

= Come to the Well =

Come to the Well is the fifth studio album by American contemporary Christian band Casting Crowns , released on October 18 , 2011 through Beach Street and Reunion Records . The album , which has a predominantly pop rock and rock sound , was based on the Biblical story of the woman at the well . In writing the album , lead vocalist Mark Hall collaborated with songwriters Steven Curtis Chapman , Matthew West , and Tom Douglas . The album received mostly positive reviews from critics , many of whom praised the album 's songwriting , and received the award for Top Christian Album at the 2012 Billboard Music Awards .

Although it was projected to debut at number one on the Billboard 200 by music industry analysts , Come to the Well debuted at number two on the chart and number one on the Christian Albums chart with first @-@ week sales of 99 @,@ 000 units . It also debuted on the Canadian Albums Chart at number sixty @-@ nine and appeared at number eight on the New Zealand Albums Chart in 2012 following the band 's appearance at the 2012 Parachute Music Festival . The album has sold over 779 @,@ 000 copies and has received a Gold certification from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) . The album 's lead single , " Courageous " , peaked at number one on the Billboard Christian Songs chart and at number four on the Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart .

= = Background and recording = =

According to Casting Crowns ' lead vocalist Mark Hall , the concept for Come to the Well is the song " The Well " . Hall wrote the song based on the Biblical story of " woman at the well and the fact that she was standing there talking to Jesus about water and Jesus was talking to her about water , but they weren 't talking about the same water " . Hall noted that , in his life , " when I come to Jesus , I 've already got my well figured out , I 've already got what I think is going to sustain me , I just need him to sprinkle some magic Jesus dust on it and make it work . We have our wells figured and we want Jesus to fix our wells , but our wells are really holes in the ground " . Hall argued that instead of using that approach , Chrsitians should " start with Jesus , then we go to the world " , and said that approach is what the album is about . In writing the album , Hall worked with outside songwriters Steven Curtis Chapman , Matthew West , and Tom Douglas on several tracks ; he received writing credit on eleven out of the album 's twelve tracks , the exception being " Face Down " , which was penned by Hector Cervantes and Marc Byrd .

Come to the Well was produced by Mark A. Miller . It was recorded and mixed by Sam Hewitt at Zoo Studio in Franklin , Tennessee . Additional vocals were recorded by Billy Lord at Eagle 's Landing Studio in McDonough , Georgia , while additional recording was conducted at Lifesong Studio in McDonough . The string tracks on the album , which were arranged by David Davidson , were recorded at Ocean Way Studio in Nashville , Tennessee by Bobby Shin . It was mastered by Andrew Mendelson at Georgetown Masters in Nashville . The album was submixed by Shin at ShinShack Studio in Nashville .

= = Musical style and songwriting = =

Come to the Well has been described as a pop rock and rock album ; it has also been described as being a pop and worship album .

= = = Tracks 1 ? 6 = = =

Opening track " Courageous " , a pop rock and soft rock song , was described by Hall as an " anthem of encouragement . It ? s one brother reminding all of God ? s men we were meant for greatness , and that greatness is defined in contagious and courageous abandonment to Jesus " .

" City on the Hill " , described as " lush " and " string @-@ laden " , is a critique of denominationalism in the Christian church ; Hall described the song as an " allegory of the factions

of the modern Church , the result of predominantly like @-@ minded people often dwelling upon non @-@ essentials and personal taste to go their own direction " .

" Jesus , Friend of Sinners " " admonishes the Christian church to show compassion " and " laments how the world knows many Christ followers more by what they are against than what they are for " . Although Hall called the song " one of the more direct songs [Casting Crowns has] written " , he said " it also speaks truth . And I think believers should speak truth to each other as long as we do it in love " .

" Already There " , described as " echoing " Clocks " -era Coldplay " , relates the concept that " God is already sitting at the end of your life looking back at it " . " The Well " , regarded by Hall as the " heart of the entire album " , highlights the " life @-@ giving love of Jesus " as opposed to " dried up empty religion " .

" Spirit Wind " incorporates a folk rock sound with influences from country music . The song , one of the first songs Mark Hall ever wrote , was written after Hall saw a pastor at a church in Alabama preach the story of Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones to a church that Hall described as one of the " deadest churches " he had ever seen . The song 's verse structure goes from " Ezekiel in the first verse to the country preacher in the second verse and finally to a prayer for God to raise his Church again as a mighty army [in the third verse] " .

= = = Tracks 7 ? 12 = = =

" Just Another Birthday " , sung by Megan Garrett , is a mid @-@ tempo ballad . The song was written to " shake up some fathers and remind them of their true priorities " and to " encourage kids out there who don ' t have an involved dad here on Earth " .

" Wedding Day " features a " soaring melody " . According to Hall , the song " anticipates the thrill of reveling in the presence of God as the Bride of Christ " , a theme Hall felt is rarely addressed in modern music . " Angel " was written for Hall 's wife , Melanie , and references the first time Hall met her as well as their wedding day .

