Sermon: **He will make peace between parents and their children and will bring those who are not obeying God back to the right way of thinking, to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord.** (Luke 1.17)

“I hope it’s a nice day tomorrow”, “The present – I hope you like it”, “I hope I win the Lotto jackpot”.

Some hopes are unrealistic - I do not even buy a ticket!

Hope can seem unlikely. What makes it real is what it is based on.

Hoping for a better world, may seem just as unrealistic, but it is based on God’s promises.

This is what upset Gabriel with his promise of God to Zechariah (v 20: **because you have not believed**...)

Rare earths are important - For example, an iPhone uses eight of them. Small amounts go a long way.

Hope, even more than love, is probably the rarest virtue on earth. A small amount can go a long way.

TEXT. Hope relates to waiting for the Lord to come – is this unrealistic? This is why John came.

[1] Getting right with others

We all would like peace on earth. And we know it begins with each of us. But where to begin? Getting right with others we know. TEXT.

This would include family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, acquaintances, passers-by.
But they might not want peace with us. John gave opportunity for baptism as sign of repentance.

[2] Getting right your thinking

Clutter-filled houses – taking all rubbish away is not enough; the hoarder needs sorting out too.

Not enough to sort out external relationships, need to sort yourself out too! TEXT.

We come into the world ready made to love and trust, but many experience that which destroys both.

It is a bit like weeds crowding out a veggie plot, which needs pruning/weeding.

Especially true in relation to God. Cynicism, disbelief, suspicion is common. John comes to prune!

[3] Then you are ready!

TEXT. Only when [1] and [2] are in place are we really ready for the coming of the Lord. Indeed, this is what being ready means. How can you be ready if [1] and [2] not in place?