



Ouch! There are a lot of folks running around with head wounds.

TR: Some of those wounds are not our fault, but . . .



If this graphic is accurate READ SLIDE

TR: Many Christians are not only suffering but also ineffective in being witnesses of God's Good News story because they haven't put their hard hats on.

**WE MUST FIRST BE
GOSPEL *influenced***

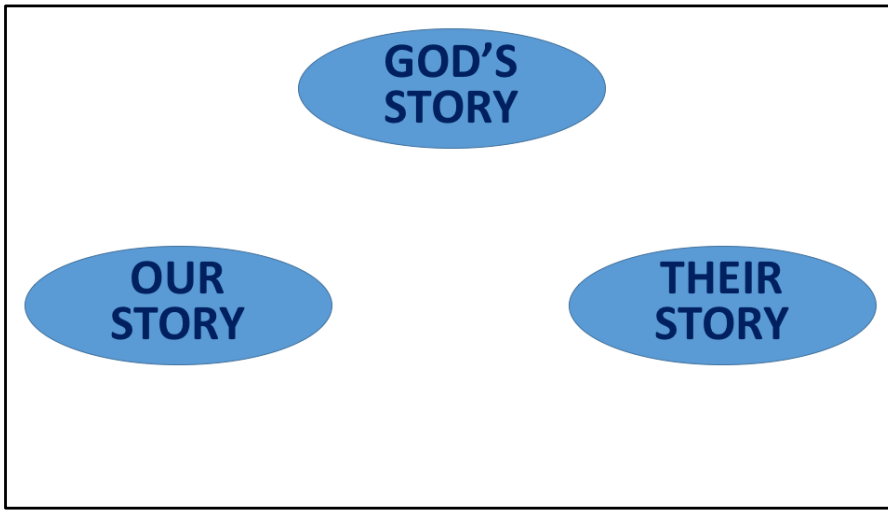
**TO BE
A GOSPEL *influence***

READ SLIDE

-- We put our spiritual helmets on by first being **GOSPEL INFLUENCED**.

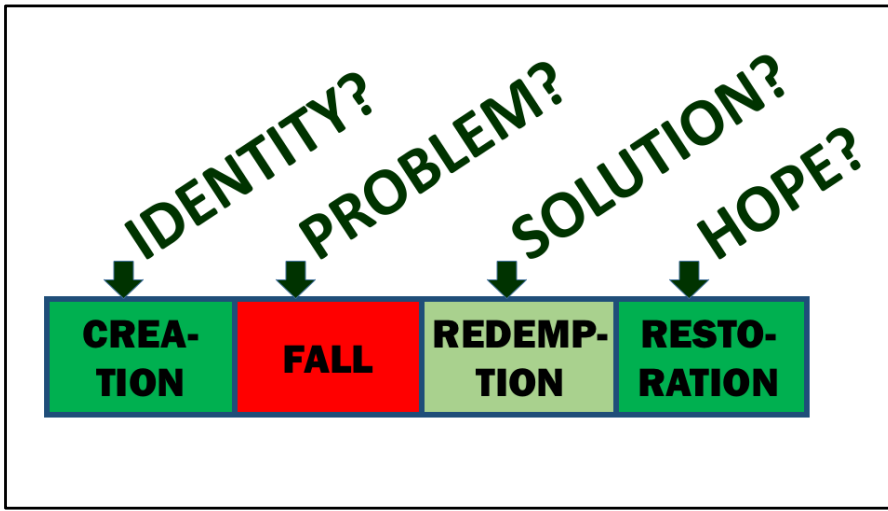
-- Like the safety speech in an airplane . . . we must first put the oxygen mask on ourselves before we help others put theirs on.

TR: The idea of gospel influence is very simple but also easily misunderstood.



There are three stories that we are trying to connect.

TR: As we try to connect these, we can use the 4 movements that we are learning in our small groups, we see the most basic of outlines for God's story . . .



REVIEW SLIDE

TR: Unfortunately, many Christians merely use this outline to .

..



... READ SLIDE

TR: Most of us realize that in our culture, this is rarely effective. So we remember to BLESS, by beginning with prayer and then .

..



listening with care . . .

-- We use the outline to try to understand what the other person's answers are to their sense of . . . (four components).

TR: And then, we . . .



