different aspects of His nature and character, all the different reasons why He is worthy, all the things He's done through history, all the stories in the Bible, all the wonderful things about His kingdom. I mean, there's a lot to get your teeth into. And I love doing that. That hasn't got old so far. I've been doing this for a few decades.

On the *Lamb of God* album, same thing. Because I'm not singing about any new themes. I'm just trying to sing about old themes in a new way. You know, universal theme in a unique way. For me, that's the best kind of song. It's something biblical, true you should be singing about, but you've found a way to sing about it. And on this record, *Lamb of God*, I think we have four songs about the cross. At one point I was like, "Maybe I'm going overboard on this." I mean, it's-

Annie: It's little cross.

Matt: "People are gonna think I don't know about anything else." But actually I loved thinking, "Yeah, what's a different window? What's a different angle?" Some of these old hymn writers. William Cooper:

*There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains:*

The dying thief rejoiced to see

*That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away*

He's saying everyone knows that guy was a criminal. Well, wait a minute, I'm just as bad as He is and I need this saving flow of Jesus' blood just as much as that guy did. So the hymn writer has taken you into the cross through a different avenue. So I'm just trying to do that.

Lamb of God is the title song. We have the *Son Of Suffering* song we talked about, a song called *King of Calvary* on there. And a couple too where I think this subject matter is just so good. I mean, whenever you think you've summed up the cross, then you find another layer.

Annie: That's it. That's it. Forever. That'll be forever. You'll be [inaudible 00:37:11] for the rest of forever.

Matt: I love that.

Annie: A really unique thing about you and Beth and about your ministry... I mean, you have a global ministry. But y'all are very plugged into what God's doing in the UK and you're very plugged into what God's doing in the US.

Matt: Yeah, I love that.

Annie: So what's the difference? Tell me what he is doing in the UK That I don't know. I mean, Pete Greg, for starters. I need you to know that Pete Greg and the prayer guys are like my Kardashians.

Matt: I love that you call them the prayer guys.

Annie: Oh. I mean, they're like my Kardashian. I want to know. I mean, I'm such a super fan of everything he does.

Matt: The whole *24-7 Prayer* movie, wonderful.

Annie: Ah, incredible.

Matt: Sing it, go between different streams of the church and young people and old people and... amazing. You know, I think that, in England, if you were just to read the newspaper... A newspaper makes me sound very old.

Annie: That's great. No, no, no, I'm with you.

Matt: Online news.

Annie: They still print papers over there. I've seen them on the internet

Matt: So if you were just to read the news, you would think, Oh man, the church. I mean, wow. There's never any good news. It's just always scandal, or like this many young people left. But growing up in it, all I saw, mostly what I saw was growth and salvation and healing and freedom and church planting. So I saw the other side of it.

I know sometimes Americans look over at England and they get pretty worried about us over there. And it's true. Society's gone secular a lot quicker than it has here but actually can very much see God at work. And it's a little different here. Because I think, honestly the way I would say the biggest distinction would be, in England, if you are in a church, you're probably a full-on Christian. In America, sometimes you can't exactly tell like, am I definitely dealing with like full-on disciples here or some of these people are just people who are going church? I'm exaggerating and I'm-

Annie: But you're not.

Matt: ...putting everyone in the same thing. Obviously, that's not the case. But if you were to say what is the overarching difference, that might be one of them.

Annie: Do you know I lived in Edinburgh?

Matt: Oh, yeah.

Annie: I lived in Edinburgh about 12 years ago.

Matt: Did you just try and think, What's the coldest place I can live in the UK?

Annie: Yeah. It's like-

Matt: "I'll just go live there."

Annie: "Where will it for sure rain every day?" I was like, "I want to throw some shoes away and never get them back." When I lived there, everyone who went to church really meant it because it cost you something there to be a believer.

Matt: That's a great way of saying it.

Annie: So they were like, Well, if I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna really do this because now the people... But it was interesting, Matt, because it wasn't that people were like, "Well, you can't shop in our stores," or anything like that. It was they lost a respect of business people.

Matt: That's so interesting. That's very insightful.

