

# “Are You Prepared?”

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What did God instruct John to do to prepare the people for the coming of Christ? God had John preach a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Are you prepared for the coming of the Lord? Through the power of God’s Word, John demonstrated the necessity for

the people to confess their sins, turn away from their sins, and be baptized.

This is the same way that God prepares the hearts of His people today. Are you prepared? Our hearts are opened to God through the power of God's Word and the cleansing of our sins through the waters of Baptism. It is through Christ placing His perfect righteousness on you that you are prepared to stand before the Lord on the Last Day.

Unfortunately, many people today do not know what God has offered to them. They do not know what God desires or what He demands, because they have not learned about any of the important things that God has done for them. This is the same predicament that the crowds were in who came to the banks of the Jordan River to listen to John. They really didn't know God or what He had done for them.

John the Baptist does not prepare the people for the coming of Christ by saying: "Pray really hard, and you will be OK." "Be the best 'you' that you can be and God will be pleased." Prayer is certainly important and God commands us to be good neighbors, but prayer and good works are the ways in which we exercise our faith. It would be like if you wanted to be healthy and strong, so you exercised all the time, but you never ate any food. Or when you did eat something, it was a candy bar or a bag of popcorn. You can exercise all that you like, but if you don't eat anything nutritional, you will grow weak and die.

Our life of faith is the same way. We need to exercise our

faith, or we will not be spiritually healthy. We need to pray, and ask for the strength to keep God's commands. We need to love our neighbor. We need to be patient, kind, forgiving, and generous. This is how we exercise our faith.

However, God's Word and Sacraments are the meat and potatoes for your soul. We cannot survive without them. Many people try to survive on spiritual exercise alone. And many of them think that they are really healthy. But God sees how deathly thin and weak they actually are.

During the Advent and Christmas Season, growing thin is usually not something that we have to worry about. However, if you lose sight of what is truly important or neglect those things that are truly important, it does not take long for your faith to become ghostly thin and weak.

During this time of year, we hear all sorts of heart-warming stories that are supposed to put us in the Christmas spirit. There is but one Spirit that changes your heart this time of year, and it is not the ghost of Christmas past, present, or future. The only Spirit that brings real change is the one that has been dwelling in your hearts since the day that you were called to faith in Baptism.

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This is the same way that God prepares the hearts of His people today. Are you prepared? Our hearts are opened to God through the power of God's Word and the cleansing of our sins through the waters of Baptism. It is through Christ placing His perfect righteousness on you that you are prepared to stand before the Lord on the Last Day.

Unfortunately, many people today do not know what God has offered to them. They do not know what God desires or what He demands, because they have not learned about any of the important things that God has done for them. This is the same predicament that the crowds were in who came to the banks of the Jordan River to listen to John. They really didn't know God or what He had done for them.

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Our life of faith is the same way. We need to exercise our

faith, or we will not be spiritually healthy. We need to pray, and ask for the strength to keep God's commands. We need to love our neighbor. We need to be patient, kind, forgiving, and generous. This is how we exercise our faith.

However, God's Word and Sacraments are the meat and potatoes for your soul. We cannot survive without them. Many people try to survive on spiritual exercise alone. And many of them think that they are really healthy. But God sees how deathly thin and weak they actually are.

During the Advent and Christmas Season, growing thin is usually not something that we have to worry about. However, if you lose sight of what is truly important or neglect those things that are truly important, it does not take long for your faith to become ghostly thin and weak.

During this time of year, we hear all sorts of heart-warming stories that are supposed to put us in the Christmas spirit. There is but one Spirit that changes your heart this time of year, and it is not the ghost of Christmas past, present, or future. The only Spirit that brings real change is the one that has been dwelling in your hearts since the day that you were called to faith in Baptism.

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Mark 1:1-8

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