

FINDING FAVOUR

A big part of what makes Finding Favour so endearing is that they're relatively normal guys. They're family men who like to hunt & fish, enjoy quiet nights in the country, and don't know or really care about this year's fashion trends.

That said, what comes with the territory of 'normalcy' are standard feelings all men deal with—like a desire to be respected, accepted and understood. And the fear that creeps in at the thought of those desires falling short.

Naturally, Finding Favour (Blake NeeSmith, Allen Dukes, Dustin Daniels, Matt Pacco and Jon August) know these fears all too well. Or *did*.

"After 12 years as a band, we were finally getting to a place where we truly believed in the songs we wrote," recalls NeeSmith. "But we were still walking in a lot of fear. Maybe people wouldn't like the stuff we were writing. Maybe we're not cool enough. If people don't like us and our songs, would we even still be able to do this five years from now?"

As the band worked on their follow-up album to 2015's *Reborn*, they decided it was a good time to address those nagging thoughts and let them go. Thus, titling the project *Farewell Fear* was not only a catchy alliteration for a band initialed 'FF,' it was a fitting proclamation moving forward.

"We're all in our thirties—most of us have wives and kids—and there's fear involved in that," NeeSmith said. "We wanted to discuss honest stuff in these songs, and there's fear involved with *that*. Early on in this album's writing process, the statement we wanted to make became clear to us: 'Lord, we trust You and know You have plans for us; so we don't need to live in fear.'

With an esteemed cast of burgeoning producers taking turns at the helm: Bryan Fowler, Jordan Sapp, Dave Lubben and Casey Brown, each one helped the band actualize their capability of expanding and reframing their style down adventurous, creative roads. Again, "different" and "new" are never nonchalant adjectives for artists that have worked a decade-plus crafting a comfortable sound that's blended harmony-rich, pop-rock with a deep South-borne twinge of Country. But what resulted during that Nashville studio time was a cohesive and inspired effort by each band member on each of the album's songs.

Start to finish, *Farewell Fear* serves as a melodic scrapbook of Finding Favour's heart 'n' soul experiences over the past couple of years; but lead single "It Is Well"

undoubtedly best defines who the band is, lyrically and stylistically. NeeSmith points specifically to the song's bridge as a particularly favorite songwriting moment:

*In the fire and the flames
In my pain
You are with me*

*This is not the end
You're not finished yet
You're still moving*

*No matter what I've lost
Or what it costs
My heart will sing*

"For someone to hear those words in the middle of the chaos? That can be an anointed, powerful moment," NeeSmith says.

If there's one song that expresses the central message of *Farewell Fear* most succinctly, it's "Completely," nestled square in the middle of the record. The line in the song, *Though my heart may stop beating, you will heal me completely*, is one the band agrees is the most important on the entire project. "It's not just about physical sickness; says NeeSmith, it's about marriages, addictions and so many other things. There's life after death, and I mean that metaphorically and spiritually. I want people to know that we're free to struggle, we're not struggling to be free. We don't have to live in fear at this moment," he continues, "because even when we die, this isn't the end. There's healing."

True to the band's form on their debut, *Farewell Fear* maintains a balance of upbeat tunes and sentimental power ballads. Regardless of the how they're stylized though, the heart behind the collection of songs on this album is helping set people free from fear, anxiety and doubt as they've journeyed through all of those life roadblocks themselves.

"Even with the scariest things I can imagine on earth, I've found great rest in knowing God's on the other side of any of it," NeeSmith says. "There's life we can't see and maybe don't understand, but living in fear and worry—what's the point?"

