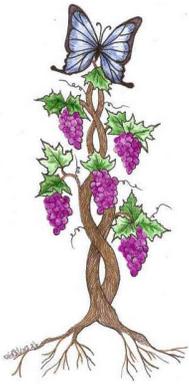


*Nurturing Faith...
Every Day in Every Way*



December 9, 2018

Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6



Are You Ready for Christmas?

Object: A calendar (you can use an Advent calendar)

Wow! Look at that! (Hold up the calendar.) There are only sixteen days until Christmas! Are you ready for Christmas? That is a question we hear quite often these days, isn't it? What do people mean when they ask if you are ready for Christmas? Well, they usually mean things like...

- Have you put up your Christmas tree and all the decorations?
- Have you sent your Christmas cards?
- Have you finished baking all of the Christmas goodies?

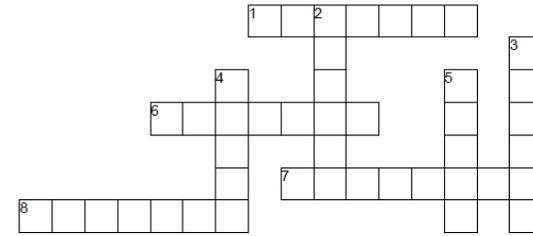
Are you ready for Christmas? What things do you need to do before you will be ready? (Allow time for answers.) There is another question that is much more important than "Are you ready for Christmas?" That question is, "Are you ready for Christ?"

In our Bible lesson today, we hear the voice of John the Baptist crying out to the people, "Prepare the way for the Lord. Fill in the valleys and level off all the mountains. Make the crooked roads straight and the rough places smooth." Did John the Baptist really want the people to work on the roads? No, what John wanted was for the people to get ready for the coming of the Messiah. What he really meant was that the people needed to get their hearts right and return to God. You see, no matter how good people may think they are, there are always some crooked ways and rough places in their lives. There are things such as dishonesty, selfishness, pride, jealousy, and many more. John wanted the people to make those crooked ways straight and rough places smooth so that Jesus could come and walk among them.

During this special season of the year, you and I need to make sure that we are ready for the coming of the Christ of Christmas. We need to look into our hearts and ask God to make our crooked ways straight and smooth out the rough places so that we can walk with Jesus each day of our life.

Loving God, we want to be ready. Make our crooked ways straight and our rough places smooth. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Crossword Puzzle



HORIZONTAL

1. To grant a pardon for sin.
6. Having bends, curves, or angles.
7. Having no bends or curves.
8. To make things ore oneself ready.

VERTICAL

2. To turn away from one's sins.
3. Having a surface free from roughness
4. What we use to speak.
5. Having an irregular, course, or shaggy surface

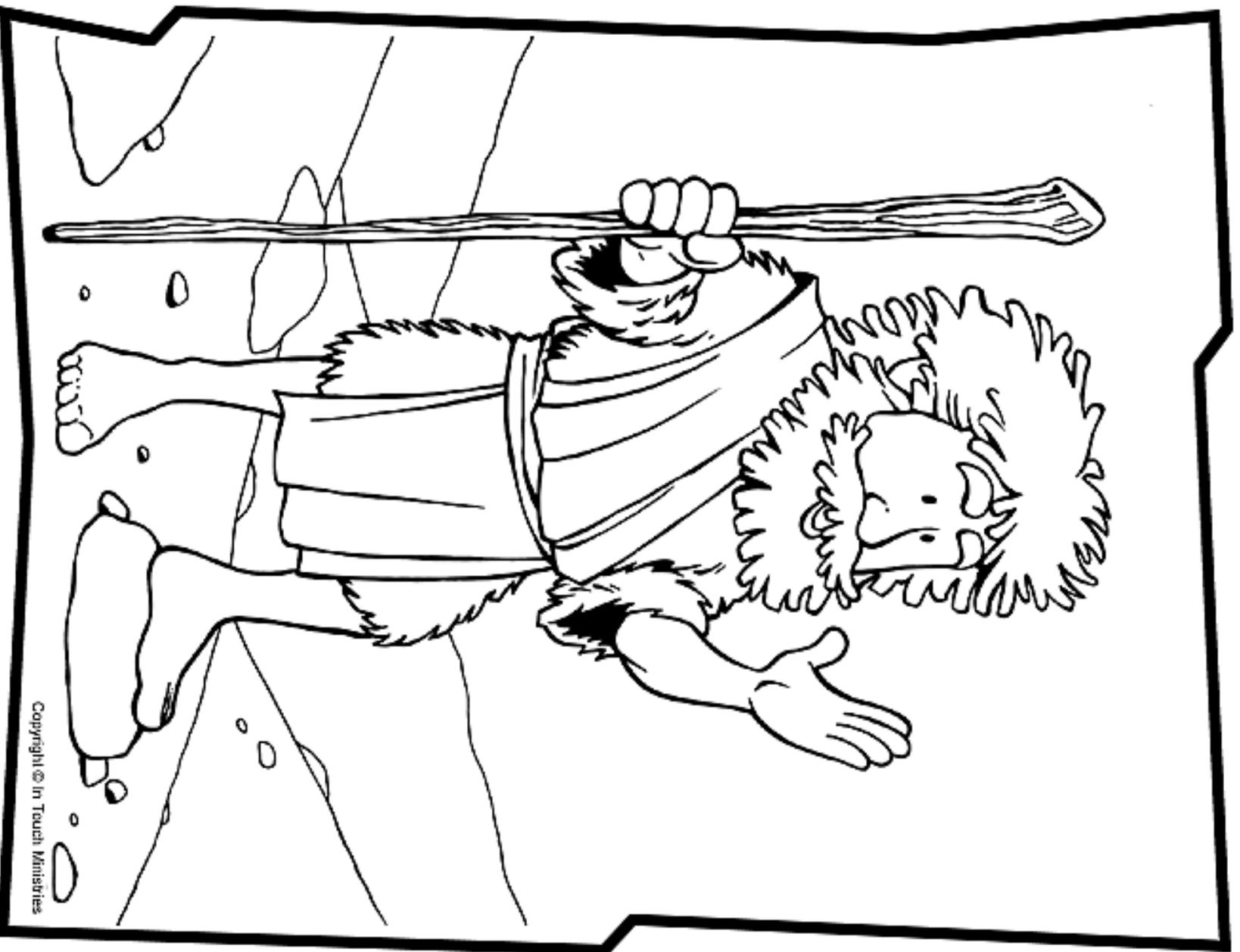
VOICE	STRAIGHT	FORGIVE	CROOKED
ROUGH	PREPARE	SMOOTH	REPENT

Activity: Using heavy construction paper create two roads. On the first road, paste small pebbles on the road to create a bumpy ride. On the second road color in the road with black or brown crayon. Children can either use their finger or a toy car to "drive" on the road. Which one is easier to "drive" on?

Discussion Question: What are some ways that we can prepare our hearts for Christmas?

Family Table Prayer for December: Round this table, here to pray. First we thank you for the day. For our family and our friends, gifts of grace that heaven lends. Living water, daily bread, countless blessings our God sends. Thank you, Jesus, for them all, for the great ones and the small. Amen.

December Memory Verse: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11



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JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4