**Sermon Notes**



**“Prepare the Way”**

Mark 1:2–8 (NIV)

2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”— 3 “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’ ” 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 water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**Israel and the Kingdom of God**

*“How will God’s Kingdom come?”*

1. Pharisees: Obey God’s Law!
2. Sadducees: Don’t rock the boat!
3. Zealots: “No King but God!”
4. Essenes: Retreat and prepare!

**John the Baptist and the Kingdom of God**

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 water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**Preparing the way for Jesus**

**Questions for Discussion**



1. If you could summarize the sermon in one minute for group members who didn't hear it, what would you say?

2. What insight from the message left the biggest impression on you? Why?

3. Of the four groups (Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes), which “way” of trying to establish the kingdom of God do you think the church in North America is most aligned with? Why do you think that is the case?

4. Why do you think John the Baptist was as influential as he was? What were some of the characteristics of his life that you would like to grow into?

5. Who “prepared the way for the Lord” in your life? What made them so spiritually influential in your life?

6. What do you think is the best way Christians today can “prepare the way for the Lord” as it relates to pointing others to Jesus? What habits, words, or actions do you believe help to “make straight paths” for other people to listen to and respect Christians?

7. What do you believe the consequences would be for us if we ignored this Scripture and message?

**Prayer Prompters**



-Pray that we would encounter Jesus in a fresh way as we move through Mark’s gospel.

-Pray for a passion to see God’s kingdom come on earth as in heaven.

-Pray for those who “prepared the way of the Lord” in your life.

-Pray that we would become men and women with the heart, passion, dedication, and courage of John the Baptist.

-Pray that we would become a church that in ways big and small faithfully points people to Jesus.

-Pray for our small groups and small group leaders as they begin meeting together this month.



**Take Action**

Write a thank you note to someone who pointed you to Jesus!