

# SERMON NOTES    Sunday 8 December

## sunnysidechurch

### Bible passages Malachi 3.1-4 and Luke 3.1-6

#### Introduction

Luke's reading is about the universal and the particular and how both are part of God's rescue plan for the world

#### Luke 3.1-2: the Scandal of the Particular

Luke rooting John the Baptist's ministry in a particular time and place

- Men and their titles mean John the Baptist began his work in 28-29AD (which is therefore when Jesus' ministry began)
- Luke proving his reliability as an historian
- Demonstrating the 'scandal of the particular' – God loves and works through particular people to save the world

#### The particular as part of the universal

- The details Luke includes link John the Baptist to God's big story: God speaks through scripture and John baptising around the River Jordan
- Help us to see how God might be at work today and what it means to follow him

#### Conclusion

- John's message is that God will turn the world upside down (as stated in the songs of Mary and Zechariah's Song in Luke 1.46-55 and 68-79)
- God uses the particular so that 'all people will see God's salvation' (Luke 3.6)

Some questions for discussion

1. When you read a story, what details do you look for to help you know that the author is reliable?
2. Read Luke 3.1-6. What do you notice?
3. Read Malachi 3.1-4. God's coming brings judgement and liberation; in what ways is this reflected in John the Baptist's ministry?
4. Read Zechariah's song (Luke 1.67-79). How does this deepen your understanding of John's ministry?
5. Rebecca spoke about the 'scandal of the particular'. How does the example of John the Baptist help you understand this?
6. In what ways might reflecting on the theme of the particular deepen your understanding of your relationship with God?
7. What is God asking you to do as a result of what he has said to you through these passages? It might be something to pray about, something to think more about, something he wants you to talk to someone about or something he wants you to do. Make a note of it so you don't forget!

'A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
"Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him."' (Luke 3.5)

Why not spend some time thanking God that he works through the particular and ask him to show you the areas in your life where you need to repent and receive his forgiveness?

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