

I Am (Part 1) – I Am

Matt Chandler – January 31, 2016

Well, how are we? Doing well? Excellent. And amped up this morning. I like that. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. John 4 is where we're going to camp out. If you're with us today and don't have a Bible with you, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. If you don't own one, that's our gift to you.

I woke up early this morning, and I went to Roots to grab a cup of coffee before I came up here to pray with the staff. The barista, who is a member of our church, said, "Hey, the first half of your message was awesome last night." What kind of compliment is that? "The first half was really good. I thought it was a little weak near the end, but the first half was really good."

I asked. I have the personality type. I'm going to ask what that means. She said, "No, no, no. I just had to leave early." I was like, "Oh, okay." So all we know at this point is that the first half of this is really good. The back end could be terrible. No promises. While you're turning to John 4, I want to talk to you about James Smith. James Smith graduated from Waltrip High School in 1967. From there, he went to Sam Houston State University. Go Bearkats!

He got his degree and then had a long, wildly successful career, married to his wife Sherry for over 30 years, has two grown children who are also married. He has a son named Jeremy and a daughter named Tiffany. He is a bit of a social conservative, so if you want to think about politics, he's going to be on the conservative side of things. He is staunchly pro-life and is not a fan of the current administration.

He has a John Deere tractor, and he's proud that for a man his age, he still mows his own lawn. He has a great sense of humor, but the real crown jewel of his life is his seven grandchildren. The Bible says children are an inheritance from the Lord, but I'm telling you as a parent, it seems that grandchildren are an inheritance of the Lord because they certainly have an easier gig than the one I'm walking right now. You have to earn that to get to that inheritance.

He loves those grandbabies. If they're playing a sport, he and Sherry are there. He has oftentimes... I love that he does this. He took his oldest granddaughter up to New York, and they did high tea together. When you hear me say, "High tea," don't think of what you do in your Keurig. This is kind of real swanky kind of high tea experience with his granddaughter.

He is all in on those grandbabies. He has a dog named Oliver, a Goldendoodle. That Goldendoodle weighs 36 pounds and has recently been neutered because he was a little crazy, so they thought, "If we neuter Oliver, maybe he'll calm down a bit." Real quick confession. I have no idea who James Smith is. On Wednesday night, I was with my wife (this will give you insight into our relationship), and I said, "What do you think the most common name in the United States for a man is?"

She said to me, "Siri, what's the most common name for a man in the United States?" Siri came back very quickly (thank you very much, Apple) and said, "James Smith." On Thursday morning, I woke up. I had breakfast with a young man named Otis who is doing stunning ministry down in south Dallas, and I came to my office to study.

I got on my computer, went to my wife's Facebook page with her permission. Don't give me that look. I don't have one. I searched, "James Smith." Then I scrolled through the list (it was an incredible list) until I found a James Smith who had no mutual friends with my wife. I picked him and for 10 minutes perused his Facebook page, and that's who I just introduced you to.

Now, how weird is it if he's a podcaster, right? How awesome is that if he's a podcaster, and this week, he's going for his run, and he puts his headphones in. He's like, "Wait a minute. My name is James. I have a dog named Oliver. Wait, I have... Wait, he's talking about me!" Jim, if you're listening to this, I love you, I think. I'm not sure. I just spent 10 minutes on your Facebook page.

Social psychologists are going to say that I don't *know* Jim. I know *about* Jim. They're going to tease out this idea of knowing and knowing about, and they're going to use the terms "impersonal knowledge" and "personal knowledge." My Bible is over here. Maybe it's better if I just come over here and say it doesn't matter if you're a believer or a Christian, not a Christian. It doesn't matter. Social psychology says there is a difference between knowing about someone and knowing someone.

Social psychologists would say I know about James Smith, Jim, but I don't know him. Social psychologists would argue this way. Impersonal knowledge could be that you're an acquaintance, that you're able to smoothly enter into conversation with them, and that you would recognize them. All of that would be categorized psychologically as impersonal knowledge. It means I could see Jim. I would recognize him, and I know enough about his life to begin engaging him in rather smooth conversation.

