



## Who Knew? – Touchpoint for March 4, 2026

### John 4:5-42 (NRSVUE) Samaritan Woman at the Well

**TOUCH POINT**

<sup>5</sup> So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" <sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup> "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" <sup>30</sup> They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

<sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

**Grace and peace to you from the Mystery in whom we live and move and have our being.**

*"If you knew the gift of God.."*

The woman at the well asked Jesus why he's breaking a cultural taboo by asking her for a drink. Jesus begins his responds to the woman with these words, "If you knew the gift of God..."

Is this an indictment for not knowing? I don't think so.

To demand we know something is a huge expectation. How can anyone really know anything fully? How can a person know the mysteries of this universe much less God?

Even if we were to become convinced of something it's a belief, but it's not a *knowing*. I can know what I believe, but I can't trust that what I believe is absolute truth.

A therapist asked me why it was so difficult to break through with patients who identify as evangelical Christian. I repeated something a wise mentor and psychiatrist told me: "It's because they think they know."

Jesus tells this dear woman, "If you knew ...". Maybe this was his way of saying, with compassion, "If you would have known, you would have asked for the source of all water. You wouldn't need a bucket either!"

That's when she says, "Hey, I want what you're drinking!"

Jesus shows her he knows her past. Perhaps he knows it's the biggest obstacle to her belief that she has access to living water.

What if this was not an indictment of the woman and her five marriages, but a way of Jesus the liberator showing her she's being seen for the first time. By a man. A Rabbi. A person who would go out of his way to connect her with her inner wellspring of life.

Is it more important for me to know God or God to know me?

Jesus displays his knowing by asking her to go home and get her husband. She responds, "I have no husband." Jesus responds, "True story, well woman. As a matter of fact, you've been married five times and now you're living with someone."

There is no indication it is an indictment. It is simply Jesus saying, "I see you." Whatever she went through in each marriage, whether being widowed, or rejected, Jesus somehow knows.

In that moment, Jesus earns the right to be heard. She is about to receive a bucketless relationship with an inner well that doesn't run dry. There is no shame in her not knowing.

There is no shame for those of us who get lost in the limitations of our brain's capacity to think our way into change and transformation.

Knowing is overrated.

To be liberated from the need to know, and live fully, is to enter the adventurous life of faith. Faith means action taken in the face of my not knowing... actions taken in the midst of fear and doubt. The Liberator of our need to know is Christ. In Christ we are known and seen.

Maybe the liberating message would put manipulative, money-hungry churches and their charlatan pastors out of business. People might drop the dependency they've created through their structures, and nurture a reliance on the inner gift of God.

To communicate to others a well-spring of eternal love, connection, and thirst-quenching water within them, would be transformative. Perhaps they would want to be in community with others who have let go of the need to know and experience the fullness of this well-spring together... loving each other in the uncertainty and unknowing nature of the human condition, yet living in an experiential environment of grace and joy.

In Marvel movies, the superhero uses his power to liberate those who are suffering. He uses his gift to rescue others from global catastrophes, and the inevitable, imminent apocalypse.

Jesus is an anti-superhero. He simply says to the Samaritan woman that in her is a wellspring of living water. He tells her how to access this gift within herself, so she's not dominated by external powers.

Jesus said, "If you knew..."

According to all the cultural and religious rules about what makes a person fit in, this woman is living wrongly.

She had five husbands.

She associated with pagans.

She couldn't worship in the temples.

She was a woman.

She lives on the wrong side of the tracks.

She evidently is an educated woman.

She is respected by the fellow marginalized men in her community.

She probably even takes long walks on the beach and calls it prayer.

Here are some questions for us now that we can be liberated from having to "know."

- What draws you and I to the well?
- What are we deeply longing for that a bucket full of religiosity cannot quench?
- How have we not been seen?
- Where have we felt indicted?
- How have I waited and settled for a second-class life simply because I thought I should know? Believed better? Behaved better?
- How often have I felt I'd disappointed God by not knowing, not having enough faith?
- How have I rejected the idea of a caring higher power because I needed to know that it's true?

Jesus is revealing that the wellspring of life is not an external gift. It is an internal gift that we have access to when we let go of our need to know and drink from this wellspring of engagement with the liberator. The Spirit of Christ within us.

How would you live today if you knew?

**Amen.**

## Opening Song

### **Be Still**

(London Fox Taizé Choir)

Be Still, know that I am God.

### **Lamb of God**

(Salt of the Sount)

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God (hear our prayer),  
Lamb of God, Grant us peace (hear us pray).  
This we pray.

## Bible Passage

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

## Touchpoint

(Where God's story touches our life story)

### **Come, O Lord, and Set Us Free**

(John L. Bell, The Wild Goose Collection)

Come, O Lord and set us free. Give/Bring your people peace.  
Come, O Lord and set us free. Come Lord Jesus, Come.  
1. And take our guilt away. Give us your pardon Lord.  
2. Free from our self-obsession. Free from each fond possession.  
3. Free to affirm each other...as sister and as brother  
Reshape the world you made. Let what your hand created...be always celebrated.

## The Meal

### **The Lord's Prayer**

(The Scottish Festival Singers)

## Benediction

### **Light of the World**

(George Salazar)