

December 10, 2023

Prepare Yourself

[Mark 1:1-8](#)

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

*“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way,*

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

*‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight,’ ”*

4 so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever seen the movie or the musical play *Godspell*? In the beginning, the people are going about their own business when they hear the call of John: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” The people drop whatever they're doing to follow John.

The Jewish people in this scripture passage were so desperate for someone to save them from tyrannical Roman rule that they sought out the crazy man who was living in the desert, apart from civilization and polite company, wearing what he could find, and eating what was available.

Today we would say he lived off the grid and left a small footprint. He preached a message of redemption.

No longer would the people have to journey to Jerusalem every year to offer a sacrifice for any sins they committed. Now, being baptized in the Jordan River meant that God washed away their sins, and they need only turn away from sin. The Sacrifice would be provided soon. John’s job was to get the people ready so when the Messiah arrived, they would recognize him.

Who has God sent into your life to prepare the way for the task to which he will call you? How will you answer that call: eagerly, with reservations, or will you ignore it, and hope God forgets?

Prayer: *God Who Calls Us, use us as proclaimers of Peace and Good News Bringers. Let our answer to your call be a resounding “Yes!” Grant that during this Advent Season we will prepare our hearts to receive Jesus once again. Amen*

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