Literally, if I saw him, I could be like, "Jim, how are you, man? Is Sherry with you? How is Sherry doing? So you've been retired for like three years now. How has that gone? Are you enjoying retirement? Are you not enjoying retirement? How was high tea with that grandbaby? How cool was that? Is Oliver still wilding out, or did it calm him down some?" I could just enter in.

He's probably going to be a little freaked out, but I could recognize him. I know enough to have conversation with him. Social psychologists would just say, "You don't know him. You just know about him." Since I just described the bulk of all of our relationships, what does it mean to actually know someone?

Again, we're not in the Bible yet. We're going to get there. According to psychology, personal knowledge, to know someone is to know information that is particularly intimate or private. I can unpack all of these kind of external details about Jim's life, but to actually know him, I would need to sit across from him and him to begin to unpack for me unseen things.

To make just an easy illustration, if I had the opportunity to sit across from James Smith, and he began to tell me with tears in his eyes his hopes for his grandbabies, his concerns for his children, the fears he currently walks in, the joys he's currently walking in, something Facebook would never tell me and cursory conversation would never, the type of information that must be earned by lovingly being in someone's life for a period of time.

Then I could begin to say, "Yeah, I know Jim. I don't know him because I know his dog's name and know that he likes to travel and know how he likes his steak and what he thinks about Sherry. Rather, I've seen aspects of his heart that are hidden from the general population." The reason I'm starting out with this is because I have a keen awareness of where ministry is taking place for me and for us in the Bible Belt.

I have wrestled a long time. I never thought I would be in Dallas. I thought I was going back to the Bay Area and was going to pastor out in the Bay Area. One of the things that is really unique about where ministry is playing out here in Dallas is we still live in a rather overt Christian culture. Although there is growing hostility, and we're viewed as growingly abnormal, by and large, most people think they're Christians here.

By and large, my neighbors, the people I run into... It's a really strange thing to come across just a hardened atheist. You can. I'm not saying you're not there. Heck, maybe you're even here today. See, I started out with psychology so we could talk. That's rare. People just think they're Christians in the Bible Belt, and I have a growing concern that most of us have a more impersonal relationship than we do a personal relationship with Jesus.

Back in June, I was on sabbatical, and I was just reading through the Gospels, and I was reading not to just see all Jesus has done, but rather, I just wanted to look at who Jesus was. I think our confidence in what Jesus has accomplished for us is directly tied, rooted in with who we understand him to be. If our knowledge of who he is, not what he does, grows, then so our confidence in what he says he has accomplished will grow also.

It's a very safe saying to say that by beholding Jesus, by looking upon him, not just by checking off facts about what he has done, but really seeing Jesus for who he is, we might be transformed more and more into his image. The things our souls are really hungry for actually take place not when we have a checklist of things we know he has done, but rather, we see him for who he is.

The apostle Paul, who hated Jesus and then served him unto death, said this in 2 Corinthians 3:18. **"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord..."** We're beholding the glory of Christ. **"...are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."** The apostle Paul is arguing that by beholding Jesus, we're transformed from one degree of glory to the next.

That text in and of itself is tremendously rich. First, I love that text because it means there are no silver bullets. We're transformed one degree of glory to the next. You're not transformed like this. Every Christian here could do a hearty, "Amen," to this. It's a slower process than we would like. Amen? It's just slower than I would like.

I'm like, "Are you kidding me? Twenty-something years in, and this is still an issue, Lord? Can we maybe pick up the pace, here?" He's like, "I was asking you the same question." My hope over the next eight weeks is a simple one. I just want to help us look at Jesus. This isn't going to be that kind of series where we go, "Here are eight ways this will help your marriage, four ways to remove doubt..." It's not that those things are unimportant. It's that those things get put in their rightful place when you see and savor Jesus.

