

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

## John the Baptist Prepared the Way

**Mark 1:3**

“A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

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

Living in the Midwest, one becomes familiar with the changing seasons. That means *shovel*, *swat*, and *construction*. We learn to *shovel* snow, and by the time our backs are aching we are *swatting* the mosquitos that land on our arms. However, a season that never seems to go away is *construction*. Whether it's rural farm roads, busy city streets, or highways, the orange barrels and “Construction Ahead” signs line our path from January to December. However, construction is necessary. Without it, the roads would be worse than what they are. But ignore those signs and damage can happen to our vehicles. When these projects are done, which can take years sometimes, the finished product is worth the drive (especially in the summer with the top down on your car).

We are in a new church season called Advent. It means “coming.” In Advent, we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming as a baby and as the King of kings. Like a road sign that prepares you for what's coming on the road, God sent John the Baptist to pave the way and make straight the path for people to see the coming of God's long-promised Messiah. John's whole mission was to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah, “A voice of one calling: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God’” (Isaiah 40:3).

Like us, the people of John's day needed to hear the message of repentance. It's a message that warns, “Your hearts and lives are on the dangerous road of disobedience. Turn back! But it's a message filled with the amazing, good news of, “Look! Jesus is coming to save you!”

Whatever season of life you are in, whatever road you are traveling, pause to look, listen, and prepare your hearts to meet Jesus in the stable this Christmas and in the sky for his glorious return.

*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 Younger Children**

- Why is waiting so hard this time of year?
- Why is it important to watch and wait for Jesus?

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

- How did John the Baptist get people's attention?
- Explain how John the Baptist was like a road sign for the coming of Jesus?

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

- Explain: The road I am on does not matter, what matters is that Jesus is with me on this road.
- Our hearts can be messy. Identify two things in your heart you would like to ask God's help to clean up before Christmas comes.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, this Advent, pave the path of my heart with humility. Clear away any obstacles that would block me from clearly seeing you coming this Christmas for me. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 16:1,2 – On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry**

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Come then, and listen, for he brings  
Good news about the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every life from sin  
And furnished for a guest within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.