



Prepare the Royal Highway: A Midweek Series for Advent

Overview: Highway under construction

How exactly do you prepare a highway for God? Our passage from 1 Thessalonians offers a construction blueprint: rejoice, pray, give thanks, hold fast to what is good. In this way, we make a straight path into our lives for the coming of Christ.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer

God of the covenant, we hear the voice of John the Baptist breaking into our world: The kingdom is near! Prepare the way! Come and dwell in the pathways of our hearts, that we may be ready for the Messiah's birth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40

3 A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be lifted,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

5 Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

New Testament Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

¹²But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; ¹³esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. ¹⁵See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Reflection

Hymn

Comfort, Comfort Now My People



- 1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
- 2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseauxes de David*, Geneva, 1551

Prayers

Gracious God, send your Son into our midst.

Show us your pathways of love.

Grant that war may cease and divisions end.

Show us your pathways of peace.

Watch over all who are sick, mourning, or in special need of your care.

Show them your pathways of hope.

Fill our world with gladness at the coming of the Savior.

Show us your pathways of joy.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

May the light of Christ show you the way, the love of God be your guidepost, and the power of the Spirit sustain your journey. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace to prepare the way. Thanks be to God.

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