... READ SLIDE

-- This is certainly better. At least it has a relational dynamic for a story that's all about relationship.

TR: But, this still isn't what Gospel Fluency is all about. We are to be more than a search engine that connects their story with God's story.

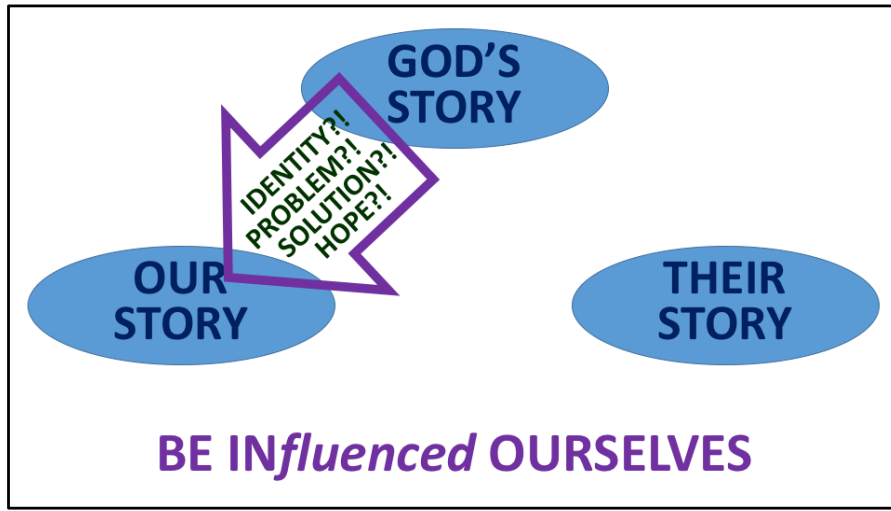
**WE MUST FIRST BE
GOSPEL IN*fluenced***

**TO BE
A GOSPEL IN***fluence*

Remember . . . READ SLIDE

-- To be Gospel fluent means that we must move from our heads to our hearts

TR: We first need to . . .



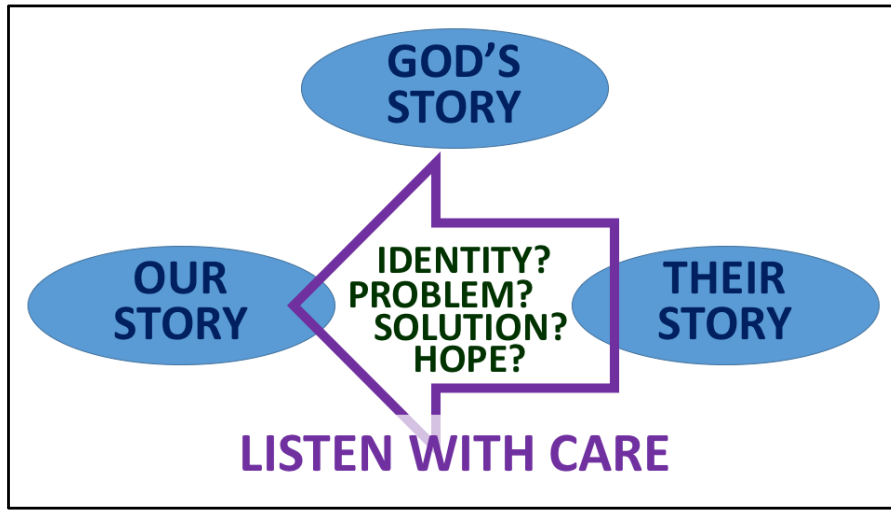
READ SLIDE

-- That is, we need to be gospelized, transformed by the renewing of our minds and hearts . . .

-- . . . welcoming God's truth as it helps us with the 4 related questions of the basic outline . . . identity, problem, solution, hope.

