

THE STORY OF HUMANITY

THE COMPLEXITIES OF CREATION

03 OCTOBER - 06 NOVEMBER 2021

THE SUSCEPTIBLE HUMANITY

(10-16 OCT 2021)

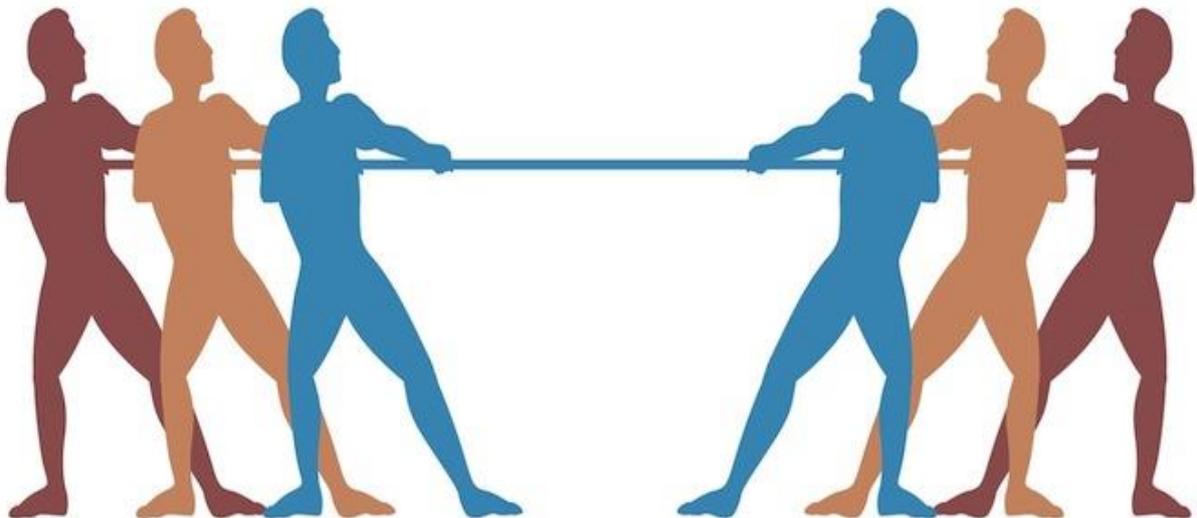
INTRODUCTION

With all the good intentions with which God created, humanity could not resist the temptation and be influenced by other fellow creatures. Humanity struggles to remain faithful losing the privileges given to them. To their surprise though God remains faithful even when humanity fails to be. The Psalmist is correct in Psalm 23:6 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."



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The struggle of the soul – The beauty of Genesis 2:25, “And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.” last only up until that chapter. This is a strong notion of acceptance of who humanity is without being influenced by anything except how they feel about each other. There is affirmation, openness or transparency without shame or embarrassment. There is no judgement between the human beings in this chapter. They are happy to be. Things change when we get to Chapter 3. The contentment comes to an end at the craftiness of the serpent (a Latin mythical symbol of a cunning and deceitful creature that comes crawling). It is not the big things that spoil our relationship with self, one another and God. The serpent in this mythical world represents the small things that put us at odds with ourselves and ultimately with God. The hissing sound is not the loudest and yet seems to be the most influential to the human beings. The speed at which the snake moves of up to 16-19km/h could not be outrun by the human beings who can move at over 30km/h. It is not the fastest things that catch up with us, but the slowest that find us on the way and convince us otherwise. The conclusion



then is that it is not the physical sense humanity that is in trouble, but the soul that is in trouble. It is the inner being that is in danger more than the outlook. When the spirit, the soul of the human being is in trouble it affects the entire human being.

REFLECTION

What are some of the unassuming things that have influenced and affected your life?

Disobedience – God had warned humanity of the dangers that could destroy their lives. This nature of humanity will continue throughout scripture. Humanity has the ability to ignore God’s counsel. Humanity remembers what God had told them (Gen 3:2). This was even in detail of what God said and yet the human being listened to the serpent rather than upholding God’s advice. Humanity seems to be susceptible to the last voice they hear. This led to disobedience. The serpent had not done anything to deserve human’s attention and yet they were convinced that that is the best advice. Disobedience comes with ignorance – the foolishness of neglecting the best we have been taught and embracing the new without testing its credibility. The truth with this ignorance gets to be twisted. The serpent convinces the human being that life could be better. Our quest to explore can at times land us into disobedience.



REFLECTION

What voices have you noticed to be convincing in life that sound credible?

Living with the Consequences

– We do things willingly and we struggle to live with the consequences of the choices we have made. It is not just us who are faced with this reality, but even the serpent had to in Gen 3:14-15. The corrective measure taken by God to ensure the serpent does not influence humanity further is that of separation between humanity and the serpent.



