

Letters To The Editor



TOP

Casting Crowns to Appear at The Carson Center

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Paducah, Kentucky – Casting Crowns will appear at The Carson Center in Paducah, Kentucky on February 28th.

Taken from their website here is more information about this awesome Christian band. For Ticket information click **HERE!**

“Hearing Casting Crowns’ frontman Mark Hall singing those words in the title track of the band’s new album **Thrive**, it’s hard not to feel peace wash over your soul. Life can be so challenging and it’s easy to become overwhelmed. What a gift to be reminded we were made to thrive!

“The idea of ‘Thrive’ came out of our student ministry. I’ve been a youth pastor for almost 22 years and it’s still what I want to be when I grow up,” Hall says with a grin. “The songs always really start out with what we’re teaching, and for years I’ve been using Psalm 1 in showing them what a believer looks like. It says: ‘Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season.’”

For Hall, nature seemed to underscore scripture on a family vacation in Gatlinburg, Tenn. when he looked at the trees near the river. “Their roots are exposed and you can feel them just doing everything they can to get to where the water is,” he says. “When I talk to families about how they are doing, they always say ‘just surviving.’ That is not the life

that God designed for us to live. That's not saying that you're not going to have problems. None of the New Testament people had it easy. They all had troubles, some even at the expense of their lives. The book of joy, Philippians, was written from prison. Hard times are going to come, but God didn't put you here just so you could survive through hard times. He put you here to thrive, to dig in and to reach out. This record is an effort to draw a picture of what a believer, a follower of Jesus, would look like if they dug into their roots and understood God and themselves more, and then instead of trying to go be Christian for God, they just let God give them chances to be a Christian."

Casting Crowns' has consistently delivered songs that spur listeners to evaluate their relationship with God and with each other. "The basic idea is let God define himself through you and if you'll do that, you're going to thrive," says Hall. "The first six songs on the record are all about learning who God is and who you are. The second six songs are about how that works out. How are you going to get out there and let him live his life through you?"

The album's lead single "All You've Ever Wanted" has a potent message. "It's combating that logic that we have in us that says when we fail, we need to make it right," Hall says. "We think we need to make things right with God. We think we've got to make him proud again. Not only does it not work, it's not needed. We're fighting a battle that's already won and that's what this song is about."

Hall says the hardest song for him to write on the new album was "Love You With the Truth." "It's a big, upbeat rockin' song about a person realizing that they've been a really cruddy friend because they haven't shared the truth with the person closest to them," Hall explains. "People say, 'I want to share the gospel, but I don't want to ruin my friendship.' What you are really saying is I love my friendship more than I love my friend. It's tough, but it's truth."

One of the most poignant songs on the album is the compelling ballad "Broken Together." "Marriage is tough," Hall says. "We bring a lot of fairytales to the picture when it comes to marriage. We bring them to the altar with us [thinking]: 'This is going to be perfect. We don't have to be apart. We can just wake up together every morning and no one is going to have morning breath. We're not going to have any problems.' And then the problems hit and you don't know where to file those into your picture. . . The idea I'm trying to say is: 'Can you lay down who you thought I was and love the me that is? Can we take this from where we are now and realize that I can't be that person?' Only God is going to be able to make this work and broken people can be broken together. To me, it's probably the most important song on the record."

Song after song on the album deals with tough topics and frames life's challenging moments in Biblical perspective. "House of Their Dreams" paints a portrait of a family who has achieved what the world views as success, but inside their home, they are aching with emptiness and isolation. "Just Be Held" shares an uplifting message for anyone struggling as Hall shares what our heavenly father wants his children to remember: "Your world's not falling apart, it's falling into place. I'm on the throne. Stop holding on and just be held."

"Waiting on the Night to Fall" is a powerful ballad that displays the depth and range in Hall's voice. The haunting lyric about addiction uses the metaphor of an old man lurking in the woods, biding his time, as Hall sings: "He knows you have the answers, but truth lies dusty on your shelf and the sword that you could slay him with has become an ornament and nothing else."

"Dream for You" features Hall's youth group singing background vocals. The song reminds us God's dream for us is bigger than we could ever imagine. "We have this picture of who God can use," Hall says, noting that when God spoke to Moses, he found reasons he couldn't do what God asked. "What God had to do for Moses is He had to wipe away that picture and say, 'I'm going to use you.' It's the same way with us. When God hits us with something like 'You need to teach this small group' or 'you need to live on a mission field,' we immediately look in our own backpack at our gifts and skills. If I would have lived on that, I would have never been a youth pastor. I would have never written a song. I would have never stood up in front of anybody. I don't have any of those things in my backpack. . . God is saying, 'There's an X-factor here. If you would just step up, I'll do something that will blow your mind.'"

Working again with producer Mark Miller, who signed the band to his label more than a decade ago, **Casting Crowns** has crafted another collection of songs that are entertaining and innovative, yet lyrically substantive. *Thrive* is a rich aural feast that leaves everyone with plenty of food for thought. In writing songs for *Thrive*, Hall enlisted some of his favorite collaborators, among them Matthew West, Matt Maher and Bernie Herms.

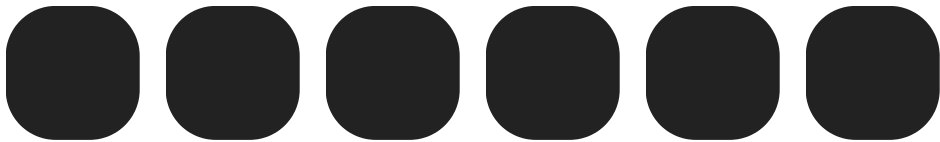
It's been more than 10 years since the members of **Casting Crowns** heard their first single on the radio in July 2003, the same day Hall and his wife Melanie welcomed their daughter Zoe. Since then so much has happened in the lives of each member and along the way God has taught them so much. "He's opened our eyes to our suspicion that He was way bigger than we thought He was," Hall says with a smile. "He didn't need **Casting Crowns** to come along to help His word get out. God is winning. He's changing

the world. It may look at times like things are getting darker and darker, but they are not. Everywhere you go, you can see light and light wins. It always wins.”

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