

**Week of December 6, 2020**

**Mark 1:1-8 (NRSV)**

<sup>NRS</sup> **Mark 1:1** The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

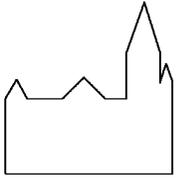
<sup>4</sup> John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

<sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

<sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

Gathering questions:

- A. What material gift surprised you the most with how useful it turned out to be?
- B. What is the most misleading book title you can think of?

Bible Study Questions:

1. In verse 1, how broad is the meaning of the word "beginning"? What is "beginning"?
2. What do you think is important about the "wilderness" mentioned in vv 3-4? What do you think might correspond to the "wilderness" in today's world?
3. In verse 6, why do you think it was important or significant that John's clothing and diet were mentioned?
4. Why was John's ministry necessary? Why not go straight to Jesus?
5. What would make the "path straight" for Jesus to take greater hold of your life? What obstacles or resistance are you putting in the way of Jesus?
6. As the New Year approaches, what can you do to *be* Good News to the world around you?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about how you can embody Good News to the world.