



“What’s the problem?” “What’s THEIR problem?” “What’s YOUR problem?” “Houston, we have a problem.”

-- People are angry about so many things: people who steal the credit for our work, who blame us for something we didn’t do, liars, slow loading screens, bad drivers, nosy people, screaming kids, people who talk through movies.

-- People are angry because things don’t happen on our time tables, they don’t meet our expectations, when some seem more generous with others than with us, when folks refuse to extend our play time and make us take a nap.

TR: (Intro continued)



When anger is turned outward, people blame others for the problems they face: blaming their addiction, their parents, their environment, their appearance or heritage, and when pushed, they will admit that they blame God.

-- People become judgmental, which is anger against others who seem to flaunt the rules you feel obligated to keep.

-- When anger is turned inward, it can result in depression and defeat, why can't I just do better, or be better.

-- And, what's interesting is that atheists are angrier with God than people who believe in God.

-- Think of the power we give to others when we say, "You make me so angry!"

TR: So, as Christ-followers, how are we supposed to respond



We talked about being the blessing to others.

-- But how do we respond to the seething anger that is often out there, especially when the topic of God comes up.

-- cf. testimony last week of interaction . . . how are we supposed to be a blessing when we feel blasted?

TR: The hidden gem in this dilemma is that . . .

Anger is our **opportunity**
to be *Influenced*
and to be
a *Gospel INfluence*

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: We are just into our second of our three year vision of being “IN” as a church, living out our core value of being “from the church out.”



**And the question we keep asking ourselves is, “Are we IN?”
-- Are we making the most of every opportunity IN our
communities to win and grow disciples who show allegiance to
Jesus Christ?**

**TR: Part of being IN is learning how to be a blessing to others,
even when the others are angry.**

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

LISTEN WITH CARE

EAT TOGETHER

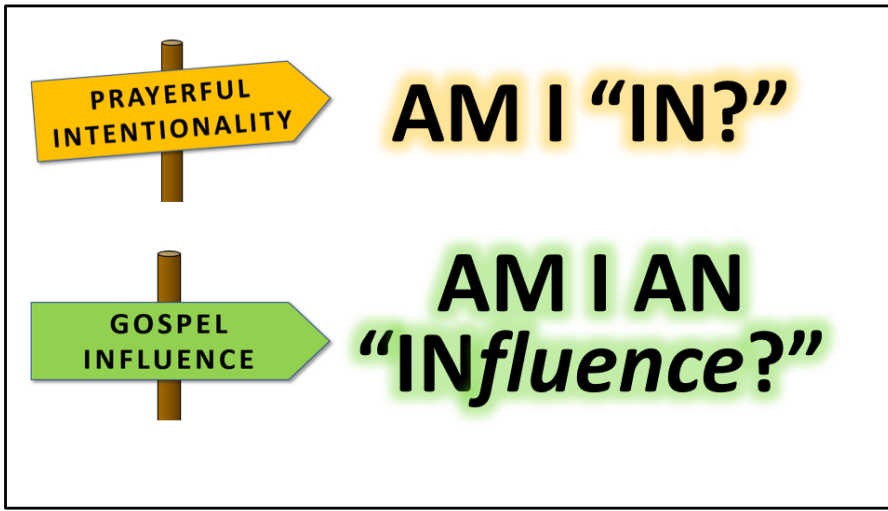
SERVE WITH LOVE

SHARE OUR STORY

Last week, and in our small groups, we learned that in order to be IN we need to BLESS others.

-- REVIEW SLIDE

TR: At its core, this tool aligned with our Path of *INfluence*.



We've all been challenged, and through our small groups we are being equipped, to be IN . . .

-- . . . and then move to becoming an INFLUENCE.

-- We BLESS . . . BEGIN WITH PRAYER, LISTEN, EAT, SERVE . . . in the hope of being able to SHARE our story of how the Gospel has INFLUENCED us.

-- But, how can we be a blessing when people are so angry?

TR: How can we have a powerfully impactful but SOFT answer?

**A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: The key to living out this verse as those who want to have Gospel INfluence, I believe, is to be able to answer the question of the day.