That's the endgame. That's the whole point. I want us to talk about what it means that Jesus is the Bread of Life. He's not saying, "I've accomplished things that are like bread." That's not what he's doing. he's saying, "I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the resurrection and the life." What does it mean when he says, "This is who I am, not just what I've done, but who I am"? That's my hope, but I thought we would do this first.

The Bible talks a lot about seeing but not being able to see and hearing but not being able to hear. What's happening when the Bible talks about that is he's talking about this dynamic where there is a type of familiarity that makes us miss out on the depth and beauty of what is right in front of us. Right? It's very quick because of our church background or maybe other hurdles for us to go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah."

What I want us to do is I want us to just stop for a second because I don't think you can really see and savor Jesus if there is not a commitment to slow down a little. I want to give us a second just to stop and I want you to pray for you. I want you to pray that the Holy Spirit of God would give you eyes to see and ears to hear.

This isn't the time to pray for your friend or your crazy brother who just happened to show up this morning or that lost guy at work. No, no, no. You pray for you. You ask that the Holy Spirit of God would show and help you see and sense the reality of Jesus Christ in a way that goes beyond where you currently sit. I want to give you a second to do that. You pray for you. You ask the Holy Spirit of God to minister to you, and then we'll dive into John 4.

Holy Spirit, we just ask that in your mercy, you might give us eyes to see and sense and savor Jesus, and that as we consider that he is the Messiah, that he is the Christ, that he is the Savior of the world today, that you would jostle our hearts and our heads, that you wouldn't let us run out of our hearts up into our heads or out of our heads and down into our hearts, but you would engage us in a holistic way where we're transformed yet another degree. Help us now. Some of us are very weary

of ourselves, so will you minister to us today, Holy Spirit of God? It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

Okay, we're going to read John 4. We're going to read something like 40 verses together, and you're going to do great. Here's what I would like you to do as we read the Bible. There are a couple of ways to read it, and we'll talk more about that a little bit later in this sermon, but we can read the Bible like a newspaper, right? We can read it and kind of get the facts and maybe write a little note in our journal that is factual and true.

Or we can get inside the text and read it like we used to read when we were kids before we got all crusty. Do you know what I'm talking about? When my kids read, they're immersing themselves in what's happening. It's like a movie in their brain. What we want to do as we read this narrative, which I believe is one of the more powerful ones in the New Testament, is we want to be able to feel the sun. We want to be able to smell what it smelt like that day. We want to put ourselves in the text.

One of the ways I do it in my own personal reading is I'm thinking, "Hey, if I'm shooting this scene in a movie, what does it look like? Where would she be sitting? Where would Jesus be sitting? What would this interaction be like?" How do we get this out of our kind of newspaper, factual type of reading and get myself into the text in such a way that I might really sense what is going on? Let's look at this, John 4, starting in verse 1. Here's what it says.

"Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee." Verse 4 is an interesting verse. **"And he had to pass through Samaria."** If you write in your Bibles, it would be a good idea to underline that. We'll come back to it.

"So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey..." Isn't that an interesting sentence? Most people don't think of Jesus getting tired on a journey, yet there it is. **"...so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour [the middle of the afternoon]."**

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?'" Why would she ask that question? I'm glad you asked. The Bible answers. "(For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

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.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.'

Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.'"

Verse 16 is pivotal in our text today. "Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.'

The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am he.'

Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking with her?' So the woman left her water

jar and went away into town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' They went out of the town and were coming to him."

Skip verses 31-38. It's not that they're not important. It's not that they're not inerrant and the very words of God. It's just that for where we're going today, we want to skip down to verse 39.

Eventually, I'll preach through the gospel of John, and we'll hit these, but just not this morning.

"Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. 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 indeed the Savior of the world.'"