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Humanity would now be suspicious of the serpent and the snake would have to bite to get the attention of the human being.

On the other hand, human beings would need to live with the reality that life will not be easy going forward. They would sweat for their living instead of receiving it as a gift. Betrayal leads to difficult life – the story of humanity teaches us here. The difficulty will go to the extent of humanity no longer enjoying the reign of God. Humanity had chosen to live without God and God offered them that life. This would mean being exiled. It is a harsh reality and yet a just one if God is not to control humanity and allow them to be who they have chosen to be. We may see it as a punishment, but it is justice for God and for all of creation. Imagine for a second, human beings having to live forever with all their short comings. It is just that with their unhelpful potential of working against God they do not live forever, and this is a difficult consequence we had to embrace by being disobedient. There is also Cain who cries out to God that the reality of being a wanderer (Gen 4:12). He failed to live within the framework of a family setting and now that God is allowing him to lead a solitary, he is struggling with such a consequence (Gen 4:13).

REFLECTION

What are some of the hardships you have had to endure because of the choices you have made in life? What lessons have you taken from these hardships?

Disregard for life – Human beings now show another destructive side of who they have become. Cain and Abel are brothers raised by the same parents to advance life differently. This should not have caused any enmity between the two of them. Unbeknownst to their parents and



even God for that matter Cain would be influenced by his emotions, "Cain became furious, and scowled in anger." (Gen 4:5). God engages Cain as God saw the signs of what this anger ruling Cain can do to him and engaged him. It was not going to be the love for life that Cain would be concerned about, but hatred for his brother. This hatred would not come from what Abel would have done to Cain, but what Cain would not have done for God. When we become full of self, our love for life diminishes and we begin to act in destructive ways. The destruction for Cain begins with the plot. He convinces himself that he now has control over Abel's life. Abel would no longer be a brother to him, but a stumbling block to his blessings. He did not do the right thing and yet all of a sudden it is Abel who is a problem. When we do not see the need to be honest with self, we soon see others as a problem, and we deal with them in such a manner. Cain would end up killing his brother in cold blood. He plots and the evil in him mounts and gives him the urge to take Abel's life. When we entertain the evil thoughts, even our actions become evil, and we lose regard for life for others. The self-entitlement had captured Cain's mind, heart and soul. It is in such moments that we need to listen to the Ten Commandments, "Thou shall not kill." We also need to listen to Jesus, "Love the Lord your God with all you heart, mind and soul." When we allow God to fill our minds, hearts and souls, we will be ruled by love and not hatred, peace and not violence, appreciation and not disregard.

REFLECTION

What has been laying heavily in your mind and heart that troubles your soul to the point of affecting your relationships with others and God? Share this with God and ask for peace with you.

CONCLUSION

The story of humanity takes a hard turn of living with the consequences of their actions. It is a harsh reality of what happens when other influences come in the way of our relationship with God and other human beings. We cry out the punishment is harsh. We blame God for the stuff we did ourselves to one another and to ourselves. We no longer enjoy life the way God had intended for us. From life being a gift to life becoming a struggle. It appears though it is not the biggest of things that make us lose this relationship with God, creation and fellow human beings. At times it is the trouble within us rather than the things on the outside. The story of humanity is that of our emotions taking over our lives to the point of having no regard for any other life except our personal lives. This selfishness leads to lifelessness and hardships.

REFLECTION TIME

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How can you avoid listening to all other voices and listen to God?
2. What are some of the things that are most influential in your life? How can you resist the temptation not to fall for such influence?
3. How do you deal with the emotions that are not helpful that seek to control your life?
4. How do you deal with disappointments in your life such that they do not ruin your relationships with others?
5. Has God ever not been pleased by your choices? How have you dealt with this to ensure a restored relationship with God?
6. How can you learn to be **more** considerate in life so that your actions are not destructive?

GROUP REFLECTION

1. What are some of the dangerous influences in life that do not make so much noise and yet have the potential of damaging our lives?
2. How do you think we can resist the temptation of ignoring God's Word that advises?
3. Why is it difficult for humanity to remain faithful to God, but instead loyalty is to self?
4. What are some of the dangers of a life that is centered around self? How can we avoid this way of living?
5. Disobedience is not without knowledge, but choosing to do the opposite of what you know ought to be done. Why is it easy for human beings to be disobedient?
6. We struggle to live with the consequences of our actions and choices. What are some of the reasons people use for not wanting to live with the consequences?
7. Humanity at times thinks others do not matter in life. How can we change this perspective? How can we resist the temptation of self-entitlement?