

“Preparing the Way for Jesus”
Series: “*What happened after Christmas*”
(Part 2 of 2)

Open: If you could change one personality trait in yourself, what would you choose?

Explore: Read Galatians 5:16-26.

Galatians reminds us of the incredible freedom and benefits we have in Christ. However, that freedom comes with the responsibility to live for Christ.

1. What happens when a person lives by the power of the Holy Spirit (vs. 16)?
2. What is the conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit (vs. 17-21)? What strong warning does Paul issue to those who continue in sin?
3. List the fruit of the Spirit and give a brief definition for each (vs. 22-23).
4. What have those in Christ done to the sinful nature (vs. 24-26)? How can we practically keep in step with the Spirit?

Reflect: Review the LG and discuss the questions below.

1. How would you describe the person who introduced you to Christ?
2. The ministry of John the Baptist preceded the ministry of Jesus. What did his lifestyle (where he lived, what he wore, and what he ate) say about his commitment to his role? How should our lifestyle reflect our faith?
3. John taught a baptism of repentance - which means to make a U-turn and walk the other way. Is repentance something we do once, or is it something we must do on a daily basis? Explain.
4. John relied heavily on God’s Word when he taught others. How have you seen God’s truth produce fruit in your life? What role do we have with one another/others when it comes to sharing/teaching the Word?
5. In what ways does John’s life teach us about humility? How can we practice the words of John the Baptist, “Jesus must become greater and I must become less”?

Live:

As a group: Break into subgroups of men and women. John challenged people to a lifestyle of repentance. Is there something in your life (something you are doing or maybe not doing) from which you need to repent? Pray for one another.

On your own: John the Baptist was always pointing people toward Jesus. Who do you know that needs to hear about Jesus? How will you pray for them or how can you share the good news with them?

Listening Guide Notes

John prepared the way for Jesus by...

1. His different approach.

“John grew and became strong in spirit and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.” –Luke 1:80 (NIV)

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” –Romans 12:2 (NIV)

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” –Colossians 4:5 (NIV)

2. His baptism.

“He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” –Luke 3:2 (NIV)

^[4] *“As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. ^[5]Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. ^[6]And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’” –Luke 3:4-6 (NIV)*

3. His preaching.

^[7] *“John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?’ ^[8]Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.” –Luke 3:7-8 (NIV)*

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” –1 Corinthians 1:21 (KJV)

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.” –2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

4. His humility.

^[15] “The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. ^[16] John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’” –**Luke 3:15-16 (NIV)**

“They came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.’” –**John 3:26 (NIV)**

^[29] “The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ^[30] He must become greater; I must become less.” –**John 3:29-30 (NIV)**