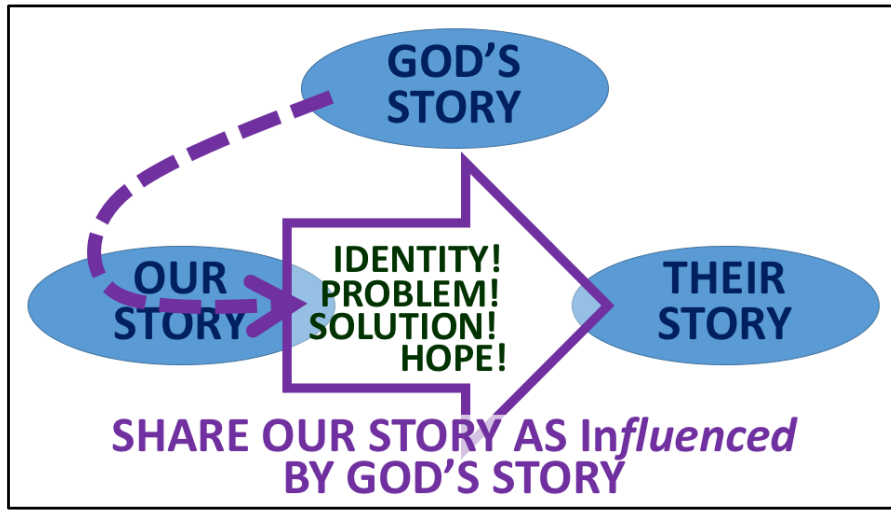
-- If we have been gospel influenced first, then . . .

TR: . . . after beginning with prayer, we must . . .



READ SLIDE

TR: But we don't then just "give them the gospel" as merely a collection of facts. The data points are important but an effective witness will . . .



. . . connect their story to God's story through our story.
-- This is the step of vulnerability that many of us find challenging.

TR: But this is exactly what we see modeled for us in the witness of the Apostle Paul in Acts 22 and 26 . . .

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day."

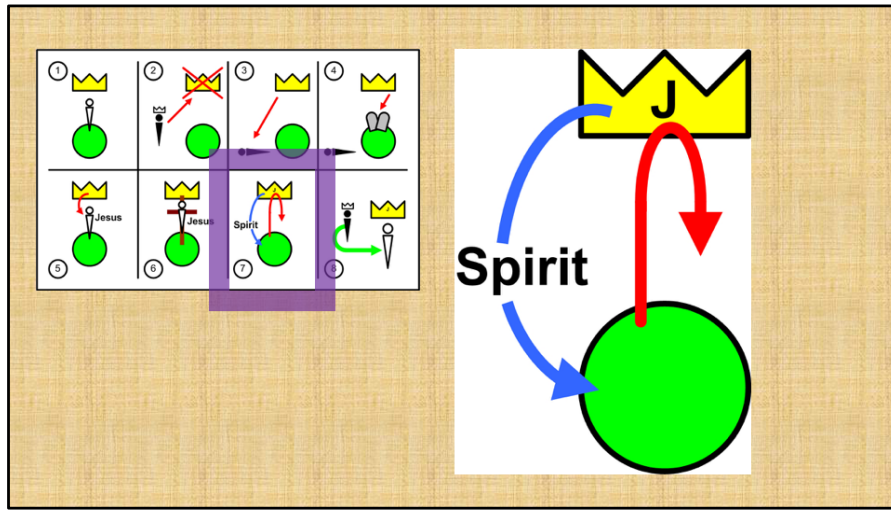
ESV

Paul tells about Jesus and His salvation, but through Paul's own story of conversion.

-- Paul was influenced before he had a gospel influence on others.

—and Paul's continuing influence depended on his putting on his hard hat everyday.

TR: So, that's exactly what I hope will happen to you today . . . that you will be influenced and put on the hard hat of biblical truth regarding . . .

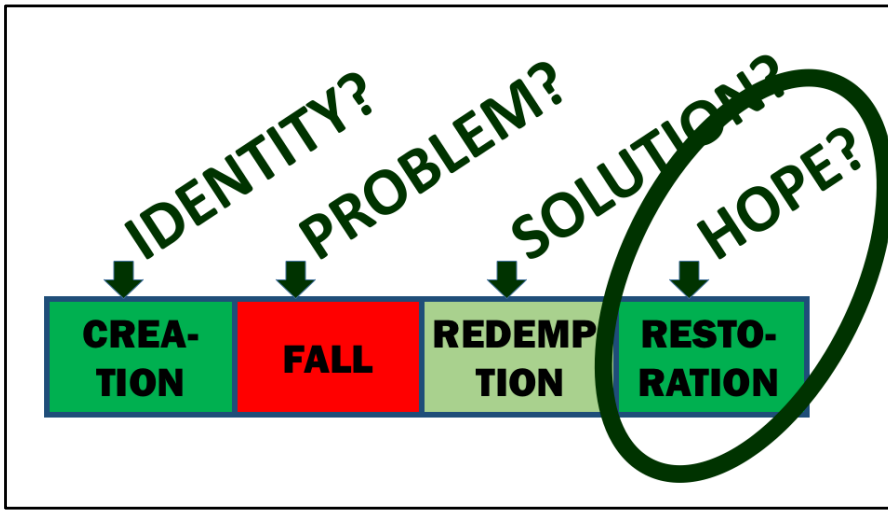


. . . the great hope we have in Christ.

