

Advent 2 – December 6

Scripture - Luke 3:1-6

Tiberius Caesar had been ruling for 15 years. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. Herod was the ruler of Galilee. His brother Philip was the ruler of Iturea and Traconitis. Lysanias was ruler of Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. At that time God's word came to John, son of Zechariah, in the desert. He went into all the countryside around the Jordan River. There he preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. Here is what is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet. It says,

“A messenger is calling out in the desert,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make straight paths for him.
Every valley will be filled in.
Every mountain and hill will be made level.
The crooked roads will become straight.
The rough ways will become smooth.
And all people will see God's salvation.’ ” (Isaiah 40:3–5)

Lesson to discuss as a family

The first part of this scripture gives background into who was in leadership (kings, governors and high priests) at the time right before Jesus began his ministry. It is important to remember that these were important people with power over others, and each of them would play a part in the life of Jesus later.

John, son of Zechariah, was a prophet (or someone who receives messages from God). John was very different from most people, wearing camel hair clothing and eating wild honey and locusts and living in the desert. He heard a very important message from God, though that was first mentioned in the Bible by the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah. God told Isaiah that a messenger in the dessert would be announcing the coming of the Lord. The Jewish people knew that God was going to send them a king who would make their lives better and that they would need to be prepared. That messenger from the Old Testament was John!

So John told people to stop doing the wrong things and start doing the right things; the word for that is *repent*. John was baptizing people and helping them prepare for when Jesus would make himself known and begin his ministry. The result of this ministry would be a wonderful world “every valley will be filled in. Every mountain and hill will be made level. The crooked roads will become straight. The rough ways will become smooth.” The people would “see God's salvation” when they looked upon Jesus the Savior.

In this time of preparation during the season of Advent, we are preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, and most importantly God's great love for us. God loves us so much that he came down from heaven to be born as a baby. God wanted to live amongst his people and show us all how to live. The gift of Jesus and salvation is free, there is no way to earn it or deserve it. We can, however, lead

our lives in a way that thanks God for this precious gift. How are we doing in that area? This is a time to discuss what wrong things we can stop doing, and what right things we could put in place. What would we want Jesus to see if he walked into the room right now?

Activity Banner

Take the pieces out of the bag and glue them to the banner. Discuss as a family all the components on the banner, mountains and trees and roads, and what will be the difference when the Kingdom of God comes to earth upon the return of Jesus. Remember Jesus riding on a cloud from last week? That same power will change the way the world looks. List on the banner the things you can do together to make your family look like the paradise that God promises. List things you are going to repent of.

Family Impact

Talk together about what things each of you wants to try to do better to be more aligned with God's hope for us. Nobody is perfect and God does not expect that. But it is important to stop making the same mistake all the time; we all must repent. So when we make a mistake and go in the wrong direction, all we need to do is stop and go in the right direction. We confess, or admit, that we made a mistake and we ask for forgiveness. There is nothing we could ever do that God would not forgive.

Pray as a family to work to get along with each other, and to forgive when someone has made a mistake. Ask God to help you all in areas in which you struggle, and thank God for how much he loves us and helps us.