Annie: That's not true here. If you want to win an election, you go to the big church so that people see you there. And over there, my experience 11 years ago-

Matt: Well, the classic would be of Alastair Campbell, the press secretary for Tony Blair, the Prime Minister years ago, Tony Blair wanted to say something. I think it might have been after Princess Diana died. And the famous quote was, he said, "Tony, we don't do God."

Annie: Wow.

Matt: And he was basically saying, Don't you dare say anything about God in the press release.

Annie: So it just means people over there who have committed their lives to Christ know that they counted some cost. They're not counting the same cost as people who are being murdered in the Middle East. But they're counting a cost there that we're not counting here.

Matt: And like I say, I don't want to generalize, especially because for example, America's the biggest sending missionary nation. So that's something to bear in mind, you know?

Annie: Sure.

Matt: Actually, there's phenomenal missionary efforts at great cost going on around the world that are spearheaded from the USA.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Matt: So we want to be clear to bring that stuff into-

Annie: You're like, "I love you too, America. Y'all are good at church. Well done. Well done."

Matt: "I'm Gonna give you one more chance."

Annie: That's right. Do y'all like living in America?

Matt: Yes.

Annie: Okay. Out in California. The weather's gotta be better than London.

Matt: Yeah, the weather's lovely there. I mean, I've been in America so much because we've lived here for a year in California and two years in London, now seven years in America. And then in between those times I've traveled here a lot. So I'm the funny mix. Like I'll read the British news and I'll watch Premier League soccer.

Annie: I was about to say, "Who's y'all's club?"

Matt: Liverpool.

Annie: That's what I thought.

Matt: Quite near Edinburgh.

Annie: You know I'm Arsenal.

Matt: Oh, I didn't know that. Oh, well you had a hard time at the end of last season.

Annie: Well, it's just very on [inaudible 00:41:40].

Matt: Is that when you got into *Son Of Suffering*?

Annie: I really got into your album.

Matt: The Son became very real.

Annie: Yeah, when we came in seconds, it set up very... Yeah, you're exactly right. So you're still connected to all those parts.

Matt: Yeah, absolutely. We've got to see a lot of America through touring. I did a 41-day tour once with Casting Crowns, which was... I mean, we got to see a lot of America that time.

Annie: Forty-one? My gosh.

Matt: It was amazing. It was fantastic.

Annie: That's crazy.

Matt: I actually have a very unique story from that tour. I had to have a crown cast on my own tooth during the tour. So I was on tour with Casting Crowns having a crown cast in my mouth.

Annie: You literally did. Well done.

Matt: And I was like, "Lord, you're so kind."

Annie: I mean, I had a conversation with my dad a few months ago where we were talking about, have you been to all 50 states? And my dad was like, "I've never even counted. I don't have any idea. I've been to a lot, but I don't know." And I thought, "Man, your job and my job are so unique that one of the things we get to do is be like, "Well, yeah, I've been to almost every sta..."

Matt: I'm embarrassingly bad at American geography. I didn't learn it at school.

Annie: Yeah, of course not.

Matt: I think probably five years ago I realized Idaho and Iowa weren't in the same state.

Annie: They're not. I'm sorry to tell them both.

Matt: I still can't spell Mississippi, but there you go.

Annie: I can teach you a trick. M I crooked letter, crooked letter, I crooked letter, crooked letter I Hump-back, hump-back I.

Matt: No way.

Annie: So S-S-S-S-P-P.

Matt: That's awesome.

Annie: There you go. It's just a little thing they learned.

Matt: Thank you.

Annie: When you grow up in the South, you get some stupid tricks like that.

Matt: Love that.

Annie: Okay, last question I want to ask you, before we talk about what sounds fun to you. What do you think the Lord is doing next? What's coming? What are you prophetically seeing? What are you in conversations about? Where are we going with God in the next couple of years? Do you have a vision for that?

Matt: Great question. Brooke Ligertwood just released a song called *Fear of God*. I was so encouraged to see that. And I thought, Wow, that's a bold title and she's the kind of person I would trust to write a great song around a theme like that. I also love that it was quite motivating because it's saying the fear of God's gonna keep you. It's like, Okay, tell me more about this fear of God thing then.

