

Preparing the way

by Pastor Tim Castle-Schmidt

Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth (Luke 3:5).

Read [Luke 3:1-6](#)

Have you been on a road trip recently, a day-long drive to get from one part of the country to another? Remember all the preparation that leads to this: checking the car, including tyre pressure and radiator water, and possibly cleaning out the boot?

As we journey deeper into Advent, we think about the preparation that is going on. God sends John to 'prepare the way', but rather than checking the tyres, John calls people to repent. Repenting does not just mean saying sorry but turning around and returning to trusting in God.

And look at what John points them to: This prophecy of Isaiah, approximately 800 years earlier, speaks of this prophet who will prepare the way for the arrival of the Messiah. And that prophet was John. It took place 2,000 years ago; the way has already been prepared!

The invitation to us living post-Christ (or indeed post-John the Baptist) is to walk along those crooked roads made straight, the rough ways smooth.

The preparation of the way has happened, and the Messiah has arrived.

And yet, if we look around, with wars and famine, natural disasters and climate change, the paths are clearly not straight. The preparation has happened, but the straightening is not yet complete. We live in this 'liminal space' (a space that is opening up, but we are in the midst of it happening).

It's a good 'space' to be in, but it can be uncomfortable; like the car journey, the preparation has been completed, but the journey still brings unexpected occurrences.

As we journey deeper into Advent this year, may we see again that all is complete while also being incomplete. As we experience Advent, yet again, we step into it with the joy of expectation amid the reality of living in the liminal space.

Lord Jesus, as John prepared the way for you, and you came into the world, be with us and give us rest and peace as we walk on the paths of the liminal space. Please help us to look ahead with a new hope and walk into the days, weeks and years ahead, knowing you have arrived in this world and completed all that is needed. Amen.