-- We'll use drawing seven, but we could use the other outlines as well to point us to restoration.

-- Last week we saw the Christmas Drawing and the Good Friday drawing, but now it's Easter Plus.

TR: This is the drawing that helps us be influenced by . . .



. . . the restoration . . . which is our source of hope.

-- As we listen to folks, really listen, we will hear what they believe their ultimate hope to be.

-- It will usually be related to how they define their identity, what's keeping them from fulfilling that identity (the problem)

. . .

-- . . . and what they consider to be the solution.

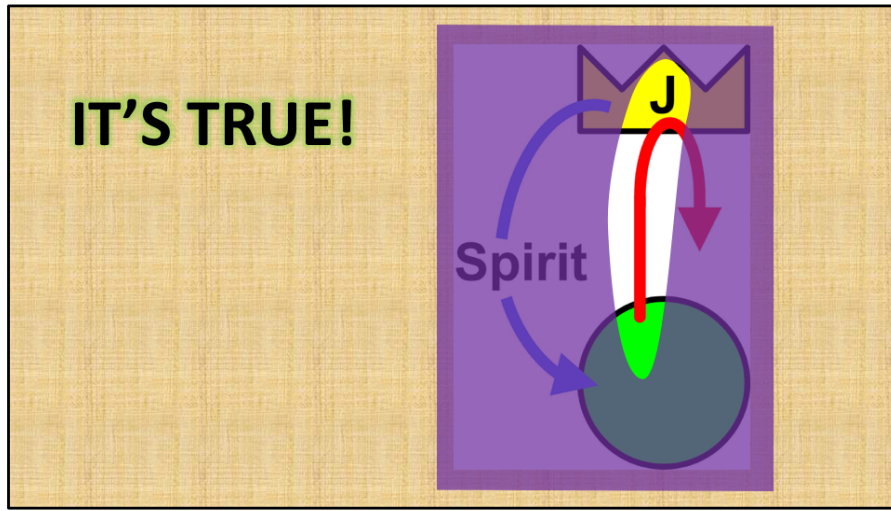
-- They will also express a hope . . .

TR: Unfortunately, many of them and of us have a very weak sense of hope, it's more like . . .



. . . keeping our fingers crossed . . . not the confident expectation of biblical hope.

TR: What biblical truths are we reminded of through drawing seven that can give us confident expectation?



IT'S TRUE!

**I have confident hope that . . . READ SLIDE
-- Here I am focusing on the up arrow that tells us of Jesus'
resurrection from the death, never to die again.**

TR: Turn to 1 Corinthians 15, the great resurrection chapter . . .

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and **your faith is in vain.**

ESV

Some folks within the church had some serious spiritual head injuries because they thought perhaps that there is no resurrection from the dead.

-- This is exactly where many people in our culture are today.

-- But, Paul writes . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 15

1 Corinthians 15:15-16

19

We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.
¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 17

And if Christ has not been raised, **your faith is futile** and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ **have perished**. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, **we are of all people most to be pitied**.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- But the clear, strong evidence of history is that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

—every so often I take off my hard hat and I begin to doubt .

.. Is it all just wishful thinking?

—but then I put my hard hat on with the historical truth that He rose from the dead. . .

TR: His resurrection from the dead gives me the confident hope that . . .

IT'S TRUE!

- *there is life after death*
- *Jesus is Who He said He was*
- *Jesus accomplished what He said He'd do*

READ SLIDE

-- Without the truth of the resurrection being a historically based reality, Christianity would be no different than anyone else's imagination, it's all just "cross my fingers and hope it will be OK" thinking.

TR: When I was a kid, I imagined that I could fly.



I had dreams about flying, soaring over the trees, sometimes coming in for hard landings. It was amazing and felt so real.

-- But, even if I believe really hard . . . in truth, I cannot fly.