The Question of the Day:

How does the Gospel help us to focus our anger in the right direction? How does it help **define** the problem that, at times, makes life so hard?

READ SLIDE

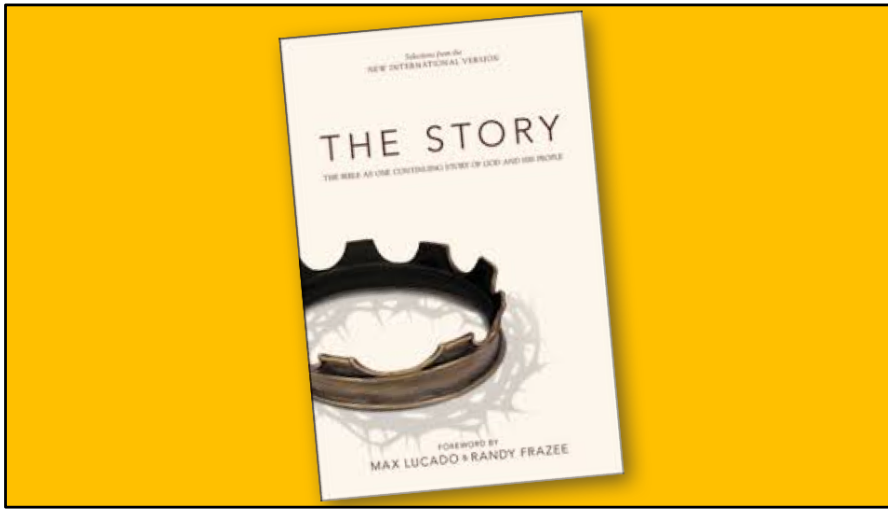
TR: This is not just a question for folks OUT THERE, but especially for those of us who claim to be followers or disciples of Jesus.



If we are going to be fluent in Gospel, we need to start “thinking in Gospel”.

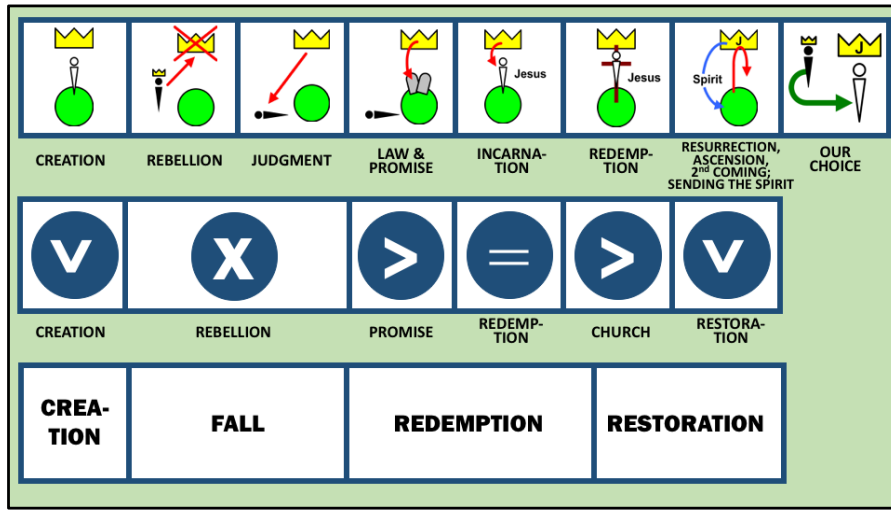
-- Cf. growing up and having both Dutch and English to choose from.

TR: In our groups we are learning several different outlines of the good news story of the Gospel.



