MORIAH PETERS I CHOOSE JESUS

Everyone is faced with choices that impact their lives --sometimes subtly, other times profoundly. For nineteen-year-old, singer/songwriter **Moriah Peters** the way she chooses to live her life is a unique and bold declaration that provides the title, and first single, of her debut album *I Choose Jesus*, releasing April 17 (Reunion Records).

"I'm so excited about this project -- and that song in particular," she says with an infectious smile. "It's the song that every other song was held up against. It's the song that represents who I'm called to be, not only as an artist, but as a daughter of Christ. I'm called to be bold. I'm called to be strong and I'm called to speak the truth in love about who God is and what He's done in my life."

The stories behind this young artist's songs are what make them so genuine, honest and easy to connect with. "One day when we go to heaven God is going to say "well done, my good and faithful servant," she says about the song 'Well Done.' "This song is about staying heavenly minded. It can be a hard thing to comprehend. When I'm going through a crazy time, when I'm frustrated, when I'm down, I have to remember I'm living for something above all this, something that will last for eternity. In the song, I say "I'm going to run this race to hear you say well done." The road is hard sometimes, but whatever I go through, at the end of the day, it will all be worth it to hear "well done."

Moriah's passion for serving God infuses each track on her Reunion Records debut; whether she's encouraging others to make a difference by sharing her mother's selfless story in the opening track "Know Us By Our Love" or celebrating redemption in "No Shame."

"The overall theme of the record is about making a choice," she says. "All of these songs are songs about being in different circumstances and choosing Jesus in each situation. I know that God has a blueprint for every single one of our lives. He has a plan and a purpose, and He wants to make His Son known through us.

Though Moriah initially planned to become an entertainment lawyer, she also always had a love of music that began as a child. "Music has always been a passion" she says. "I still have a notebook of songs I started writing in the fourth grade." Having a father who is a musician, she grew up soaking up a variety of sounds from Stevie Wonder to Crystal Lewis. "I started singing when I was about six-years-old," she recalls. "I remember going to my dad's band practices. He played bass at my church. I'd be sitting in the pews singing harmony and would sing really loud so they would hear me. I've always loved singing. Even to this day people ask, 'Why are you singing all the time? It's just a natural thing. It just comes out."

Moriah's parents always encouraged her to use her gift. "My dad always told me that 'if God has given you a gift, you are only holding it temporarily. Take care of it so that you can give it back to Him," she says.

As Moriah focused on high school graduation, her mother encouraged her to audition for *American Idol*. After five months of preliminary cuts, she came to a crossroads. The judges loved her voice but wanted her to be something she wasn't. Though she was hurt and disappointed at first, Moriah soon had a new opportunity that would allow her to be herself and stand up for what she believed in, while still getting to follow her musical dreams.

After the auditions, a man approached Moriah, commenting on both her talent and her heart for serving God. He connected her with a friend in Nashville which ultimately led her to a record deal with Provident Music Group. She soon began working on her debut album with acclaimed producer Ed Cash (Chris Tomlin, Steven Curtis Chapman, Dave Barnes, Kari Jobe).

Preparing to record her first album, Moriah wrote or co-wrote more than 50 songs drawing inspiration from a variety of sources including her family, her own relationship with Christ and experiences she's walked through with other young girls while leading her high school Bible study. "Know Us By Our Love" is a song about my mother," she explains. "She moved to California when she was 21. She barely got by and worked so hard she didn't have time for herself, but she seemed to always make time to serve others."

A marketing major at Grand Canyon University, Moriah is originally from Chino, California where she attended a large public high school. During this time in her life she frequently had to explain and defend her faith not only to classmates, but also to teachers.

"I Choose Jesus" is rooted in an experience my senior year of high school," she says. "I was one of very few Christians. I was ridiculed, interrogated by my classmates. They got to me. I wasn't prepared to answer a lot of those questions. I grew up with Christianity, but I had never had to defend it before. I sought out answers to their questions. That strengthened my faith. I'm grateful for those times. It gave me the opportunity to make my faith my own." As a result of this and other experiences, her convictions grew stronger and her songwriting became saturated with a wealth of personal experience and insight that has given her wisdom beyond her years.

The album's closer, "Bloom" is a final boost of encouragement to the listener. "I wanted 'Bloom' to be the last song on the album; a final reminder to be patient and keep believing as God works through our lives and seemingly hopeless situations," Moriah says. "Sometimes we just see the surface of our circumstances not realizing that God has a wonderful plan for us."

I wish you could see you were made for more.
Your wildest dreams can't compare to what God's got in store.
Just keep believing you'll see a new season soon,
you're turning into something amazing...you were born to bloom.