

Read: Isaiah 40:1-11

Get Ready for Someone Important

Isaiah 40:3,4

A voice of one calling:

“In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

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

Did you know the highest bridge in the world stands a knee-knocking 1,854 feet above a river at the bottom of a deep valley with steep mountains on either side? The bridge connects two cities that used to be a five-hour drive apart. Now it only takes an hour!

Building a bridge is hard work and costs a lot of money. But building a bridge over a valley is a lot easier and cheaper than filling in the entire valley with earth. In the same way, it can be easier and cheaper to build a road through the mountains by digging a tunnel for the road to go through. If you can't move a mountain, dig through it, right?

in today's devotion, the prophet Isaiah announces the coming of a person so important that it would be worth the effort and expense of flattening mountains and filling in valleys. “Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.” Wow, that's quite a job!

Who could be so important that would make all the hard work and tons of money worth it? Isaiah tells us. This amazing and important person would be the one God would use to show his great power and love.

The people of Isaiah's time knew he was talking about God's promised Savior. We now know who this person was. It was Jesus. Jesus is the great King that God had promised. Jesus is the one who would build a bridge between us and God. How? Jesus did the hard work of living perfectly in our place and yet dying for all the world's sins. He flattened the mountains of our pride. He filled in the valleys and low points of our lives. Now the highway between us and God and heaven is smooth and straight!

Someone who would do that for us is worth getting ready for, don't you agree? In this month when everyone is so busy with a gazillion things, let's slow down our minds and prepare our hearts for Christmas. Thank God he doesn't put us in charge of preparing for our way there. He put his Son in charge who did everything he needed to do perfectly. Thank God the Lord has prepared the way—into our hearts and into his kingdom.

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

- Tell about the biggest hill or mountain you've ever seen. How many bulldozers and trucks do you think it would take to tear such a mountain down?
- God tells us that saving us is an even bigger job than moving a mountain. What big job did Jesus have to do to save us?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What are some ways you can tell that someone important is coming?
- What are some ways that we can show how important Jesus is to us?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Think of two common obstacles that stand in the way of us being ready to welcome Jesus' birth this time of year.
- Who are some of the people God uses in our lives to help us prepare the way for Jesus in our lives?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, help us prepare our hearts to receive you. Make us trust in your promises. Give us joy in knowing that your glory is to show love to us by taking away the guilt of our sin and giving us the gift of a new heart now and new life forever. Amen.