

Title: Intro**Series: People Are the Worst**

Genesis 3:1–13 ESV

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 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. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Blame shifting - it is a universal “sport”.

Why are sometimes so apt to shift blame?

Talking serpent? Did they all talk?

Many believe the serpent was actually Satan.

Revelation 12:9 ESV

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

What do predators prey on?

In the world, We are encouraged to get all we can any way we can.

Snakes and lions

1 Peter 5:8 ESV

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Two ways to attack or be attacked – What might this look like in your circles?

- Snakes slither in and want you to cause your own harm
- Lions and wolves tear into you.

You are either the predator or they prey.**Predators prey on:**

The Weak - We need the strength of the pack (parents, families, other believers) Stresses the importance of discipleship - re-parenting

Extended isolation can be a deadly place.

What is the responsibility of the pack? How can we as a church, community group, youth group help those who are weak?

The Gullible - people who believe lies based on fear or the promise of prosperity. Some believe everything is fake news and others believe fake news.

What is the “snake oil” of today?

Discernment - the difference between right and almost right.

and

Healthy skepticism - if something seems too good to be true it probably is.
Predators exploit blind trust or irrational fears

The Proud - the root of all sin is pride

What happens when you believe you deserve it?

Christ battled these temptations by quoting Scripture back to God.

The serpent's "promise" that you will be like God by action, not surrender.

Think like a predator and live differently

Jesus teaches us a different way.

Matthew 10:16 ESV

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Don't be a wolf.

Don't tear other people apart or down (marriages, friendships, church family, parents, classmates, co-workers)

Don't steal from the weak.

How can you stop being a wolf? How might you help someone who is a wolf?

Don't be a serpent (but think like one).

Be discerning and repent when you want to prey on someone.

wise as serpents and innocent as doves

Ask for wisdom. James 1:5

"As sheep..." - go out as sheep (not proud and not gullible & no fear of death)

You are no longer prey or predator

If you are prey, stop being the victim, seek reconciliation, be more discerning, forgive yourself, stay connected to healthy relationships and the church.

If you are a predator, repent. Stop victimizing others and become a protector of the sheep.

Grow in humility by living like a dove.

Take prayer requests and be sensitive to the group. Many of us have been preyed upon and we have also been predators.