

PREPARING WITH HOPE

Different preparations went into the first Christmas.

- Shepherds and the Wise Men
- Mary and Joseph
- God

Preparing for the plans of God.

- Ready for whenever, whatever and wherever God may be leading us.
- Trusting in the promises of God - even when it's hard. (Romans 8:38-39)
- Preparing with Hope - the true preparation that comes from repentance. (Mark 1:15 / John 14:3)

3 Questions:

1. How would you explain what it means to prepare with hope?
2. How have you experienced God's work of preparation in your life?
3. How does repentance work to prepare us for the things of God?

GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries: "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 up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.