

MAIN POINT

In preparing the way for Jesus's ministry, John the Baptist called his hearers to repent and believe.

INTRODUCTION

Presume you are a few weeks away from taking the month-long vacation of your dreams. What sorts of things would you have to do in order to prepare for your trip?

Which is more stressful for you—preparing for a long journey or returning home from a long journey? Explain.

As wonderful as it is to experience the vacation of our dreams, there are certain stressors associated both with preparing for that journey and returning from it. The former can serve as a helpful metaphor for thinking about John the Baptist's life and ministry. He was called to "prepare the way" for Jesus and His ministry, and the first verses of Mark 1 share some of what this "preparing" looked like and what its impact was on his hearers.

DISCUSSION

> READ MARK 1:1-11.

What do we learn about John the Baptist from this passage?

Read Luke 1:76-79. What did Zechariah prophesy, or tell in advance, about his son in that passage?

How do you see John the Baptist fulfilling his father's words in Mark 1?

How does this relate to what we read about John the Baptist in John 1:6-9?

What message did John preach? What does it mean to repent? How would you explain your experience of repentance to an unbeliever?

Why do Christians, even though we are saved, need to live a lifestyle of repenting daily?

What do we miss if we fail to turn toward God and only turn away from sin? Are we in danger of turning toward ourselves if we don't turn to God?

Put John's warning in verse 12 into your own words. Why was this important to note in a conversation about repentance and the coming Messiah?

How did John consistently use his words to point forward to Jesus? How did his life make much of Jesus?

APPLICATION

What does repentance look like in your life? What role does the body of Christ play in your repentance?