There is so much in this text that you could do a series on this story alone. It's a stunning reality, and there are all sorts of things mixed in it that are epic. Yet, really the whole thrust, the whole point of this passage of Scripture is found in verse 26 and verse 42. The thrust of this narrative is that Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

Everything else that happens in this text happens because Jesus is the Savior of the world. There are all sorts of cultural oddities in this text. Let me list out a couple of them. The first is that sentence I had you underline at the beginning, if you write in your Bible or highlight on your iPad, that Jesus had to go through Samaria. Now, it is true that to get from Jerusalem to Galilee, where he was going, he was going to have to cross through some aspect of Samaria.

Because the Jews despised Samaritans so deeply, there were two ways. You could cut straight through Samaria, and that would take you through Sychar, or you could go all the way around it, and Jews always went all the way around it. They despised the Samaritans. Even the Bible just told us Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. If you put that in common, 2015 language, think of how much bigotry and evil is in that sentence. "I have no dealings with the blacks." Can you imagine? How crazy would that be?

Yet, that's what's happening. They would avoid at all costs, yet Jesus says, "I have to go this way." He goes right back up. Why? Why does he go straight north rather than around where all of his country... Is he not thinking about his disciples? How confusing is this going to be? Are his disciples ready for this? He's taking them right into the cultural awkwardness of their day without any

apologies, without any explanations. He just heads north. Why? Because he has an appointment. With who? With this woman. Why? Because he's the Savior of the world.

Now, let's talk about this woman for a bit. She's at the well at the wrong time of the day. If, by the grace of God, you've been able to go on some of our short term trips or have come around the world, to this day, women will still get up very early in the morning, and as a communal exercise, they will head to the well together.

My wife and I have been to southern Sudan a couple of times now, and every morning, they get up. They grab their buckets and their barrels and anything else that can hold water, and the women together as a herd head down, and they do what women do here. They're talking about their husbands. They're talking about their kids. They're just not wearing yoga pants.

Hey, if you don't work out, at least look like you do, right? They then get to the well, and they're talking about life, and they're talking about their husbands. Then they get back before the heat of the day. This woman has not gone with the other women. She has come by herself at the hottest part of the day and is avoiding that communal experience.

Why? We find out why. She has had five husbands, and the man she's with now is not her husband. Now, in our day, that just sounds like a wild four years of college. In her day, that could get her killed. What has happened here? We don't know. Maybe those five brothers died. Maybe that's why the new guy is not marrying her. It's like, "No, black widow, I'm not going out like that." He's not marrying her because there are five dead dudes in front of him. Maybe she is wildly promiscuous.

We don't know, other than it's a mark of shame for her. Because that shame has permeated her life, it has affected her ability to walk in community, and she now spends her energy and vitality hiding. In the middle of the day, in the heat, when she knows no one else will be there, she heads to the well, except the Savior of the world is there.

Why is Jesus engaging this woman? Because he's the Savior of the world. I love this. Maybe some of this will sound hard to you. I hope it doesn't. I hope it makes sense and clicks. That's part of the reason we were praying earlier. She has some hurdles around believing that this guy is the Savior of the world. She has some significant hurdles.

I love the fact that Jesus does not tiptoe around her sin. When she finally, in desperation, says, "Give me this water so I don't have to come to this well anymore," do you hear what's going on? "I'm weary of what life is. I'm weary of hiding. I'm weary of coming out here in the middle of the day. I'm weary of this. Give me this water." What does Jesus say? "Go get your husband."

Doesn't that sound a little bit cruel? Here she is, "Give me this please." "Go get your husband." He touches the most tender, most shame-filled, guilt-ridden part of her. "I don't have a husband." "I know. What you've said is true. You've had five, and the guy you're with now is not your husband." Why would Jesus do that? It seems cruel. If you're trying to win converts, this probably isn't the way to go. Can we just agree? Just give her the living water, yo.

All of a sudden, you're trying to drudge up this really painful, heart-level, gut-level stuff. It's the kind of stuff we bury in our subconscious and don't want to deal with, right? Yet, here's Jesus. "Do you want the living water? Go get your husband." "I don't have one." What is happening? Jesus is going after the space that only he can heal. See, she's coming out to the well in the middle of the day, which means she's avoiding either the very real or perceived judgment of the other women.

