



# Sermon Growth Guide

**December 6, 2020**

**Wonder – God Is On the Way**

**Mark 1:1-8**

**Key Verse:** Mark 1:7-8 “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**Big Idea:** Hearts were opened up to the coming Messiah through the wonder-filled word of John the Baptist.

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## Foundations

2020 has given us plenty of reasons to be cynical. But cynicism makes life small. We need something better than cynicism. We need good news that is actually and lastingly ... good.

Our text this week sees a man, John the Baptist, wildly dressed and sternly proclaiming that the prophecies from centuries past are about to unfold. Could it be? John’s message caught the ears of the entire region and they flocked to hear him. A full day’s journey into the wilderness is no small commitment to hear the ramblings of a locust-eating, camelhair-wearing mouthpiece of God. And to top it off, the people were convicted of their sin and their need for a savior, so they were baptized.

John was careful to never pretend to be the center of the story: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:7-8).

Hearts were opened up to the coming Messiah through the wonder-filled word of John the Baptist. How about you? Is there room in your heart for wonder to lift your head up to the Messiah?

Gathered together with your circle, in-person or online, open your time of study in prayer. Ask the Spirit to guide and guard your thinking and growing.

## Understanding God’s Word

How does Mark open his Gospel? What catches your attention?

In what way is John a continuation of the prophetic pronouncements about the Messiah that have been proclaimed for centuries? What is unique about the timing of John’s ministry?

In verses 7 and 8, John compares and contrasts the baptism he is offering with the baptism to come with the arrival of the Messiah. What are the similarities and differences?

## Applying God’s Word

Hearts were opened up to the coming Messiah through the wonder-filled word of John the Baptist. How can you fight to keep your heart open to the wonder of salvation in Christ? How can your Christian community help you guard your heart from cynicism that so quickly leads to hard-hearted pride?

## Witnessing God’s Word

Identify one wonderful thing you can do for someone in your life who does not yet know the Messiah. Ask your circle to challenge you to do it! Wrap up your time together by praying for one another, especially for the burdens you each carry this week.