

Day 8

Preparing hearts

*“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. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.”
Luke 3:4-5*

A very special guest is coming to your house this Christmas. What should you do to get ready? You could certainly clean your home to make it ready and welcoming. But what if you do something to offend your guest while he's there? If that happened, you'd probably feel obligated to apologize and perhaps even send a gift. Of course, the value of the gift would have to be proportionate to the size of the offense or you could risk offending your guest again.

What if your honored guest was God Himself? How would you prepare for His coming? What about the things you've done to offend Him – those things called sin? Any gift you might give already belongs to Him, so you can't impress Him with even the most extravagant gesture. You certainly can't make God think you are better than you are – He already knows you aren't even half as good as you think you are.

Advent isn't about God coming to punish you, nor is it about trying to make yourself worthy to meet God. Advent is about God honoring us with His presence in Jesus. Love was born at Christmas – Jesus came to do all that was necessary to make us worthy.

Prayer

God, I am so blessed that you chose me to be your child, and I don't have to do anything to earn it. Help me to receive the gift of your presence, especially during this holiday season. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Ponder

Imagine what it would be like if you knew God was coming to your house. What would you do? Preparing your heart for the gift of Jesus takes time and repentance. What state is your heart in as you prepare for the birth of Jesus celebration?

Worship Video

Create in me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=it4BHq6DYKs>

Christmas Story

[Luke 1:26-38](#)

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Bible Verse

[Luke 1:30-31](#)

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