

# BIG DADDY Weave

## *When the Light Comes*

September 13, 2019

Known for honest songs that tell personal stories of freedom in Christ, Big Daddy Weave fans have long admired the band for their particular brand of real-life, real-person openness. With songs like “My Story,” “The Lion and the Lamb,” “Overwhelmed,” “I Know,” and “Redeemed,” Big Daddy Weave has cemented its status as one of the most beloved bands in Christian music. Millions have taken their anthems of Jesus’s chain-breaking love as their own and sung along to songs about the radical act of redemption. But while creating their latest album, *When the Light Comes*, the men of Big Daddy Weave, Mike Weaver (lead vocals, guitar), Jay Weaver (bass, vocals), Jeremy Redmon (guitar, vocals), Joe Shirk (saxophone, keys, vocals) and Brian Biehl (drums), found themselves working from a new and unfamiliar place. The inspirational themes and uplifting messages many find in the group’s music were desperately needed by the members themselves.

“When we were working on songs for this new record,” shares lead singer Mike Weaver, “they were all written from a place of processing grief and sorrow. We were in a season of serious hurting.” The list of trials the band was going through was nearly overwhelming.

In early 2015, an infection began to overtake Jay Weaver’s body. In December of that same year, Brian Biehl and his wife Kim, after six years in the journey of infertility, found out she was pregnant. In January of 2016, they had a miscarriage. That same month, Joe Shirk’s father, Steve, who had been a prayerful encourager of the band and had even driven their bus for them at times, died suddenly from a heart attack.

As 2016 progressed, Jay’s health declined to the point that his survival was in question. After the amputation of both of his feet, a procedure performed to save his life, a time of recovery began that was so painful and difficult that Jay battled the idea of whether he should even continue living.

By the end of 2017, Mike and Jay’s father, Russ Weaver, their hero and an integral part of the Big Daddy Weave support team, died on Christmas Day after a hard-fought struggle with pulmonary fibrosis. Shortly after that, Mike and Jay’s mother Pat, another member of the Big Daddy Weave support team since the beginning, was diagnosed with cancer.

While grappling with these heavy realities of hurt, suffering, and grief, the band members were also trying to create new art that inspires. It was a mission they weren’t sure how to navigate.

“When we deal with stuff that’s happened to us on the inside,” says Mike Weaver, “we don’t know how to put it into words. We don’t mean to be hidiers, but sometimes we don’t know how to bring things into the light.” Brian Biehl adds, “We’ve found it’s in the getting back up where you find true worship. When you’re down, it’s easy to stay there. But it takes a lot of strength to worship God when you’re in the middle of the disappointment and heartache. It takes a lot to sing some of these songs every night because some of us are still going through pain, still in the struggle. But we get up every night to make a stand and say the things God wants us to say.”

Instead of avoiding the painful truth of what they were going through, the band pushed themselves to put it all into the songs. The result is an album that, surprisingly, radiates unblemished joy. While working through their self-described hardest season ever, an underlying current of rejoicing broke through. As bassist Jay Weaver puts it, “Only Jesus can turn sorrow into joy.”

*When the Light Comes* is a collection of soul-baring testimonies and joy-inducing anthems, such as “This Is What We Live For,” co-written with worship leader Matt Redman, that speak about the very real places we find ourselves, all the while proclaiming who God is and that He’s the one doing all that’s good in the world. Also included is the album’s chart-topping debut Christian radio single, “Alive,” composed by artist Zach Williams along with Jason Ingram and Jonathan Smith, with its high-energy hooks mixed with Weaver’s fresh air vocals, calling the listener forth to a brighter day, a better feeling, and a faith that doesn’t disappoint.

“These songs are where we’ve been and where we’re heading. With the help of Jesus, we’re heading to joyful times,” says Beihl.

Produced by guitarist Jeremy Redmon, the band kept the signature elements of who they are while finding a fresh sound that pushes the band forward. “We had some flexibility when recording this album,” says Redmon. “In the past, when we’ve rented a space and studio time, we had to make decisions faster and on a timeline. We recorded *When the Light Comes* in my home studio, something we haven’t done before. It gave us the freedom to experiment and try new things.”

One of the most moving tracks, the ballad “I Know,” is a steady declaration of God’s concrete character. Mike Weaver, his “Redeemed” co-writer Benji Cowart, and their friend Hank Bentley, write that in the face of those things we cannot understand, what we do know is He is good. He is kind. We are loved.

“It’s a lie that you’ll never be okay again. You can have life in the middle of the sorrow. That’s the process between here and heaven. We grow in Jesus in the journey,” Mike Weaver shares. “You can talk yourself out of sorrow just by focusing on what you *do* know. We can’t help what happens to us, but we can learn how to respond. He is with us, He is holding us, He is worthy of our praise, even when we’re being crushed.”

Another ballad, “All Things New,” holds deep significance for brothers Mike and Jay Weaver. Written a short time before their father unexpectedly passed away, the lyrics *You make all things new / You make all things new / God of mercy and love / Do what only You can do / And make all things new* took on a new meaning.

“‘All Things New’ had become a favorite of my dad’s in his last days, and it was the last song he heard before he died,” says Mike. “On Christmas Eve, I held my dad, singing over him and rubbing his back trying to give him some relief. On Christmas morning, he was no longer breathing. The ambulance brought my dad to the hospital. We were in the emergency room with him. He was on machines making him breathe, but we knew he was already with the Lord. Jay, my mom, Jay’s wife Emily and I were standing around my dad. I pressed play on my phone of the rough demo of “All Things New” and laid my phone on my dad’s chest as they unplugged the machines. As we stood there, we believed the song was true, even though it was the most hurtful time. But I was certain at the same time that it was real. Those are the moments when you find out if you really believe it or not.”

The band’s openness to go through whatever doors God opens for them has kept them going since their early days as students at the University of Mobile. Their spirit of dedication – to their calling and their craft – shows up in everything they do.

“We challenge each other about what we’re gonna do with that,” says Mike, “saying, we’re alive and we’re here. How are we going to use this time?”

It’s a testimony poured out and into *When the Light Comes*, an album about a deep and personal faith in Jesus, no matter the circumstances. It’s one thing to sing about trusting God in the midst of trials, but the men of Big Daddy Weave have learned what it means to truly live by faith and to trust in a God who makes all things new.

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