



Mustard Seed Children's Summary for September 7, 2008

Released on Wednesday, September 3, 2008

"Get Ready"

Lesson Text: Mark 1:1-8; Matthew 3:1-3.

Memory Verse: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

Mark 1:1-8

- 1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- 2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
- 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
- 4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.
- 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;
- 7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.
- 8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 3:1-3

- 1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
- 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

TEACHER'S NOTES ON THE LESSON

Today's lesson, which tells about John the Baptist and his preaching, provides an open door to review salvation truth with children who already believe.

On God's side is the provision of the Saviour. On the human side, there needs to be readiness to receive that Saviour. Therefore John said, "Repent." This word that he used does not primarily mean to feel sorrow for one's sin but rather to have a change of mind. The crowds listening to him would have understood it that way.

He told them what would make them ready for the imminent coming of God's kingdom. It was not the routine worship the nation was carrying out, John said, but a recognition of personal sin that resulted in confession and pleading with God for mercy. He told them to recognize that they had a need that had to be dealt with.

Had they been thinking their efforts to please God were enough? If so, John urged them to reject that sort of thinking. They needed to repent.

It is worth remembering that children as well as adults put their faith in Jesus for salvation only when they feel some sense of need to do so. A gentleman I know said he did not like the gospel the first time he heard it. He thought he would "look around and see if there was not some other way to get to heaven." He found no other way, of course, and returned to the only one who is able to save.

"Jesus Paid It All" is more than a song title. It is truth. Another believer, somewhat inelegantly, put it this way: "If Jesus did not pay the penalty for my sins, I am a goner." She understood that trusting Jesus means reliance on Him and on Him alone. But trusting Him is enough.

Obviously it is but a step from reviewing with the Christian boys and girls Jesus' all-sufficiency to addressing the class members who do not have a complete understanding of the gospel.

What thinking needs to change? Find out by asking questions. Who sent Jesus? Why? What did God do with our sins when Jesus died? How much of our sin was put on Him? Where is Jesus today? Pray for open minds and open hearts.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Help the children understand how people are born into God's family.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. In John's time God wanted His family to grow; He still does.
2. Because God loves people, He sent Jesus, and He sent John to announce the truth about Him.
3. Repentance, which means changing the way we think about ourselves and sin and God and Jesus, makes people ready to accept the Saviour.

PLANNING VISUAL AIDS

For Telling the Lesson, find or make pictures of Jesus speaking to a crowd, John the Baptist, a dry and rocky wilderness area, John preaching, a huge crowd, John baptizing, John pointing out Jesus, and a sign reading "repent."

For Helping to Remember, fold sheets of construction paper in half both ways to make four segments, and cut out one segment for each student. Using a round bowl as a pattern, in each box draw the largest circle possible. You will also need crayons, safety scissors (round edge), and small safety pins.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Here are three incidents that talk about readiness.

1. Nancy was playing in the yard when her mother called to her from the kitchen door. "It is nearly dinnertime, Nancy. Come in and wash your hands so that you will be ready."
2. Uncle John had promised to take Dale to the soccer game. "I will be here at one o'clock," he had said. "Be sure you are ready to go."
3. The third grade teacher said, "Get out your books, class, and let us get ready for reading time."

Be ready. Get ready. Has anyone ever told you to get ready for something? Yes, that happens to everybody. It is the kind of thing that happened to people in Bible times too. Listen to this story about some people who got ready.

TELLING THE LESSON

The Bible says that God knows everything. He knows what happened yesterday, and He knows what will happen tomorrow. So before Jesus began to teach and preach and heal sick people, of course God knew when He was coming. (Show Jesus and crowd.)

But God wanted to make sure the people were ready to hear and believe what Jesus would say. So the Lord also promised that somebody would come first and help people get ready to believe Jesus. God chose a man named John to do that work for Him. (Show John.)

John was Jesus' relative, but he did not live where Jesus lived. John lived far out in the country. He wore a coat made from camel hair, and he ate whatever food he could find out there.

The Bible calls that dry, rocky place where John lived a wilderness. (Show wilderness.) Not many people would be living in a place like that. So who would listen to John preach? God would have to bring them, and He did.

We do not know how God showed him, but somehow John knew the king God had promised was coming soon. And we know the king would be Jesus. John began telling whoever was there about God's kingdom and the king. (Show John preaching.)

"Get ready," he said. "God's kingdom is almost here. Get ready for the king by changing the way you have been thinking. Remember you have sins that need to be taken away. Ask God to forgive you. Change the way you have been living. Start doing what is right."

Before long, people from farther away began to hear about this strange man in the wilderness and what he was preaching. They came out to hear him too. Soon God was bringing more and more people to hear about getting ready for His kingdom. (Show large crowd.) People heard about John in the big city of Jerusalem. People heard about him in the small towns. Every day great crowds came out to the desert to hear him for themselves.