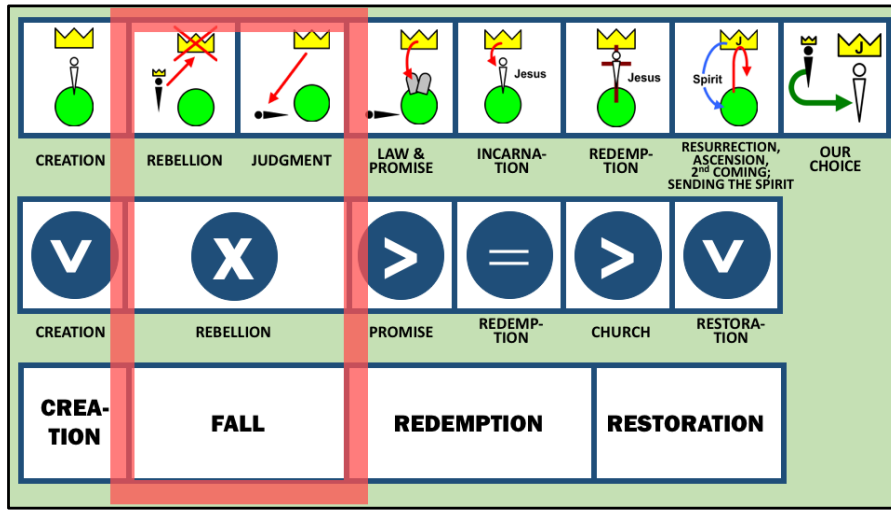
There's even an arrangement of the Bible, as one continuing story of God and His people, you can buy that's far more detailed than what we are trying to do.

TR: For us, right now, we are trying to become fluent using three models.



REVIEW SLIDE

TR: As we seek to be influenced so we can influence, our question of the day directs us to . . .



. . . what is the problem.

-- Whether 8 simple drawings, 6 acts, or 4 movements . . . this is where the tension comes into the story.

-- Even as good stories have protagonists and antagonists . . . and tension, so does the story of God and His people, people created in His image for an eternal relationship with Him.

TR: My prayer for this morning is that we all will be . . .

INfluenced
by the Gospel truths
about
“THE PROBLEM OF SIN”

READ SLIDE

TR: If we ARE NOT so influenced, there is a great danger. A danger that so many in the world fall into.

We all need to be *INfluenced* by the Gospel so that we don't misdiagnose and focus our energies or place our hopes on the wrong things.

READ SLIDE

- “What is keeping you from reaching your best life?”
- What are the roadblocks? The hindrances? The enemy? The problem?

TR: So that we focus our energies in the right place, looking for the right solution, let's take a few moments to be influenced . .

.

Part of the **truth** of the Gospel is:

- . . . by a part of the TRUTH of the Gospel.
- Today we focus only on the second act and second movement, only drawings 2 and 3. It is not all the story.
- But it is a critical part, and without it the rest of the story makes no sense.

TR: Read with me some vital texts from God's Word . . .

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 6 . . .

Genesis 3:6 p. 3

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: And even at the beginning of human history, sin impacted our willingness to declare what the problem really is.

Genesis 3:12-13 p. 3

The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."
¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

ESV

Blaming others started then . . . READ SLIDE

TR: The Bible teaches us that the decision by the head of humanity, Adam, brought sin into humanity's experience.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

ESV

In Romans 5 we read . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Jumping down to verse 17 . . .

For if, because of **one man's trespass**, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Here we start to read of the solution to the problem, the one man Jesus Christ.

TR: Verse 18 . . .

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 19 . . .

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- When the problem is defined correctly, we see our need for the only solution, the obedience of the one man Jesus Christ.**
- We can be upset that condemnation comes to all of us because of Adam, but if that were not possible then why would we assume that the one man Christ Jesus' righteousness could be imputed to us?**

TR: We are sinners by position at birth, and we all become sinners by practice. Back a few chapters in Romans 3 we read

...

as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

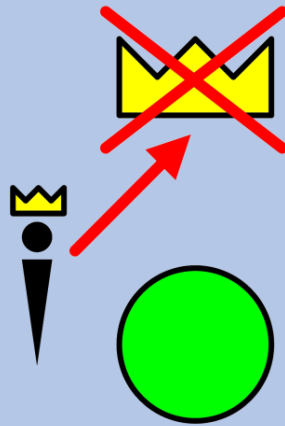
ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: So, down in our sermon notes under #5, we can capture these truths from these texts and the Bible’s story, act 2, movement 2 . . .

