

Preparing the Way

Sunday Morning, January 11, 2015

Thesis: Christians are called to prepare the way of salvation

Introduction:

In ancient times, when a king was going to visit a city, he would send before him someone to herald his coming, someone to announce that he would be arriving soon. The herald would go around the city, and go before the leaders of the city, telling them all, "The king is coming. He will be here any day. So clean up your lives. Make sure you are all in obedience to the king's commands so that you will not be punished when he arrives."

This herald also served as a city inspector. He would go around the city and make a list of things that needed to be fixed. He would tell them, "Clean up your city. Sweep your streets. Get rid of all the garbage lying around. Round up any criminals to make the city safe. Fix the roads; make them smooth and straight. Make sure the town is gleaming. Make sure the city is fit for a king to ride through." It was an embarrassment for that city, and the people of the city, if they were not prepared when the king did arrive. It was also an insult to the king if they had not prepared properly for his arrival. If he came, and they were not prepared, he might mete out some judgment and punishment upon the city and its rulers.

As we look at Luke 3, this is what we see going on. The King is coming, and He has sent a herald to announce His imminent arrival.

I. Christians Are Called to Prepare the Way of Salvation With Light

(Luke 3: 1 – 3)

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,

2 while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,

The Word of God Came to John Light

(Acts 9:3)

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

God Intervenes With His Light

(Matthew 5:16)

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Christians Are Light

Be the light as He is the Light.

II. Christians Must Work to Prepare the Way of Salvation With John the Baptist's Methods (Luke 3: 4 – 5)

4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth;

Crying (Psalm 126:5)

Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy.

Prepare (II Timothy 2:15)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Paths – Straight (Isaiah 42:16)

I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, & crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them.

Valley – Filled (Hebrews 12: 12 – 15)

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,
13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.
14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:
15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

Mountain (Zechariah 4:7)

'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!

Crooked – Straight (Proverbs 3: 5 – 6)

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Smooth (Psalm 27:11)

Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.

Our goal as Christians is to prepare the way for others to receive salvation. Our lives like roads must be free of debris and smooth for others to follow us more easily to the Lord.

Conclusion:

(Luke 3:6)

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

See Salvation

(II Chronicles 20:17)

You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."

Next Week: Part II

The Response, Cost and Fruit of Preparing the Way of Salvation