

Mark 1:1-8

New International Version

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^[a] the Son of God,^[b] ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way"^[c]—

³ "a voice of one calling in the wilderness,

'Prepare the way for the Lord,

make straight paths for him."^[d]

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with^[e] water, but he will baptize you with^[f] the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1 1-8

I wonder how we would act towards John today? Would we let him approach us, stop us and speak to us. Well he may as well just forget that! As if we would listen to someone who dresses so strangely and openly eats the most bizarre mix of foods of locusts and honey. Why would we even think that John could tell us something that we don't already know?

How often do we see people walking towards us, we feel that they may be a little strange, due to the way they dress, look at us or how they walk or the fact that they are even talking to themselves.

It can make us feel a little uncomfortable with our thoughts can't it? Here we are either sitting in church or watching online, with God in our mind and heart and then, then I come along and make us think of how we may wrongly judge and treat people we don't even know.

There is part of me that wants to apologise but to be honest, I think it is good to be reminded that we need to ask for forgiveness and remember why we need it. God did not lay down His only son's life for us so that we can treat people how we seem fit. God did this so that we can all love one another as He loved and loves us.

John came out of the wilderness preaching Gods message with total conviction. Part of me imagines John to be quite a rough talker to match his clothing and diet. I don't see him as being worried about airs and graces. I imagine him being straight to the point with no apologies. But I don't imagine arrogance.

He knows that he is the messenger sent by God to prepare people for Jesus.

The message that John has been given is so loving and caring, his actions of the baptism show this. He seems humble by the way he talks about himself "After me comes one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie."

Hundreds and hundreds of people came to hear him talk to listen to his message. Telling them that they need to repent of their sins so that they can receive forgiveness.

They came to him from Jerusalem and the whole of Judean countryside. Not one person was asked to go to him, not one person was ordered to go and listen to him they went to listen to his message of their own free will.

There must have been a freshness about the message he was giving for so many people to go and then be baptised by him. We know that from reading John he was like a sharp pointed arrow whose words

can hit us right in our heart. It must have been incredibly powerful to hear him and then be baptised by him for the forgiveness of our sins.

So, if John who was spoken about in the book of Isaiah, you know the strange John, the messenger that God choose, and sent, all so that Isaiah the prophet's words would come to fruition. If his message can make us think, that we need to repent of our sins to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord.

Then what about our Lord Jesus, the one whom John was preaching? How intensely powerful is His message for us?

John says I will baptise you with water but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit. Gods holy Spirit is a complete life changer. We are all able to receive the Power of the Holy Spirit.

All we need to do is prepare our hearts and our minds. We need to repent of our sins, sincerely, repent of them. We need to accept and receive God's forgiveness so that we can forgive ourselves and move on in maturity and faith with the Holy Spirit.

Gods Holy Spirit lives in all of those that believe and have accepted Him. Don't let it go to waste, do good with the love and forgiveness God has given you. Prepare yourselves by learning more about God. Praying and spending time in God's presence, reading and studying the bible is a great way of learning more and knowing that you are loved and forgiven every day.

Prepare yourself during this Advent so that you can prepare the way for others that you meet.

Jesus is the light of our lives and our world. Don't you think that we should be sharing his light and love with all those that we meet. You CAN do this with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God uses many types of people, please let his Spirit enter you and share the light,

love and forgiveness of our *Almighty Lord*. So we can all be prepared to meet with our saviour.