-- Nor can you, as some of us learned when we jumped off a roof in a childish attempt.

-- All of us wonder what's after death. Many choose to cross their fingers and "hope" for the best.

-- Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we can have the confident expectation that there is life after death, that He is Who He said He was and He accomplished what He promised He would.

TR: Back to Drawing 7, the truth of the gospel lets us know that with confident hope . . .



READ SLIDE

-- The down arrow tells us of Christ's promise to return, to make this world the way it is supposed to be.

-- This is **NOT** as good as it gets.

-- The Bible teaches that Jesus will return and then set up His 1000 year earthly reign before the final judgment and the beginning of the new heavens and new earth.

TR: The Christians ultimate hope includes the following, from the last book in the Bible, Revelation . . .

Revelation 21:1-2 p. 1143

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

ESV

This is part of a Christian's confident expectation . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 3

Revelation 21:3

25

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 4

Revelation 21:4

26

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 5

Revelation 21:5-6

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

ESV

READ SLIDE**TR: Verse 7**

Revelation 21:7-8

The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

ESV

READ SLIDE**TR: Jump down a bit to verse 22 . . .**

Revelation 21:22-24

29

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 25

Revelation 21:25-27

and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: In the midst of the junk of this life, with all its struggles and pain, all its uncertainties and confusion . . . we have the confident assurance that . . .

IT GETS BETTER!

— *“The best is still to come”*

- *there will be justice—
“He’ll make it right”*
- *there will be victory—
“Jesus wins”*

READ SLIDE

TR: Our confident hope is that for the believer . . .

IT GETS BETTER!

— *“The best is still to come”*

- *there will be re-creation*
- *there will be the forever relationship we were created for*

READ SLIDE

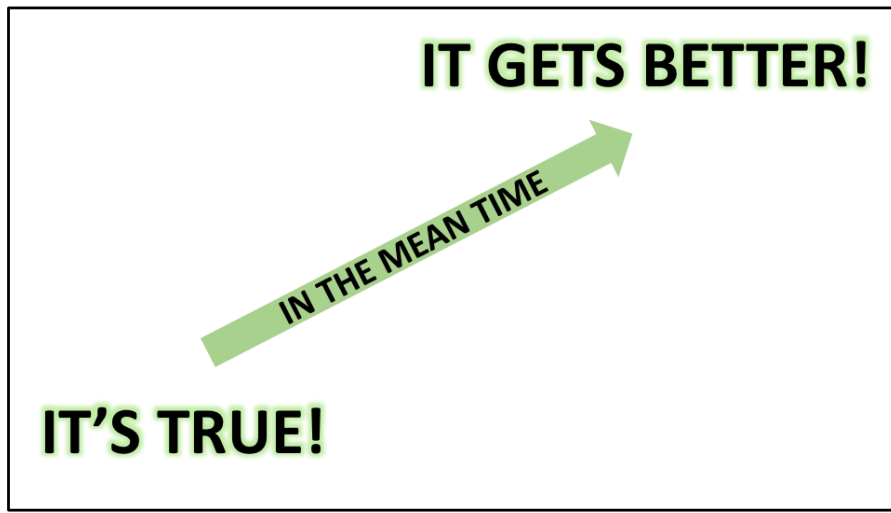
-- When people we respect say that the US is “the last best hope for earth” they don’t have their hard hat on, they haven’t studied history, they haven’t faced the reality of eternity.

TR: Our world losses hope so quickly . . .



- . . . we hear it when we reach 40, 50, 60, 70 . . .**
- we hear it when we're told that our college years are our best years,**
 - that having infants and toddlers is great compared with teenagers.**
 - Real HOPE has to be a hope that can be the confident expectation of everyone on earth, not just the wealthy elite.**
 - Real HOPE has to be that which pulls us to the future even as we work to make our present better.**
 - It is not escapism nor is it fatalism.**
 - I have the confident expectation that IT'S TRUE and IT GETS BETTER, do you?**

TR: And what is your hope for . . .



. . . the mean time.