She has come out in the middle of the day to avoid being wounded by the stares and whispers of others. She feels dirty. She feels ashamed. She's hiding, and she has been wildly successful at avoiding that judgment and at least not seeing the whispers of others. Yet, she has not been healed. She has actually been enslaved now to her guilt and shame and sin. Jesus, being the Savior of the world, being rich in love, engages that spot to pull it out to heal.

If you think about it, those places we go and hide are one of the primary hurdles to knowing Jesus personally. We hide these places in our hearts as though Jesus doesn't know them. We have these hurdles ourselves. We struggle ourselves to believe. I think you can have an impersonal relationship with Christ and be a Christian. What affects your intimacy with Jesus is the fact that you have some very real struggles that you won't voice to him as though he doesn't already know.

That's what's so crazy about this text. Jesus knows when he says, "Go get your husband." He's not taken off guard. He knows what he's doing. He's going after this spot that she doesn't want anyone to touch because it's too tender. Yet, it's in the touch of Christ that it's healed. It's in the touch of Christ that it's healed. It's that he's willing to lean in to the most delicate wound she has and woo her out of it, and she does what we all do.

You're now at the level of the heart which is wildly uncomfortable for us, which is why most of our relationships are impersonal. Now I just have to believe that in my experience, 20-something years in ministry, at this point, we're snot and tears. You don't touch that level of woundedness without snot and tears and fear starting to grip. What does she do? She runs into her mind. "Go get your husband." "I don't have a husband." "You're right. You've had five. The guy you're with now isn't your husband." Her response to that is, "I perceive that you're a prophet."

Then watch what she does. I'm telling you this is an indictment on us. What does she do? She then goes, "Okay, this is too uncomfortable. We're dealing with my heart. I don't like this. I feel weird. This is too painful to deal with. The Jews say we're to worship on that mountain, but we say we're to worship on this one. What are you going to do?" We do it all the time. We're like, "Oh! Feelings! I was reading Calvin's *Institutes*, and he said..." It's like, "No, I'm not staying down here. This is weird. I'm freaked out. I feel not transparent but vulnerable."

You know those two things aren't the same. Most of us don't have a problem in being transparent, because that's kind of cool, authentic, but vulnerability is something altogether different. Nobody likes that. It feels weird. She runs into her mind. "Which mountain is it?" I love it. Jesus just answers. "Neither that mountain, nor that mountain. The true worshippers will worship him in spirit and in truth, and that day is today."

Again, she's like... It's such a great part of the text. She's like, "Well, the Messiah is coming, and when he gets here, he'll answer all of this for us." Jesus kind of looks at the chessboard. "I'm him. Checkmate. I'm him." Then I love that Jesus, being the Savior of the world, is not nervous or afraid by the cultural awkwardness that ensues.

I don't know if you were with me when we were reading the text, but the disciples show up, and here is this woman just puffy eyed, still snot all over the place. You can just tell that something weird has really gone on, and nobody says anything. Literally, they show up, and the Bible tells us that nobody says anything. The disciples don't go, "Hey, is everything all right? What is going on? Do you need anything? Jesus, why would you talk to a Samaritan woman?"

It's so awkward that nobody even addresses it. Then our Samaritan woman, who has been so overwhelmed with guilt and shame based on some very real sins and some very real things she has given herself over to, is no longer nervous and ashamed, but she runs into town and boldly says, according to the Bible, "Come and see the man."

What is her past? Do you think there might be some eye-rolls when she shows up in town, "Hey! Come and see the man." Do you think there might be some whispers? "Say, she killed 10 men? Another dude?" She has become emboldened by the grace and mercy of Christ. "Come and see the man who told me all I've done." They came out and heard.

The Bible tells us they believed upon the name of Jesus first because of her testimony and then because they saw him and talked to him themselves. All of these beautiful little niches in this story are happening because Jesus is the Savior of the world. Now, two ways to read this text. We can read it impersonally, or we can read it personally. Here's what I mean by that.

