

Intro: When President of the US goes somewhere there is always an advance team that goes ahead and gets ready
Solve security problems, plan exit routes, make sure everything is safe and secure.

The same thing took place back in Jesus day when the king was coming to visit. But, there was often MORE
Because the king didn't like to be uncomfortable often the roads were repaired in preparation for his visit.
There was whole team of people that went to deal with roads, accommodations, security and so on.

That is what we find taking place in Luke 3 with the ministry of John the Baptist.

He was "sent ahead" of Jesus...not just to call attention to his imminent arrival, but to prepare the people's hearts spiritually

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3 Ways John Prepared People for Jesus

And

How We Can Do The Same

1. God Often Uses People To Prepare People For His Work In Their Life Vs 1-4

- Spiritual work is often accomplished through human instrumentality
"God has for some reason seen fit to work thru humans to accomplish His purposes."
- Joke: Farmer and Man from City looking at the fields
- That is what God is doing with John: He is "preparing the way."
Prepare: Lit = *to make internally ready; to make internal adjustments or changes*
There is another word for external work through machines or tools
John is saying to people, "Check your hearts!" See if there is something God wants you to do to get ready.
- God specifically sent John the Baptist as the forerunner to Jesus, helping people get their hearts ready
- That Specifically meant two things"
~Paying attention to spiritual things (We can all lose sight of that in the rush of everyday life) Important/urgent
~Repentance: Turning from wrong choices and ways of living (Choosing a different way please to God)

Applic: God wants to do that through you. Part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus is that we are to be "John's" to others in our life!

2. Three Specific Ways We Follow In John's Footsteps.

As you look at John's life and ministry it's clear that there were a number of different things God did through him.

As we reflect on those ask yourself, "God, how do I live that way in my everyday life?"

- John spoke spiritual truth clearly. Did 3 things
~ Vs 7: **Judgment is coming:** That is NOT a very popular message today! But, bible clear, consequences
Sin must always be addressed, "Paid for" Either by us...or by Jesus
Rom "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ"
Every one of us has to come to the place in our life that we confess our sin...turn to Jesus for forgiveness
John is saying that to the people. Judgement is on the way? Who told you?

~Vs 8-14 **Live Righteously:** John is saying, it's not enough to mouth empty words...True faith in Jesus shows!
Produce fruit in keeping with repentance: If you faith is REAL then it will produce a changed life

James 2:14-20 Faith without works is dead

Applic: If we were to contemporize this, John would say, "Oh, don't just say, "I have prayed the sinners prayer...show me that prayer was real and changed your heart!"

Different people asked "What shall we do, what does that look like?"

It looks different in everyones life...Depends on who you are and what you do:

Mic 6:8 *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

~Live generously with those in need

~Honor God in your jobs!

~Don't take advantage of those weaker than you

~Vs 15-18 **Point Others To Jesus**

~Never let them think it's about you! Not me, AFTER me Not I say, but "The bible says"

~Holy Spirit can be internal...You don't have to depend on your own power

~You can have God at work in your life to help you live for Him.

CONCL: As we begin our study of Luke, keep this in mind: God wants to use YOU to bring people to Himself

God has always used people...everyday people...Just like you.

Don't have to be Billy Graham Just be yourself...a life changed by the power of God

Speak truth: Judgement is coming, Live Righteously, Turn to Jesus

As we pray this week: ASK: WHO DOES GOD WANT ME TO BE JOHN THE BAPTIST TO THIS WEEK?