The root problem of this life is that:

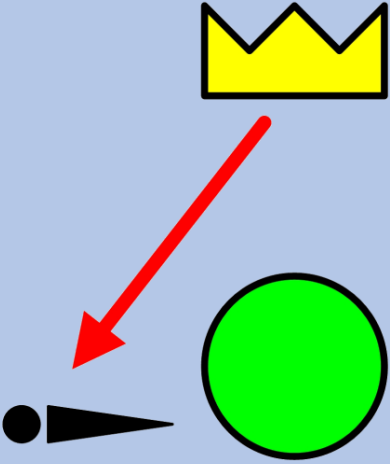
- in Adam, humanity has **rebelled** against God, and fallen into sin.



READ SLIDE

TR: The root problem of this life is . . .

- We all have inherited this sin nature and are now **“dead.”**



READ SLIDE

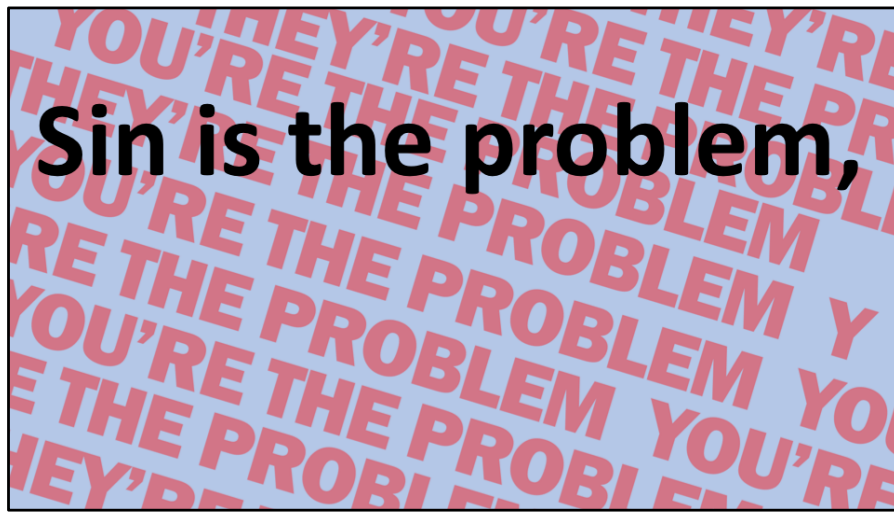
TR: Being dead in our trespasses means . . .

The root problem of this life is that:

- in Adam, humanity has rebelled against God, and fallen into sin.
- We all have inherited this sin nature and are now “dead.”
- We are all under the **wrath** of God and under the curse.

READ SLIDE

TR: We may be tempted, like the rest of the world, to be mad, saying “You’re the problem!” “They’re the problem!” But, the Gospel Influenced person gets it . . .



. . . SIN is the problem.

-- The problem isn't pain, for then our answer is to live in hospice and treat the pain but not seek the cure.

-- The problem isn't ultimately lack of education, clean water, enough food, good medicine. These problems are ultimately caused by THE problem, sin!

-- Sin impacts us individually, collectively, and it impacts our world. Even all of creation is groaning, waiting for the day of redemption.

TR: Sin is the problem, as we read in God's Word a moment ago

. . .

Sin is the problem,

- It is rooted **deeply** (sin nature)

READ SLIDE

TR: And it . . .

Sin is the problem,

- **It is rooted deeply (sin nature)**
- **It burrows pervasively (depravity)**

READ SLIDE

-- **[depravity] means that there is nothing we can do to earn righteousness because sin touches every part of our lives.**

-- **Theologians talk about the noetic effects of sin . . . it touches our ability to reason correctly.**

TR: Sin is the problem and . . .

Sin is the problem,



- It is rooted deeply (sin nature)
- It burrows pervasively (depravity)
- It has **already** killed us (dead in our trespasses)

READ SLIDE

- The anger of people shows that they too believe something is very wrong with this world.
- I believe, in a twisted way, that it reflects the image of God in which all were created.
- BUT, the problem is far worse than us being sick . . . we are dead.
- God told Adam that if he ate from the tree he would die.
- He died spiritually and would ultimately die physically. And then face eternal death, for death is separation not annihilation.
- We are spiritually separated from God, when we physically die we are separated from others AND further from God's presence, and when our bodies are resurrected, those without Christ will be separated to the fullest extent from God and all

others.

