

THE NEVERCLAIM

Jeremiah Carlson – lead vocals, acoustic guitar

Mitchell Maldonado – keys, banjo, guitar

Chuck Hill – bass and upright bass

Josh Anderson – lead guitar

Matthew Warren – guitar

Jared Key – drums, percussion

“We never want to claim God’s glory as our own.”

The Neverclaim, a six-man band from Portland, Oregon, can however claim elusive indie credibility, unabashed rock strength, and a pure collective heart for worship that is instantly contagious upon hearing its self-titled Essential Records debut. Lead singer Jeremiah Carlson’s preceding comment defines the spirit of the group—an engaging, diverse community of musicians that gained famous fans and critical praise before having major label backing yet is quick to direct any achievements back to the Lord.

“We all have different personalities and musical backgrounds, but we all really love people and believe God wants to steal their hearts with His love,” Jeremiah says about an outfit whose distinct sound gives hints of The Decemberists and early mentors Third Day among other more surprising influences.

The humble essence of **The Neverclaim** is uniquely matched with bold ambition. Telling of the band’s origin, Carlson—who used to be a heavy metal drummer—recalls being on tour in Europe several years ago when God began prompting him toward something different.

“I had a gift for songwriting and a love for singing, and felt I was being led to use those things to bring revival into peoples’ hearts,” he explains. “God stirred in me a vision for putting together a new group, shooting for the stars, and changing the world.”

At home in America where he served as a youth pastor, Jeremiah tapped into the local church scene to find his band mates. He crossed paths with Matthew Warren, a classically trained cello player and Minnesota transplant who had taken up guitar and was soon inviting childhood friend Chuck Hill to join them out on the West Coast to play bass. Drummer/Percussionist Jared Key was a farm boy, new in Portland and seeking a Christian band gig; he connected with **The Neverclaim** just as he was considering a move back to rural Oregon. Josh Anderson was another great get—“that ‘kid’ who played slide guitar” from other worship bands around town. Finally, Mitchell Maldonado was the group’s sound guy and able to play any auxiliary instrument in a pinch. His official membership status was inevitable.

“It’s really cool how God brought strangers together through random relationships for a common goal,” says Carlson. “We want to give our lives away, becoming less so God becomes more.”

And that’s happening. The soulful passion within early recordings from **The Neverclaim** led to receiving rave reviews (*Near flawless, so unlike the normal cookie-cutter worship style* —Indie Vision Music), winning a talent contest held by national radio network Spirit FM, and along the way becoming friends with Third Day lead singer Mac Powell who introduced the band to Essential Records.

Now, **The Neverclaim** album—ten songs that sound fresh yet familiar and are performed with sincerity comparable to an artist like Bruce Springsteen—is here to declare Carlson and company’s clear mission.

“Life is more than working and making money. There’s a greater story of redemption at work, and God is calling us into that story,” says Jeremiah. “He is calling people to their true identity, radical relationship with Him. We’re all made for more than mediocrity; God calls us to shift cultures because of His love.”

Produced by Paul Moak (Matt Kearney, Third Day, Matt Maher) and Jason Ingram (Chris Tomlin, Tenth Avenue North, Building 429), *The Neverclaim* rips open with the appropriately titled “Revival,” an anthem that brews and boils over with the spiritual intensity of ‘90s rockers Live and lyrics that tell of *a stirring up inside the body, a revolution in our hearts*.

“I started hearing the melody of ‘Revival’ when God put it on my heart to start this band,” Jeremiah recalls. “It’s one of our most requested songs, a song that calls out the possibility of what people can do when God is in them.”

That feeling continues on another early favorite, the soaring “Burn,” which speaks to finding life’s true fulfillment (*We were made for so much more / we yearn for the fire that’s inside / Spirit of God burn inside of me*). There’s also a third signature cut, the banjo-rocking “My Soul Longs”—Carlson says, “We’ve seen such joy released in people when we perform this; they go crazy for this one.”

All this spiritual burning and genuine longing for revival naturally leads to profound moments of worship throughout *The Neverclaim*. “Be Lifted Higher” was written with corporate singing in mind and celebrates what Jeremiah believes is one of the greatest names of Jesus: *King of Kings*. And exuberant first single “One Truth, One Life” is especially well-timed.

“This is a straight-up song about Jesus being the only way to God the Father,” Jeremiah confirms. “Especially now in a postmodern culture where even some churches question the deity of Christ and who He is, this is a song where we can confess: *He’s the Only One!*”

In addition to highlighting the universal need for God, *The Neverclaim* also has a noticeable strength for making its music personal. The gospel-flavored “Steal Their Hearts” is one man’s real life prayer to God for his children, but also one that other parents will want to recite on their own.

Even more transparent is Carlson’s candid wrestling with personal fear and anxiety, even as the band’s ministry platform grows. The topic directly influenced the triumphant “Mighty Jesus” as well as the more pop-constructed “Sweet, Sweet Mercies.”

“I still deal with some things related to anxiety,” Jeremiah admits. “I’ve gone through a lot of changes recently: moving to Nashville, my wife and I having our second daughter, the stress of life on the road mixed with the amazing moments of revival. There came a point of exhaustion, and I had somewhat of a nervous breakdown. But those times teach me how desperately I need Jesus and His people.”

“Sweet, Sweet Mercies” honors those blessings magnified by the storms of life and stands on God’s truth—which is there even when we don’t feel necessarily feel or see it. Carlson likens the heart behind the song to what the Apostle Paul must have felt singing praises to the Lord although he was in prison.

Ultimately, *The Neverclaim* walks what it talks by living out Christian community with each other and those who encounter the band. With a powerful message of spiritual revival, the guys pray for and minister to the people in their path. Jeremiah also serves on the National Youth Task Force within the Vineyard Church Movement, committing a lot of his time, along with the band, to the organization’s mission of being an outpost of God’s compassionate love in a broken world.

“If we aren’t displaying good community among ourselves, how are we supposed to inspire God’s community?” Carlson concludes. “We’re starting to see so much fruit with the band. I truly feel like we’re called to go out now as a ministry team.”

Indeed, that’s worth proclaiming.

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