

## Preparing the Way of the Lord

Sunday, September 25/22 --- Matthew 3 – 4

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. (Mt. 3:13 – 15)*

Jesus surprised people... touching lepers, talking with prostitutes, rebuking religious leaders, playing with children, clearing the temple... He was no ordinary religious figure. We might have expected Him to begin His public ministry with a show. Instead, He walked down into the muddy Jordan to be baptized along with sinners by a backwoods preacher who lived in the desert and ate locusts. Many stood on the banks and scoffed, but some were preparing themselves for God's kingdom.

---

### I. First, John the Baptist Came (3:1 – 12)

- The call to repent and be real with God.

### II. Then, Jesus Came (3:13 – 17)

- The call to identify with sinners.

### III. Then, the Holy Spirit Came (4:1 – 16)

- The call to depend on Spirit of God.

### IV. Then, the Crowds Came (4:17 – 25)

- The call to follow Jesus into a messy world.

*Discussion Questions:*

*Matthew completes his introduction of Jesus Christ in stages, showing us the preparation the Son of God went through to begin His public ministry. He is announced by John the Baptist. He is baptised in the Jordan River. He is anointed by the Holy Spirit. He is tested by the devil. He returns to Galilee in the power of God to begin preaching the kingdom of heaven.*

- What do these chapters teach us about our needed preparation for ministry in Jesus' Name?*
- How could God use us to prepare others for the coming of the Lord, like John the Baptist?*
- How might our approach be different than his?*
- What do we learn about how the devil works from Matthew 4? And what do we learn from Jesus in overcoming temptation?*

*Challenge: In this Scripture we read of several resources God has given us to overcome life's temptations... the Spirit of God (4:1), the Word of God (4:4, 7, 10), the angels of God (4:6, 11), and the people of God (4:18 – 22). This week, think about how you can depend more on these four pillars in your life to support you in living the Christian life... then take steps to do so.*