And every day John kept preaching the same thing. "Repent," he was saying. (Show "repent.") "Change the way you think." This is what the word "repent" means—change your thinking. "Start thinking about your awful sins that need to be taken away," John said. "Ask God to forgive you. His kingdom is coming soon. Someone is coming who is much more important than I am. Get ready for Him to come." And we know he meant King Jesus.

Many people decided they wanted to be ready for God's kingdom. And they did change their minds about themselves. They admitted that they had done wrong and that those sins needed to be taken away. They asked God to please forgive them. They got ready for His king to come.

Then John did a special thing for those people. He walked with them down to the river and dipped them under the water. (Show John baptizing.) We call this "baptizing." Being baptized meant they had changed their minds. Things were different now. They wanted to go God's way now. God had forgiven them. They were part of the coming king's people.

You can be sure that pleased the Lord, because God loved those people. He very much wanted them in His family. But their sin, the wrong things we all do, had to be taken away. And that was why Jesus was coming. He was going to take all their badness on Himself and put it away forever.

One day a little later, John saw Jesus coming toward him. He told the crowd, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). (Show John pointing at Jesus.)

So God sent John to get people ready. He wanted them to change their minds. They needed to admit that they needed a Saviour and believe that Jesus was the one God sent to take away their sins.

God still loves people very much. He wants us in His family too. That is why He has helpers like John all over the world telling anyone who will listen, "God sent Jesus to save you. Stop thinking you can get into God's family by being good. Get ready to belong to God's kingdom by admitting you cannot take away your sins yourself. Someone else must do it. And that Someone is Jesus."

TELLING HOW TO LIVE

Boys and girls, the Lord very much wants you in His family. I wonder if any of you are ready to say, "Lord Jesus, I see now that I can never make myself good enough to live in heaven with You, not even by trying hard. I see too that Your death on the cross is all I need to take my badness away. Thank You for doing that for me, and please put me in Your family for ever and ever."

HELPING TO REMEMBER

Let the children draw large question marks on their circles, then "fatten" them by drawing another outside the first and filling in with various colors. They may further decorate their badges as they like and cut them out. Suggest that when people ask, they tell them the question mark says, "Have you repented of your sins?"

EXPLAINING THE GOLDEN TEXT

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). That is what John told the people who came to hear him preach. "Ye" just means "all of you" and "repent" means "change your mind." He was telling them God's King and His kingdom were "at hand"—almost there. "So get ready," John said, "by admitting you have sins that need to be taken away."

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY:

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The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary, by Nelson Books.

Get Ready (Mark 1:1–8; Matthew 3:1–3)

N A D S C G N I Y R C E P J Q
W I L D E R N E S S C M Y O E
H S V M Y X C I O N L E U H R
O O X K Y Y N J A H N S U N A
C H L Z S S W T G O W S E I P
S O H Y S T N N H V Z E Z D E
C Z N S T E H P O R P N R P R
M H F F P S M G H J A G R L P
C R R E E S U E I M Q E U O S
A Z R I I S A S K A A R U C H
K B B T S V S R E C R O N U T
A X P O E T R I H J N T T S A
G A C N D O G I N G H O S T P
B V D K W X N Z W G V G R Z H
W X F A T G Q H G O S P E L D

BAPTISM

CRYING

GOSPEL

HONEY

LOCUST

PREACHING

REPENTANCE

WILDERNESS

CHRIST

GHOST

HEAVEN

JESUS

MESSENGER

PREPARE

SINS

CONFESSING

GOD

HOLY

JOHN

PATHS

PROPHETS

STRAIGHT

22 of 22 words were placed into the puzzle.

Get Ready Solution (Mark 1:1-8; Matthew 3:1-3)

+ + + + + G N I Y R C E + J +
W I L D E R N E S S C M Y O E
H + + + + + I + N + E + H R
+ O + + + + N + A + N S + N A
C + L + + S + T + O + S + + P
+ O + Y + T N + H + + E + + E
C + N S T E H P O R P N + P R
+ H + F P S M G H + + G R L P
+ + R E E S U E I + + E + O S
+ + R I I S A S + A A R + C H
+ + + T S V S + E C R + + U T
+ + P + E T + I H J + T + S A
+ A + N D O G I N G H O S T P
B + + + + + N + + G + + + + +
+ + + + + G + + G O S P E L +

(Over, Down, Direction)

BAPTISM(1, 14, NE)

CHRIST(1, 7, SE)

CONFESSING(1, 5, SE)

CRYING(11, 1, W)

GHOST(10, 13, E)

GOD(7, 13, W)

GOSPEL(9, 15, E)

HEAVEN(9, 8, SW)

HOLY(1, 3, SE)

HONEY(9, 6, NE)

JESUS(10, 12, NW)

JOHN(14, 1, S)

LOCUST(14, 8, S)

MESSENGER(12, 2, S)

PATHS(15, 13, N)

PREACHING(14, 7, SW)

PREPARE(15, 8, N)

PROPHETS(11, 7, W)

REPENTANCE(3, 10, NE)

SINS(9, 2, SW)

STRAIGHT(13, 13, NW)

WILDERNESS(1, 2, E)