

# Prepare the Way for the Lord

Wylie United Methodist Church

Pastor Jeff Hatcher – December 7, 2008

## Mark 1:1-8

1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 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 desert, '**Prepare the way for the Lord**, make straight paths for him.'" 4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

## John 1:1-9; 19:29; 3:30

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. 6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning [the] light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was **not the light**; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. 10-18 ... 19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "**I am not the Christ**." 21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you **Elijah**?" He said, "**I am not**." "Are you the **Prophet**?" He answered, "**No**." 22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" 24 Now some Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are **not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet**?" 26 "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of **whose sandals I am not worthy to untie**." 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

3:30 He must become greater; I must become less.

## Meaning of Advent:

- Four Sundays before Christmas (today is second Sunday)
- To Remember and Celebrate the first coming of our Savior
- To Anticipate & Prepare for His promised second coming

So what is John's advent message?

### **1. WE ARE SINNERS, IN NEED OF MERCY.**

"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near." (Matt 3:2)

God's Kingdom is one of **Righteousness** --  
and we are not **Righteous**.

### **2. WE PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD BY WAY OF "SELF-NEGATION".**

John the Baptist had a message of repentance and self denial.  
John the Baptist is the one who "**is not**". He says...

- "I am Not" the **Light** (John 1:8)
- "I am Not" the **prophet** (John 1:21)
- "I am Not" **Elijah** (John 1:21)
- "I am Not" the **Christ**" (John 1:20)
- "I am Not" **worthy** to untie Jesus' sandals (John 1:27)

[Jesus] must **increase**, I must **decrease**. (John 3:30)

*Only by joining with John the Baptist in his "I am not" do we make way for the coming of the great "I am". By emptying ourselves, we make room for the supreme gift that is Jesus Christ. (Edgardo Colon-Emeric)*

Our ultimate example of “Notness” is made **perfect** in the person of Jesus Christ:

Philippians 2:3-11

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but **in humility consider others better than yourselves**. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus**: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but **made himself nothing**, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, **he humbled himself** and **became obedient to death**-even death on a cross! 9 **Therefore God exalted him** to the highest place and **gave him the name that is above every name**, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So the question today is...

HOW ARE WE DOING IN OUR “**NOTNESS**”?