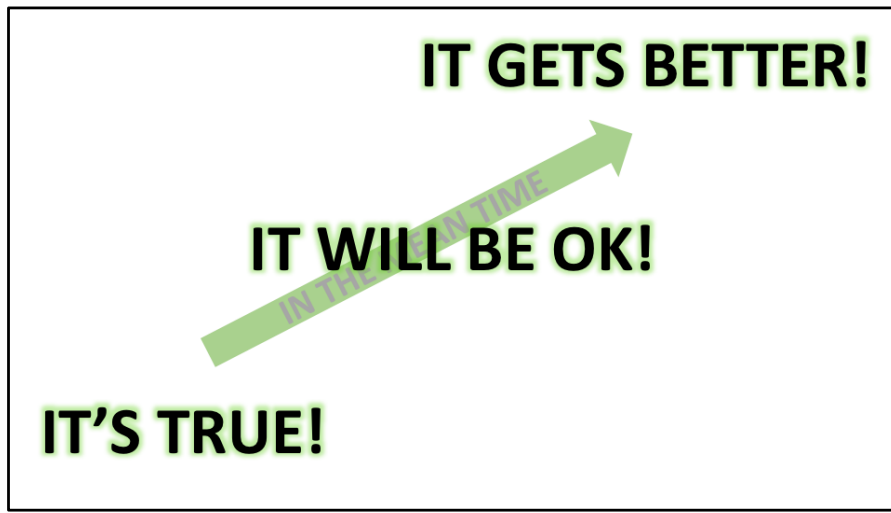
-- Christian hope is rooted in the historical truth of Jesus' resurrection . . .

-- . . . it looks forward to Jesus' return to establish the fullness of His kingdom.

-- But, what about the mean time?

-- What about in the midst of tumors, arthritis, divorce, gossip, hatred?

TR: The Christian who has their hard hat on can confidently hope, having the assurance that . . .



... it will be OK!

TR: Back to drawing 7 ...



READ SLIDE

- This is so important that we'll spend more time looking at this next week.
- But the sending of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is massive in establishing a daily hope.

TR: Just a few brief references . . .

John 14:16-17 p. 998

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

ESV

First, in Jesus' words to His disciples captured in John's gospel

... READ SLIDE

-- We'll never be alone!

-- The One Who comes alongside, even within us, the Spirit of God will dwell with us.

TR: And the Spirit dwells in the other believers around us, called the church. As we read in Ephesians ...

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

ESV

... chapter 2 ... READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 21

. . . in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: In the meantime . . .

IT WILL BE OK!

— *“We’ll never be alone”*

- *the Spirit has come to be with us*
- *the Church is here to walk with us*

READ SLIDE

- Cf. Promises to a terminal patient: You are not a burden, You will not face unbearable pain, You will not be alone.
- If we want to be gospel fluent, we first need to let the gospel influence us . . . we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- We need to remember that our hope, our confident hope, our confident expectation is that **IT’S TRUE, IT GETS BETTER, and IT WILL BE OK.**

TR: Sadly, many Christians have more of a cross their fingers kind of hope. They don’t put on their hard hats and then the spiritual head wounds take them down.



DO YOU HAVE YOUR HELMET ON?

Do you have your hard hat on?

-- Perhaps you can guess what I'm driving at by calling it a "helmet" instead of a hard hat.

-- If we are going to respond to other people's confusions about identity, problem, solution, and ultimate hope with Gospel fluency, we need let biblical truth so influence us that we can share how biblical hope has changed our story.

TR: You do get the idea about hard hats and helmets, right?

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take **the helmet of salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

ESV

Let me be more clear . . . From the teaching about the armor of God in Ephesians 6 . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Or a few pages later in 1 Thessalonians 5 . . .

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and **for a helmet the hope of salvation.**

⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- the hope of salvation is our helmet . . . our hard hat.

TR: But, for many churches, this is what the wall by the exit door looks like . . .



. . . a pile of hard hats . . . helmets of salvation left behind.

-- The helmet of salvation is what protects our mind, our thinking.

-- We will never be able to effectively share the hope of salvation if it has not first protected our thoughts from the dangers of this world.

-- Are you doubting . . . you can be confident that ITS TRUE

-- Are you feeling depressed, discouraged, maybe even wanting to end it all . . . you can be confident that IT GETS BETTER

-- Are you someone who knows that the gospel is true and that someday it will be much, much better . . . BUT the mean time seems unbearable?

-- . . . you don't have to go through it alone . . . Jesus has sent His Spirit and founded His church.

Facing the neurosurgeon appointment this week, I'm putting on my hard hat. Are you?