

**Read: Mark 1:1-8**

## This is Just the Beginning

### **Mark 1:1-7**

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way”—  
a voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 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. John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 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.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The book of the Bible named after its author, Mark, tells the story of Jesus’ life. In his book, Mark connects the dots between an old promise of God from his prophet Isaiah and how God kept that promise by sending a man named John to prepare the way for Jesus.

John was hard to forget. He was very unusual. He lived out in the wilderness. He was far away from towns and villages. And people didn’t have cars to drive; they had to walk over twenty miles to see him. Imagine walking for seven hours straight! It was hard to get out there, but people did it because they wanted to hear what he had to say.

And here’s what he said, “Get ready, people! Someone greater than me is coming, someone so great that I’m not even worthy to take off his shoes.” We know he was talking about Jesus. Jesus is the promised Savior that God had been promising for so long. And now the time had come for people to get ready to see him and hear him, and most of all, to believe him and trust in him.

But pay attention how Mark began the story of Jesus. He wrote, “[This is] the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.” This is just the *beginning*. Mark is getting us ready to hear the rest of the story.

Jesus said and did a lot of things in his life and ministry. Many of them are written down for us in the Bible. This is good news. All this good news began with John the Baptist. But the real good news is the story of Jesus' life. The good news is that Jesus loved you so much that he was willing to die for your sins. The good news is that Jesus defeated death. He rose again from the grave and now lives and rules over all things. And now the good news has come to you.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Listen to Mark 1:6. What strange food did John the Baptist eat?
- John the Baptist's job was to prepare the way for someone important. Who was that important person?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What is a way you can prepare your heart and their lives for Jesus? How do we "get ready" for him?
- Christians use the word "gospel" or "good news" to describe the story of Jesus. Retell the good news in your own words.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- The word *repentance* means to "turn away" from sin. Explain why repentance is an important beginning step in knowing Jesus.
- John was a unique messenger whom God had long promised before the Savior's arrival. What clues from verses 2 and 3 tell us that John was the one God had promised?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, you are the great one that John spoke of. Your glory is so great it outshines everything else. Prepare our hearts for you. We need you. Give us a strong faith that looks forward to when we will be safe in your arms forever. Amen.