

Advent, Day 10
Read Isaiah 40:1-11

Tuesday, December 11

"...a voice crying... 'Prepare the way of the Lord..." Isaiah 40:3

GET READY

Let's see...Napkins are folded nicely. Place settings – looking good. Coffee is on. Got those flavored creamers that they seem to like. Candles—lit. Music—just the right volume. Roast should be done in about forty minutes. Potatoes about five minutes before that. Appetizers look wonderful. Just a taste...perfect! White wine is chilled. Red is breathing. What else? What am I forgetting?

So goes the self-conversation when you are attempting to pull off the perfect evening. You've done everything you can to insure that it will be just right. If it flops now it won't be because you haven't given it your best shot.

When John came preaching in the desert places around Jerusalem, the people were eager to hear, and ready to listen. They knew that they had drifted away from the center of their faith. They knew that they needed to do something different. What John had to say hit them where they hurt and caused them to think. It was time for a change.

They came in droves to be blasted by his fiery words. They came willing to be challenged by his dynamic conviction. They came in droves and after a while there began to be whispered wondering.

Could he be the one?

Is he the Messiah?

Is this the long-expected savior of Israel?

Soon the whispers turned into open conversation and the wondering became absolute assurance.

He was telling them what they needed to hear. He was convincing them that they needed to repent and to show their repentance by being baptized. They began to believe that if enough of them would come to John's baptism that God would bless them again and God would cause an army of revitalized warriors to be raised up and Israel could be great once again. Israel could be powerful once again.

That's the way it was supposed to be. That's the way it would be when Messiah had come!

John, of course, knew better. He knew in his heart of hearts that he was not the one. He may not have known what the Messiah was to be, but he knew that his role was to help the people get ready to listen to what the Messiah had to say.

We need to be ready. We can't hear when we aren't ready to listen. We can't understand unless our hearts and minds have been prepared to receive what will be shared.

Don't be surprised, by the way, if what you hear has very little to do with becoming powerful in the way the world understands power. Don't be surprised if what you hear has a lot to do with being caring and compassionate and serving one another.

Because this time around God has something very different in mind.

Very different indeed.

Get ready!