I do think maybe that is a big thing the Holy Spirit is doing. He's awakening us to the holiness of who it is we are approaching here. Because if holiness is in the mix, so many things change. You'll live a different kind of life. It's so interesting how when we have a true grasp of theology, it changes the kind of disciple we are. And I think songwriting can play a part in that, honestly.

So, for example, if you're not singing about the return of Christ and we're not expecting for that, you're gonna live a less urgent life when it comes to evangelism and things like prayer. You're gonna live a less holy life. The New Testament makes it clear one of the reasons... Jesus is coming back, so live well.

Some of these big themes, return of Christ, the fear of the Lord, I can see the Holy Spirit illuminating them because we need Him to. And I think they can change the kind of disciples we are and the kind of church we are.

Annie: I think this has happened for a lot of generations possibly. But there's this whisper of, is Jesus coming back soon? So even the holiness mixing with a week... We are closer today than we were yesterday, so yes. But also it just feels like people are taking very seriously, if He comes back, if that lightning crosses the sky while we still have eyes to see Him, will we have done everything we wanted to do to make sure our friends know what's happening too?

Matt: That's amazing. Yeah.

Annie: And I haven't heard... and it may be my age. Maybe people in their 40s talked about this. But I haven't heard people talk about it as much as they have in the last couple of years.

Matt: I feel it's true. Yeah.

Annie: John Eldredge just did a whole podcast of like, "Jesus is coming back. Get ready. Here's what you need to be doing." And I was like, "John! Okay."

Matt: And for me, that's a theme I've seen creeping more and more to songs the last five years.

Annie: Wow.

Matt: I feel like 10 years ago we were hardly singing anything about the return of Christ. And it might be just some ignorant of what was out there. In fact, I had a lovely friend, Luis Palau, he passed away a couple years ago. I became a Christian through him. He was preaching in the London soccer stadium, and I got to sing at his funeral and wrote a song for that a little while back. But we'd become lovely friends.

The one of the last conversations I had with him, I said, "What do we need to write about?" He said, "The return of Christ." He's like, "Matt, you've gotta write more about the return of Christ." And he says, "If you can't get a whole song on it, then just at least put it in somewhere-

Annie: Yeah, seed it in.

Matt: ...in a verse." We actually have a worship training event coming up called WOR/TH. It's gonna be at Museum of the Bible in October.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Matt: And it's a Worship in Theology conference. The W-O-R from Worth is from Worship, the T-H from theology.

Annie: Brilliant.

Matt: Just bring in a couple of academic minds and some songwriters and just say, Let's stir the pot here, and let's make sure we are not missing some of these really important themes. Where are the gaps? What do we need to write into? How do we need to form worship services that give us the big picture a little bit more?

Annie: Matt, that's brilliant.

Matt: Oh, well, if you want to come-

Annie: Tell me what's the-

Matt: All details are at worthworship.com.

Annie: Okay, we'll link to that.

Matt: It's October 25th, Museum of the Bible. Felt like a great place to have the first worship theology.

Annie: No kidding. I've heard there's a floor with all the translations of the Bible. I think I'd fall apart.

Matt: It'll be amazing.

Annie: Yeah. Okay, is there anything we didn't talk about you want to make sure we cover?

Matt: We didn't talk much about Liverpool.

Annie: I know. We can. I mean, I love Klopp.

Matt: I'm joking.

Annie: Is he a believer? Are you friends with him in real life?

Matt: I'm not, but I would-

Annie: Not yet.

Matt: If you know that thing, like, who you would have dinner with, he'd be there, for sure.

Annie: Oh, he's-

Matt: He has strong faith.

Annie: He seems like it.

Matt: He had a great interview recently where they were like, "Look, how do you put all this pressure?" He's like, "Oh, easy. That's an easy answer. My faith."

Annie: Wow.

Matt: He says, my faith keeps me optimistic.

Annie: I mean, the sad story that you're not gonna appreciate is I started a Liverpool fan, and then Dave Barnes and his family, my closest friends-

Matt: No.

Annie: ...they were Arsenal. And he was like, "Hey, if you want to watch with us and go to games with us, you're gonna have to switch."

Matt: No way.

Annie: So I switched just like that. But I loved Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Matt: Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Annie: I think he is such a good player, but he is not cool.

Matt: He came from Arsenal to Liverpool.

