

# it's IMPORTANT to base my songs on scripture

## INTERVIEW WITH UK WORSHIP LEADER AND SONGWRITER LUKE WAREHAM OF CLEVEDON BAPTIST CHURCH

### WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME INTERESTED IN MUSIC AND THEN SONG WRITING?

I have been involved with church my whole life as my parents have always led and pastored Baptist churches across England, so more than 28 years – from birth! When I was 13 I started being involved in the worship team at Hereford Baptist Church and sang in the youth band. I sensed a real call from God one year at New Wine that one day I would lead worship and help people to encounter Jesus. So I began guitar and keyboard lessons with the aim of being able to lead worship.

I spent hours in my room worshipping along to different worship songs and this passion has led me to leading worship over the past 14 years and encouraging others to worship. In terms of songwriting I love co-writing with people and have

a few close songwriting friends, Matt Caddick who is minister at Counterslip Baptist Church in Bristol, Rachel Mason and Ollie Morris, all of whom have really encouraged me and cheered me on.

### WHERE WERE YOU AT THE START OF 2020?

At the start of 2020 I was encouraged by my friend Rachel to create an EP of songs I had written, so I released *Whisper* just before lockdown. This timing was not what we expected but actually it felt like perfect timing as my prayer all along was for the songs I write to speak hope and truth into people's lives.

*Whisper*, the title song of the EP, was written at a time when we were finding it hard to hear God over the chaos of life. Even when we are filled with panic, anxiety, doubt and despair a whisper from God can change everything. We believe that true

freedom comes from the hope of Jesus on the cross. God whispers to Elijah in 1 Kings - God wasn't in the noise of the wind, in the rocks breaking, in the earthquake or fire, but he was in the silence as he whispered to Elijah. God revealed himself in a whisper to Elijah as he was so close, and he whispers in our situations because he is so close and never leaves us. So releasing this song at a start of a pandemic really felt right.

### AS THE PANDEMIC AND THE LOCKDOWNS UNFOLDED, WHAT IMPACT DID THIS HAVE ON YOUR MUSIC? HOW DID YOU FEEL GOD SPEAKING TO YOU? WHAT MESSAGES DID YOU SENSE IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR SONGS TO CONVEY?

Leading worship was different during the pandemic and I know this was the same for churches throughout the world! As worship leaders, we found

ourselves learning more and more about leading worship for an online congregation. With people not being able to sing together, I found myself worship leading in 'fish tanks' due to social distancing!

One of the positives I saw come out of the pandemic in relation to online church is the reach it had at the time - and still today with online streaming helping people come to church and check it out!

The pandemic taught me to let go of the plans I have for myself and trust God with everything, including my songwriting. For me my writing process starts as I worship by myself, often in my bedroom. I have a journal which I use to write down ideas throughout the week, particularly as I listen to talks on a Sunday or a podcast. I strive to write songs that are biblically focused so I read the Bible and just worship. I think it's important to base my songs on scripture from the Bible, both Old and

New Testament, because the Bible is God's word inspired by the Holy Spirit and it points us to the God we worship. The Bible also guides us in our faith and everyday life. Then I take these ideas to some trusted songwriting friends and we set aside a time to write together and pray about the songs.

I felt that during the pandemic my songs should convey why it is so important we worship even in testing pandemic times because:

**1** We are designed to worship – our priority should be to worship God in all we do and to be in God's presence. That shifts our focus onto Jesus rather than worldly troubles and enables us to fix our mind on things above.

**2** Worship aligns us with the truth of who God is and who we are – I am inspired by a quote from John Ortberg that says 'I need to worship because without it I lose a sense of wonder and gratitude and plod through life

with blinkers on'. We should go to God with every situation we face and allow him to speak into our everyday life situations.

**3** To behold God – American worship leader and songwriter Jeremy Riddle says we should 'present our whole being to God in worship' and I strive to write songs that help people to do that. When we worship God we become more like him and we come into his everlasting presence that heals, restores, brings freedom and gives us strength when we feel weak, and this is what we need in our lives now and we needed during the pandemic.

My prayer is that the songs I write help people in their everyday life situations and help them to fix their eyes on Jesus. I also work as a youth worker in the most deprived and needy areas in Bristol and I strive to write songs that will bring hope to a broken world, speaking the truth of Jesus.



Photo by Ollie Morris Photography

## WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK HAVE YOU HAD, PARTICULARLY ON THE SONGS YOU'VE RELEASED SINCE THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

One of the cool things that came out of releasing my first EP just before lockdown is that churches used the lyric videos to the songs in their online services. My heart behind songwriting and releasing songs is that they would bring the hope and truth of Jesus into people's everyday lives, and I love it when I hear stories of the songs helping people to encounter this.

Singing the songs at Clevedon Baptist Church has been a real highlight as they are helping God's people to lift God up in praise. It was also amazing to release a brand new song *Honour You Lord* with Lou Fellingham who has always been one of my worship leader inspirations. I remember going to see her in Phatfish when I was aged 13 and thinking how amazing it was seeing people worship Jesus through sung worship!

The songs have been played on radio stations across the world and the song *Whisper* came no 11 in the UK Christian

Charts and the first EP came first in the Louder Than the Music 2020 award. Since releasing music I was also winner of the international radio awards, GX awards 2021 and was nominated for the 2021 Hollywood Music in Media Awards.

## WHAT NEXT FOR YOU?

I have already started writing new songs and I would love to share them with the wider church. I will be leading worship in my local church and at different events around the UK. I love that we are back singing together again!

My prayer is that the songs I write would:

- Bring hope to a broken world.
- Speak the prophetic truth of Jesus into everyday life situations.
- Help people to have a sense of wonder and love from God that would help them get through everyday life and to fix their eyes on Jesus.



Luke is a worship leader and songwriter based in the south west of the UK - he loves leading worship, drawing people to Jesus and seeing people changed through worshipping him. Luke leads worship at his local church, Clevedon Baptist Church, and has led worship at various Christian conferences and events around the UK.

Follow Luke on all social media channels, and find his lyric videos on his [YouTube channel](#)



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