

# Space for God    Make His Paths Straight



## PREPARATION

*In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*  
May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.  
Philippians 1:11

## WORSHIP

Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.  
**Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah.**  
Acts 3:19-20

## CONFESSION

...there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.  
**But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.**  
Philippians 3:18b-20

## MEDITATION – Matthew 3:1-12\*

In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was,  
"Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."  
The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said, "He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him!'"  
John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.  
But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he exclaimed. "Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the

IN SOLITUDE AND/OR COMMUNITY	
Read	Slowly, several times.
Reflect	What does the text say?
Respond	How does it relate to my life?
Rest	I welcome God's healing and renewal.

roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.  
"I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

ANCHORING PRAYER  
*I am preparing my heart for Your return.*

REVIEW OF THE HEART  
*When did the Holy Spirit's fire flow through me?*  
*How does my life prove that I have repented of my sins?*

WISDOM  
But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Galatians 5:22-23  
  
Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Proverbs 3:7

TESTIMONY    *What is God saying to me?*  
  
INTERCESSION    *Prayers for the Church, for others, and for me.*  
  
BENEDICTION

God, we ask You to give us complete knowledge of Your will and to give us spiritual wisdom and understanding.  
**Then the way we live will always honor and please You, and our lives will produce every kind of good fruit. We will grow as we learn to know You better and better. We also pray that we will be strengthened with all of Your glorious power so that we will have all the endurance and patience we need. May we be filled with joy, always thanking You our Father. Amen.**  
Adapted from Colossians 1:9-12

SPACE FOR GOD DAILY  
Be still and quiet before God.  
Seek the Holy Spirit's filling and guidance.  
Speak, act, and serve from a listening heart.

PermaneSED (Abide) Kurt D. Peters. **Bold** portions to be read in unison. \*Lectionary, Year A  
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