TR: This doesn't sound like "gospel," that is, "Good news," but it really is.

When we are
 **INfluenced** 
by this Gospel truth,
we can:

Because . . . READ SLIDE

TR: experience 5 liberating, enlivening realities . . .

- Be **honest** with our anger

We can . . . READ SLIDE

-- The Psalms teach us this. There is strong anger expressed in many of them and yet they end leaving vengeance in God's hands.

-- Jesus was angry, cleansing the Temple twice. He was angry with the hardness of people who wanted to keep their rules while sidestepping God's commands about mercy.

-- We can be honest with our anger . . . BUT we must also be honest about being "quick to anger."

-- At the points where we are quick to anger, we can likely diagnose that the gospel has NOT deeply influenced us there, yet.

-- We can honest with our anger and also with the sin that distorts it.

TR: Someone who is “thinks in Gospel” is able to . . .

- Be honest with our anger
- Be **angry** and yet not sin (remembering the balancing teaching about anger)

READ SLIDE

- In Ephesians we are told to be angry but not to sin . . . **AND** not to let the sun go down on our anger.
- We are told and had modeled for us a hatred of sin, Satan, and his servants . . .
- . . . **YET** we are told that the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God.
- **IF** we can no longer be angry against sin . . . **IF** the horrors of human trafficking and the slaughter of babies no longer moves us . . .
- . . . that's not a good thing, I don't think we are fully alive anymore.

TR: Being gospel fluent about THE problem helps us . . .

- Be honest with our anger
- Be angry and yet not sin (remembering the balancing teaching about anger)
- Face the temptation of **blaming** others

READ SLIDE

- cf. marriage counseling. "They're the problem."
- cf. What percentage of the problem is yours? Your job is to work 100% on your _____ %.
- There is a sinful temptation to excuse our bad behavior because . . . everyone else is doing it, they did it first.
- Bitterness is anger set to simmer on the stove of time, boiling down to a vile black paste of guile.
- I've found that many who are mad at me, or others, are often ultimately mad at God.

TR: And then thinking about the rest of the story, . . . realizing sin is the ultimate problem and Jesus and His work, through His life, His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His coming again, is the ultimate solution let's . . .

- Trust God for my best life **“so far”** as I trust Him for my best life **“ever”** (and forever)

. . . READ SLIDE

-- This is NOT the best life now. This is the best life SO FAR.

-- BUT my best life EVER won't be until Jesus brings to conclusion the story of stories that really does end, “and they lived happily ever after.”

TR: There's one more reality that I almost don't want to include. When I “think in gospel” I can . . .

- Trust God for my best life “so far” as I trust Him for my best life “ever” (and forever)
- Confront the **sin** of NOT being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

READ SLIDE

- Somehow it seems so easy to think that this is not sin.
 - That it is merely not taking advantage of some of the goodies in God’s gift bag.
 - It is impossible to please God without faith, without trust.
- Will we trust Him when it comes to defining the problem?**

TR: No one can come to faith in Christ who has not first agreed with God what the problem is.



Sin is the problem

Sin is the problem. My sin that has separated me from God.

-- On what should we focus our anger?

-- Should it be on others . . . “What’s their problem? What’s your problem?”, making us victims?

-- Or, should it be on sin, beginning with my sin?

-- Separation from God and from others . . . death in its many forms . . . is caused by Garden of Eden variety sin . . . not believing God, not trusting His heart, not accepting that He is God and we are not.

-- We must confront the sin in our lives of NOT being transformed by the renewing of our minds with Gospel Truth . . . for at its core, our not believing, trusting, accepting, is the problem.

-- Cf. Neil Anderson’s Steps to Freedom in Christ . . . the answer is always confession first.

-- Are you ready to stop blaming everyone and everything else? Are you ready to admit that sin is the problem? Others probably sinned against you, but your response has been sinful. You don't control them. You have the choice today whether to trust God for His definition of the problem AND His offer of a solution in Jesus Christ.