

Recognising prophetic voices Mark 1:1-8

Mark introduces his story of the life of Jesus as 'good news'. But before getting to the content of that good news, he presents John, a messenger sent to prepare the way and who baptizes people in the wilderness.

Read this week's passage:



Pray

John baptized people with water to show how God cleanses sins from our lives when we're sorry for the bad things we do. Run a sink of warm water and use a facecloth to gently wash your hands, as you bring to mind some of the ways you've thought and behaved in a way that would make God sad. As you wash, ask God to forgive all those things, and accept a new fresh start with God, trying to live in a way which pleases God.

WATCH



Watch this short film about John the Baptist to set the scene for who John was and what he did.

ACT

How are we identifiable as Christian? As we continue to prepare for Christmas, which activities are for those outside our circle of friends and family? For example, shoe boxes, donating to local food banks, visiting people who are lonely at this time of year.

Living Scripture

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' Mark 1:3

Have you ever noticed that something which is straightforward for you is completely mystifying for someone else? Perhaps you're good at puzzles or have an innate sense of direction? This holds true for faith too. For some people faith seems to come easily, others of us find it more of a rocky path.

When John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, he was fulfilling an ancient prophecy of a messenger preparing the way for people to see God. The image suggests the levelling and straightening of mountains and valleys to create a straight path, clearing the way between the people and God. Why? Because God wants to come to them? This isn't a straight path for the people to walk on, it's for God.

What things need clearing out of the way in our lives to enable us to see God clearly and make way for God? It's easy to look at other people and see what they should do. But remember, we're all different. What do you need to do to prepare a way for God, to make a straight path?

First impressions

- What voices have you heard recently that are calling for change?
- Why do you think John's message attracted so many people?
- How can churches act as prophetic voices in today's society?



Pray

Holy God,
in the past, you spoke through prophets.
Give us the wisdom to recognise your voice
and the courage to speak out when you ask us to.
Amen.



DRAW

Draw a picture placing yourself or your family in the middle of a page. Now draw around the edge all the voices which you listen to in the week – friends, podcasts, games, etc. Reflect for a while: what do these voices say? Which voices could God be speaking to you through? How will you know? Talk to others about it.

More free Roots resources

In touch (www.rootsforchurches.com/in-touch)

Up-to-the-minute jumping-off points for sermons, linking the reading to the latest news and global issues.

Check-in (www.rootsforchurches.com/check-in)

Connecting faith with everyday, real-life issues for young people.