We can read this text like we would read a newspaper. I think far too many of us are guilty of that. I think it's why the Bible gets boring to us. We have our journal open. We've learned we have to have a quiet time. That's what we call it. It sounds like punishment. "Go have a quiet time with the Lord." "Okay. Gosh. I'm sorry." "Just get in the corner and think about that."

We can read it in an impersonal way. We can open up our journals, open up our Bibles. We start to write facts that are true based on this text. We can read John 4, and we can take our pen that has something on it, Psalm 23 or something like that, and we can write in our journal that Jesus meets people where they are in their messes. We can write that out. Struggle about maybe taking a picture of our Bible with our coffee on Instagram and tweeting that as a line, #amen. Just fight that off. "No, no. no. It's about me and the Lord."

We go on and write our next sentence. "People really love and want to worship Jesus." Fight the urge again. "Gosh, there's my iPad right there. It would be so easy to click a great shot. People would think I'm so godly." No. Dial in. Jesus introduces freedom into cultural dynamics. These are all true statements embedded in the text. Jesus makes people bold. Jesus removes and relieves people's guilt and shame. And testimonies are powerful things.

We could write all of that in our journal. We could close it, and we could put it all away, and we could go about our day. That's reading the Bible in a way that is impersonal. It's factual. It's true, but it lacks the courage of walking in vulnerability with a personal Lord and Savior. Let me talk to you about how I think we should read the Bible personally. Let me start by just saying this. If you can't follow me here, you probably won't be able to follow me for the rest of the sermon, and maybe this is why just the first half of it is good.

We are all the woman at the well, every one of us. Jesus shows up at the well and says to the woman, "Go get your husband." She knew. It's the most tender place in her soul. For me, he showed up not at a well but after a football practice. I didn't have five previous husbands, but I was a liar, and I was a cheat, and I spent a lot of energy trying to take advantage of high school girls with low self-esteem, and I broke the law, and I was a drunkard, and I gave myself over to debauchery and sinfulness. I just did what everyone else was doing, and I did a pretty good job of it.

If you can imagine my energy not redeemed... I had just given myself over. By the grace of God, here's my well moment. By the grace of God, it wasn't working. I knew it wasn't. I could feel that that wasn't getting me what I thought it was going to get me. That's by the grace of God. My oldest will turn 13 next Saturday. We're officially into the teenage years. I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be awesome compared to like... "Get ready for those teenage years." I am ready for those teenage years. Let's go. I'm not scared. I know it's going to be confusing, but I'm not scared.

In that... Listen. It's by the grace of God that at 15, I'm going, "This doesn't work." I didn't become a Christian for another two and a half or three years, but I knew, "This isn't... When does this end? Where does this stop? Okay, I've tasted what the world has. It's lying to me." I became acutely aware. "I'm a liar. I don't just lie. I'm a liar. I cheat. I break the law. I am not a good person, and I have all the world says I need to be full and happy, and I am bankrupt and angry."

That was my well. When I read John 4, I want to remember that Jesus asked me some very specific questions about my heart, and I didn't have the answers. When I hear her say, "Give me this water," I want to remember when my heart knew there was something more, but I didn't know how to get it. I want to remember back to the over a year that I just went to church with Jeff, and I would hear about Jesus, and I would hear about what he could do, but I just couldn't see it. I just couldn't grasp it because I had my own hurdles. I had my own doubts of whether or not he was good.

I had endured some things I could not reconcile with a loving God. There had been some things that had happened to me, some things that had happened to people I loved in my closest family unit that I could not make sense that if the God of the universe was loving and good, that could be reconciled with my experience. I had some significant hurdles, but my heart was yearning. I knew there was something. I felt stuck and frustrated in myself.