Annie: He came and went to Liverpool. I just thought he was great. Liverpool has such good history. And it's just like the working man's team over there. Man, Everton, though. Do you feel for them, those fans?

Matt: I know. I'm glad they stayed up. I think it would be bad for the city.

Annie: I don't know that they will after this.

Matt: I think they're struggling though.

Annie: Do you follow Men in Blazers? Do you know Men in Blazers?

Matt: I love them.

Annie: I love Roger Bennett. When he was on the show and I was like-

Matt: I don't get how they got a show out here. I'm like, you're so you... how do you sell that show? So we're gonna be sitting in a broom cupboard with terrible graphics, making jokes no one understands.

Annie: That's exactly right. But man, they've made a lot of Americans fall in love with soccer. But I feel he's the reason I care about everything because I'm like, Poor Rag. I just feel for him how much he loves that team.

Okay, the last question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, what do the Redmans do for fun? What sounds fun to y'all?

- Matt:** Wow. I mean, one thing we love to do is getting back to England for fun. Walking up a hill, going to get a curry with some friends. But for me personally, there's one word: pickleball.
- Annie:** Really? Are you into pickleball?
- Matt:** I'm so into it.
- Annie:** Really?
- Matt:** We've got a little worship leader's club playing pickleball.
- Annie:** Globally or in LA or in Orange County?
- Matt:** Yeah, in Orange County. I've got people from so many different streams of the church. There's different worship leaders.
- Annie:** Everybody playing Pickleball.
- Matt:** And Jesus has chosen pickleball as the place we shall meet.
- Annie:** How do y'all find a court? Did you make one?
- Matt:** There's tons around there.
- Annie:** There's a bunch.
- Matt:** We just rent one and we have fun. And then I make silly bible verse puns about *Better is One Day* in your Courts—I'm talking about pickleball.
- Annie:** Listen, if anyone's allowed to do that, it's you. It's you. We took our whole staff to cel... We celebrated... I can't remember what. We hit a milestone, so we took the whole staff to go play and it was the first time I ever played and it was very fun.
- Matt:** Oh, I love that. I loved it.
- Annie:** It was really great.
- Matt:** I mean, I'm not a crazy sporty person, but I love pickleball. We get a bit of exercise, but the social part of it is wonderful.
- Annie:** Yeah, I agree with you. Okay, let me remove friendship and just be a fan for a minute. Thank you so much for your music.

Matt: Oh, you are super kind.

Annie: I have a catch in my throat thinking about how much the work you've put in to your relationship with God that translates into the work you put into the songs has shaped my life.

Matt: Oh, that's really special.

Annie: So thank you. I'm so-

Matt: That means so much. Thank You.

Annie: I'm so grateful. I'm so grateful. If you'd have told 1998 Annie that she'd ever get to sit across from Matt Redman and say that, she would not have believed you.

Matt: Oh.

Annie: So thank you.

Matt: I love that.

Annie: I'm really grateful.

Matt: I love your heart for God as well. It's wonderful seeing, you know, how He's entrusted with you the things He has and the way you're carrying them and love it. We can sit at a table like this and just be on the same page so quickly because we care about the same things.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. I mean, where else would we go?

Matt: I love it.

Annie: I'm gonna tattoo that on somewhere on my body one of these days. Thanks, Matt. Thanks for doing this.

Matt: Pleasure.

[00:51:04] <[Music]

Outro: Oh y'all, isn't he awesome? I feel like we could have talked for like three more hours. I wish he would be our seminary professor. He's just incredible. Gosh, I love

Matt Redman. Go and listen to *Lamb of God* right now. Be sure to follow him on social media and thank him for being on the show.

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. Don't forget you can find That Sounds Fun Podcast for more fun things from these episodes on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is being in New Mexico at Cowboy Church, y'all. I've been so looking forward to this weekend. I cannot believe I get to be at a Cowboy Church. I cannot wait. Y'all know I love the Wild West.

Y'all have a great weekend. I will too. We'll see you back here on Monday with Dr. Anita Phillips. Get ready for what's basically a live counseling session, y'all. She's so great. Her new book, *The Garden Within*, is unbelievable. One of the best books I've read this year. So y'all go ahead and order it and then we'll talk about it on Monday. We'll see y'all then.