Living on the Edge of Chaos: Session 1

Throughout this guide, we include the scripture passages for convenience, but the reader is strongly urged to have his or her Bible at hand and to look up each passage in its full context. Visit usml.edu/chaos-resources to listen to each audio session.

**GENESIS 1:1-2**

1 In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth—2 and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—"

**REFLECT:**
- How is order achieved?
- God works in a time all his own. It doesn’t mean God is not present.
- God is not always going to remove the external problem that we want removed.

**REVELATION 1:17-18**

17 When I caught sight of him, I fell down at his feet as though dead. He touched me with his right hand and said, “Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, 18 the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld.

**REFLECT:**
- Revelation 1:17-18 is parallel to Genesis 1.

**GENESIS 3:1-6**

1 Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden’?” 2 The woman answered the snake: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.’” 4 But the snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! 5 God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil.” 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
REFLECT:
- The serpent ruptures the line of communication between Adam and Eve and God. And a lack of trust/transparency/authentic communication occurs.
- God provides permanent protection for Adam and Eve.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: In the midst of chaotic situations. Always stop and ask yourself – where is my ability to partake in God’s creative act? Where is the invitation for you to be a creative agent in your life or community?

JEREMIAH 4:21-24
21 How long must I see the signal, hear the blast of the horn!
22 My people are fools, they do not know me;
They are senseless children, without understanding;
They are wise at evil, but they do not know how to do good.
23 I looked at the earth—it was waste and void;
at the heavens—their light had gone out!
24 I looked at the mountains—they were quaking!
All the hills were crumbling!

REFLECT:
- The people are not being faithful to the covenant and the communication is ruptured. Jeremiah is saying to the people that they are incapable of responding to the chaos in their midst. When we forget to speak to God in that language (e.g., the Sinai covenant or the New Testament), chaotic situations often ensue.

GENESIS 4:3-7
3 In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground, 4 while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion of the firstlings of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain: Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? 7 If you act rightly, you will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.
REFLECT:
- The power and the role of jealousy and deception.
- God acts according to His own ways and desires.
- How do you pray in a chaotic situation?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: Speak to God exactly what you are feeling about whatever that chaotic situation is. Listen to God in your heart and hear what he wants to reveal.

GENESIS 4:17
17 Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. Cain also became the founder of a city, which he named after his son Enoch.

REFLECT:
- Cain discovers and participates in God’s creative act.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: Look within your own world, and ask yourself where there is an opportunity for you personally to participate in God’s creative act.

MORE READING:
- GENESIS 6-9, The Flood
- GENESIS 11, The Tower of Babel

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: Look at these passages through the lens of chaos as we have been talking about it. Look also at the different degrees of communication between people and God.

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