" My Own Worst Enemy " has a " grungy " rock sound . Hall felt the song 's sound , which he described as perhaps the heaviest song Casting Crowns have ever made , was fitting due to the song 's lyrical theme of the inner battle with sin .

" Face Down " is the only song on the album which was not co @-@ written by Hall , The album 's final song , " So Far to Find You " , was written by Hall and Steven Curtis Chapman about Hall 's adopted daughter , Meeka Hope .

= = Release and promotion = =

Prior to the release of Come to the Well , " Courageous " was released as a digital download on July 19 , 2011 and to Christian radio on August 13 , 2011 . The single topped the Billboard Christian Songs chart and peaked at number four on the Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart . Come to the Well was released on October 18 , 2011 . The album was projected to sell anywhere from 95 @,@ 000 copies to upwards of 110 @,@ 000 copies in its first week of sales in the United States . Although industry analysts predicted the album would top the Billboard 200 chart , it ultimately debuted at number two on the Billboard 200 with sales of 99 @,@ 000 units , blocked by Adele 's album 21 . The album also debuted at number one on the Christian Albums chart , number two on the Digital Albums chart , and number sixty @-@ nine on the Canadian Albums Chart . In its second week , the album sold 30 @,@ 000 copies in the United States , dropping to number ten on the Billboard 200 chart . The album held the top spot on the Christian Albums chart for four consecutive weeks following its release and for ten non @-@ consecutive weeks from December 2011 to November 2012 . By February 2012 , the album had sold 601 @,@ 000 copies in the United States , according to Nielsen SoundScan . Following the band 's appearance at the 2012 Parachute Music Festival in New Zealand , Come to the Well debuted at number eight on the New Zealand Albums Chart . The album 's second single , " Jesus , Friend of Sinners " , was released to Christian radio on March 3 , 2012 . As of March 2014 , the album has sold 779 @,@ 000 copies .

= = Critical reception and accolades = =

Come to the Well received mostly positive reviews from music critics . James Christopher Monger of Allmusic gave the album three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of four stars , praising the album 's opening songs but critiquing the album 's " mid @-@ section " for having songs that " feel a bit tacked on " . Tom Frigoli of Alpha Omega News gave the album a grade of an A , praising the album for containing " everything they ? ve come to love and more with several radio @-@ friendly songs . " Jonathan Faulkner of Alt Rock Live gave the album a seven out of ten stars , commenting that the album " is defiantly a step in the right " direction . Grace S. Aspinwall of CCM Magazine gave the album four out of five stars , praising the overall quality of the album and commending the band for " staying true to themselves " . Robert Ham of Christianity Today gave the album three out of five stars , critiquing the album for " sticking to the well @-@ trodden road of modern worship " . Tom Lennie of Cross Rhythms gave Come to the Well nine out of ten stars , praising the album 's music and lyrics for being " impacting " and " making for much more than just an enjoyable listen " . Jonathan Andre of Indie Vision Music gave the album three out of five stars , calling it a " thought @-@ provoking album , about how society wants the temporary fix " . Caldwell of Jesus Freak Hideout gave the album four out of five stars , describing it as " skillfully walk [ing] the thin tightrope act of balancing a heart for ministry and discipleship with a broadly appealing (if sometimes too broadly appealing) pop rock soundtrack " .

Schexnayder of Jesus Freak Hideout gave a second staff opinion rating of three @-@ stars @-@ out @-@ of @-@ five , and wrote that " Come To The Well is not an unbearable musical venture , and it ? s likely one of their better recent releases . Although their music may not be of the highest quality , those looking for lyrics that go deeper than your average contemporary worship band should consider giving at least some of Casting Crowns ? latest a listen . " Davies of Louder Than the Music gave it a three and a half out of five stars , noting that " there is absolutely nothing wrong with this album " , which he expects more out of the band , advising that with " a little bit more creativity musically and this could be a really strong album . " Kevin Davis of New Release Tuesday gave it a four out of five stars , evoking how the album is " filled with songs that both challenge and encourage believers in their walk " , and calling it " the best album by Casting Crowns since Lifesong " . Bert Gangl of The Phantom Tollbooth gave it a three and a half out of five stars , writing that the album " taken as a whole , the new record , in spite of its intermittent musical tangents ? or perhaps because of them ? winds up being one of the Crown collective 's most cohesive , and impressive , releases to date . " Ed Cardinal of Crosswalk.com said the album was " as strong and yet relatively safe as anything it has done before " and praised it as " sure to be among 2011 ? s most popular and enduring Christian albums " . Lindsay Williams of Gospel Music Channel praised the album 's songwriting and said the album " is a solid effort in the Crowns discography " . Barry Westman of Worship Leader praising the album for its " variety in styles adds to the complexity of the album , and keeps the listener wondering what will come next . " At the 2012 Billboard Music Awards , the album received the award for Top Christian Album . Come to the Well has been nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Christian Music Album at the 55th Grammy Awards , while " Jesus , Friend of Sinners " has received nominations for Best Gospel / Contemporary Christian Music Performance and Best Contemporary Christian Music Song .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Credits lifted from the liner notes .

= = Charts = =

=== Chart procession and succession ===