

Jan 14 – Leaders’ Guide - Luke 3:1-23 - “Preparing our Hearts”

1. Read Luke 1:5-23; 39-45, 57-80. How do you think it would have been for John, growing up under the shadow of the prophecy about him? What are some of the factors that would have made it better or worse?

John would have grown up knowing that he was to ‘prepare the way of the Lord’. This is a heavy burden, but it seems that he handled it well. My theory is that being the child of Spirit-filled parents helped him shoulder this burden. What other factors can you think of?

2. Read Luke 3:1-14. How do you think John’s fire-and-brimstone, insulting message was preparing the way of the Lord?

John seemed to have a crowd who recognised him as a prophet. His message is in line with the prophets of old, focusing on justice, judgment, the coming day of the Lord, and repentance. Although he doesn’t use this language, his message is painting a picture of the kingdom of heaven, where the needs of people are put before the desire for wealth.

3. Read Luke 3:15-23. In the sermon Karen wondered if people wondering if John was the Messiah might have been a temptation for him, to live into the tension and use his platform for good. What are some ways that we seek to justify living for ourselves as “for the greater good”?

This question is food for thought. If you are willing as a leader, you can think of personal examples. An example might be the desire to get a bigger, nicer house “so that we can host better” – which may or may not be a valid justification. Can you think of other examples?

4. How does John’s response to the crowd show his character? What can we learn from John’s response?

John in the height of his popularity is willing to say that he is not even worthy to be the Christ’s slave (slaves would be the ones untying sandals). He recognises that the works he is doing (baptism, etc) are simply preparation for something much greater. He doesn’t hesitate to point people to Jesus.

5. How do we prepare ourselves to see Jesus? What are some of the ways we can be on the lookout for Jesus?

We can prepare ourselves through practicing repentance, opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s work in us, clearing out the obstacles in our lives that prevent us from seeing Jesus. We know from Matthew 25 that Jesus can be found in the ‘least of these’, and as we practice repentance and openness to the Spirit, we begin to see Jesus in the faces of those around us as well.

