

## Chapter 35

### Ecclesiastes

The summer of 2003, it had been a year. A year of back and forth with the Record Label's legal department. A year of one legal consultation after another. A year of trying to figure out what to do in the future. A year of trudging forward knowing that there was no way we could beat a Major Record Label. A year of learning more about trademark law than I cared to understand or hear about. Little did I know, I was coming up on a year of questions and finger pointing from former Vine members who had left the band years earlier.

From the summer of 2002 to the summer of 2003, I had had so many conversations and had to make so many decisions. I couldn't keep up with it all. I now know why people give up on lawsuits. They can drag out so long, at some point you just want it all to end. I was tired. I was frustrated. But, more than anything, I was sad. I was sad because today was the end of that impossible year and the end of Vine.

The paperwork had arrived from my lawyer in California. I didn't open it at first, I just stood in the kitchen and looked at the package. It all came down to the paperwork inside this FedEx envelope. I was home by myself. In the home where I lived when the former line up had decided to go with a new singer and a new name. In the home where I built a rehearsal room for the future Vine. In the home where I lived through the rebuilding of a new Vine. In the home where we did preproduction for the Postcard from Oblivion album with Sam.

I left the envelope on the kitchen counter and walked away.

I got in my car and drove to the convenience store up the street. I bought a soda and drove back home. I sat in the backyard, drank my soda and tried not to think about Vine for a few minutes. I gazed at the back fence and the yard beyond. I just wanted to feel peaceful. When I finished my drink, I walked back inside.

In the FedEx envelope, was a large manila envelope with my name handwritten on the front. I opened it up and read through the documents. Everything looked correct. We would change our name, destroy every piece of Vine merchandise we still owned and never sell anything again with the name Vine on it. I read through the documents a couple of times and set them back down on the counter.

I didn't want to sign the documents, but I knew I needed to. I needed to put this behind me. It was thoroughly stressing me out.

The band was scheduled to rehearse that night so I decided I would wait to sign the documents until there was at least one other band member present.

A few hours later, Mark Tew was the first one to arrive.

Mark saw the paperwork on the kitchen counter and asked, "So, is that it?"

“Yeah” I replied, “As the second most senior member of the band Vine, would you like to watch me sign away the name?”

Mark stared at me with a confused look on his face, then his eyebrows lifted. “Oh. I never thought of that. I guess I am the second most senior member.”

“Yeah, you are. So, um, shall I?”

Mark nodded his head.

I quickly signed my name. I put the pen down and said, “Okay, it’s done.”

I walked in to the rehearsal room.

Later that night after practice, I was sitting in my bedroom thinking back over everything. Everything back to the first night in Fatso’s *“Ladies and Gentlemen please welcome to the stage...VIIIINE”*. To the years with Daron, Billy and Mike. To the time when Tyrant, Mad World and Agape were hitting on the radio. To recording with Sam in Palmyra. Time had flown by.

I was crying.

My wife heard me and walked in to the bedroom. She could always tell when something was wrong, even when I didn’t know anything was wrong. She knew me better than anyone did. She asked if I was okay. I just shook my head. She sat down next to me and we reminisced. She and I had been together longer than Vine had existed, so she had been there with me through everything. Now she was there to help me let go. Thank God I still had her.

I finally went to sleep that night knowing the next day I would have to start destroying everything I owned with the name Vine on it.

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A couple of weeks later we had an interview on 89.7 to announce our name change. I was talking with Eddie Alcaraz before the interview started and I think he could tell I was having a hard time with the name change, then he said something I’ll never forget.

He said, “You know, in the Bible, God changed some people’s names. Think about Saul to Paul. He changed his heart and he changed his name. God might be changing the band name for a reason too. It could be a really good thing.”

I needed to hear that.

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Over the last year of Vine, Sam had become more than a Producer for us, he had become our Manager. He would continue to work with us under our new name Ben Zephyr. When it came time to announce the end of Vine, he suggested we use something biblical.

We took out a full page ad on the back cover of Origin Magazine. From Ecclesiastes 3:1, it read:

To Everything

There is a season

And a time

To every purpose

Under Heaven.

Vine

1995 - 2003