I can look back now and know that was all the grace of God, but when I read her say, "Where can I get this water?" I want to remember I was there. I was there, stuck in my heart-level, intellectual running mess, and I wanted out. I want to remember that moment of yearning. It's reading the Bible in a personal way, that Jesus came and found me because he's the Savior of the world. I want to remember how he infused boldness into me.

My older sister was in our last service, and we got to chuckle a little bit. I literally was partying with the crew in June. Christ grabbed a hold of my heart in July, and I went back to school wearing an "I heart Jesus" shirt. Do you want to talk about just wiggling people out? They had thought I had joined a cult, didn't know what was going on. All the ferocity with which I chased the party scene and girls I know chased Jesus, and it really wiggled people out, and that boldness was put into me by Christ because I didn't care what it cost me.

Eighteen-year-old boys care what it costs them. Man, I was a dork and a moron. For one of the first times in my life, I was no longer part of that cool subset. In fact, I met new Christian friends, and they were not. I had questions I didn't know how to answer. "So what do we do on Fridays now? What do you guys do?" I wasn't at a place where I could be a part of that old scene without falling back into it. "What do you guys do?" I still don't have the answer to that for a high school kid. "We just hang out." "Where?" It just matters, you know?

I just remember what Jesus did in me, so when I see her run back into town, I want to remember there was this time I ran into town, and good Lord, I haven't been able to stop running into town ever since. I haven't recovered. I have not gone back to normal. I've been set for the rest of eternity as abnormal by the Savior of the world. It's awesome. It's awesome. Yeah. I want you to be abnormal too because to know him personally is to make us a bit weird to those around us.

Even our sexual ethic makes us freaks in our day and age. *People* magazine did a blurb on a Christian artist named Colton Dixon, who just got married, and it was just a blurb about how he and his wife had saved themselves until they were married and about the covenant. Man, you should have read the comments. The predominant theme of people who read that little blurb was, "What a weirdo, sexually-repressed freak this guy is."

Even that ethic alone makes us odd weirdos, the fact that our lives are shaped by this personal Savior makes us freaks. Listen to me. We will not be the cool kids, and that's okay because God has

never really powerfully used the cool kids. In fact, it seems like he's really into the opposite of that. Why? Because he really shows off his glory when he uses weak vessels.

Man, I just heartily agree. If I'm with the skeptic who says, "I think religion is for the weak," I'm like, "You're absolutely right. I totally agree with you. I think where we probably disagree is that you don't see yourself as weak. But I would totally agree that the weak-hearted, weak-minded, they use religion as a crutch. What I'm trying to say to you lovingly, brother, is your legs are broken. I have a crutch for you. Come on in." Right?

We read the text in this personal way because it makes us vulnerable in front of a guy who already knows everything about us. You have no secrets from Jesus, and that's okay because he's the Savior of the world. The last little point here that I want to really draw out before we pray and sing and then come back and do a little Communion is if Jesus has a three-year ministry, what in the world is he doing at a well in Samaria talking to one woman?

Are there any business guys in the room? Is there a more inefficient model for saving the world than this? You have a massive crowd waiting for you just north. "No, no, no. Let's stop and talk to a single woman who is a perpetual adulterer, more than likely, and let's spend time healing that deepest wound. Then let's hang out with her loser friends for a couple of days." What's going on here? The only way to make sense of this is that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Let's pray.

Just briefly, where were you when Jesus found you? Maybe you've come in this place today, and you're not a Christian. You wouldn't have an impersonal... You would have no kind of relationship. Maybe today is that day that Jesus meets you at the well. What are your hurdles to move past being an acquaintance and into a personal relationship? Being really honest, do you have animosity toward God? Do you feel as though he has betrayed you? Has he been unfair or cruel? Can you just not reconcile some things? Do you have an intellectual problem?

Father, we just confess that we don't just want to know facts about Jesus, although those are good. We want to know him. We thank you that that's the offer here, that the offer here is not to know about but to deeply know. We pray that in looking at Jesus today as the Savior of the world, you might shape us, move us another degree toward looking like him. Help us. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.