



# Predator In Paradise

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# ***Predator in Paradise***

**A 7-Day Devotional on Purpose, Loss, and Restoration**

*All Scripture taken from the King James Bible*

*“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:3*

For the one who once walked in God’s purpose,  
but now feels the ache of distance and the sting of  
lost ground, there is a way back.

**Part of the Brush Arbor Devotions Series**

Published by Brush Arbor Publications LLC for  
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## Introduction

### A Garden, a Serpent, and the Way Back

In the beginning, there was a garden. It was beautiful, bountiful, and bursting with purpose. Eden wasn't just a paradise, it was a place of partnership, where God walked with man, where identity was clear, and where everything that was needed had already been provided. But lurking just beyond the leaves was a voice, subtle, cunning, and divisive. The predator had entered paradise.

The serpent didn't tear Eden down with force. He unraveled it with a question: "*Hath God said...?*" What followed was not simply disobedience, it was a surrender of dominion, a breach in trust, and a fracture in fellowship. One moment of compromise led to a legacy of separation.

And yet, woven even into Eden's fall is a thread of hope.

This 7-day devotional, *Predator in Paradise*, explores how God places us in good places with good purpose, but how the enemy aims to divide, deceive, and destroy. You'll walk through Eden's tragedy and Christ's triumph. You'll see how what was lost in Adam is restored in Jesus. And you'll be invited to return to the presence, power, and purpose that God still offers.

The same God who called out, "Where art thou?" is still calling today, not in wrath, but in mercy.

There is a way back. And it begins with a step toward Him.



## ***Predator in Paradise***

**Day 1 - Paradise with Purpose**

**Day 2 - The Predator's Question**

**Day 3 - Separation by Seduction**

**Day 4 - Eyes Opened, Glory Lost**

**Day 5 - When We Lose Dominion**

**Day 6 - Hidden from Presence, Stripped of Power**

**Day 7 - The Way Back**

**Epilogue - From Lost to Restored**

## Day 1

### Paradise with Purpose

It's easy to think of paradise as a place of rest, a hammock swaying in the breeze, the scent of blossoms in the air, and nothing at all required of us. But Eden, though perfect, was never purposeless. God placed Adam in a garden, not just to enjoy it, but to work it, to guard it, and to walk with God in it.

***“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Genesis 2:15***

From the very beginning, God made it clear: paradise wasn't a vacation spot, it was a divine assignment. Eden was not just beautiful; it was intentional. Every tree, every river, every breeze held a place in the plan. And in the middle of it all, Adam stood, not as a tourist, but as a steward.

A retired orchard keeper once recalled how, even in the most fertile of groves, fruit never appeared on accident. “You still have to prune, still have to watch for pests,” he said. “A good place can still go bad if you neglect it.” He smiled. “Even paradise needs a keeper.”

God didn't make Adam and Eve to simply wander through Eden with idle hands. He placed them there *with purpose*, to dress it, to keep it, and to enjoy relationship with Him in the process. The same is true for us. Whether your “garden” today is a home, a church, a workplace, or a calling, it was never meant to exist apart from divine purpose.

But here's the tension: just because God puts us in a good place doesn't mean the enemy won't try to corrupt it. Paradise must be guarded. When purpose is forgotten, paradise becomes vulnerable. The serpent didn't strike first in a barren



wasteland; he crept into the beauty of Eden. And he still slithers into the places we've been given to protect.

What has God placed in your care? A marriage? A ministry? A child? A dream? Don't let the ease of the garden make you forget the call to tend and to guard. Purpose is the key that keeps paradise from becoming prey.

Perhaps today's invitation is to lift your head and look around. Eden may be closer than you think, but it may also need your hands and your heart. Steward it well. Be present. Be prayerful. Be aware.

For even in paradise, there is work to be done, and God walks with those who work with Him.

## Day 2

### The Predator's Question

Deception rarely begins with a lie shouted in your face. More often, it comes in softly, wrapped in curiosity and couched in concern. The serpent didn't slither into Eden with threats; he came with a question. And that question cracked open the door to ruin.

***“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Genesis 3:1***

It was subtle. Just a twist. A doubt. Not a denial of God's word, just a reshaping of it. The serpent's genius wasn't in force, but in distortion. He took a clear command and made it sound restrictive, unfair, even questionable. And suddenly, the trust that held Eden together began to unravel.

A teacher once told of a promising student who dropped out just weeks before graduation. No one saw it coming. “Someone whispered to him that the system was rigged,” she said. “That all his hard work wouldn't matter in the end. And once that seed of doubt was planted, he couldn't see straight.” The student never verified the claim; he simply *believed the whisper*.

That's the serpent's strategy still. He doesn't begin with rebellion. He begins with suspicion: *Did God really say? Does He really mean that? Is He holding something back?* And the moment our confidence in God's character falters, our footing follows close behind.

Eve didn't fall because she was rebellious. She fell because she was deceived. The moment she entertained the serpent's twist of truth; she was already losing ground. And once God's words are bent, it doesn't take long for our hearts to follow.

Today, we still hear those whispers. In our relationships, our trials, our waiting, the question slinks in: *Is God really good? Can He really be trusted?* And if we're not careful, we'll begin to trade trust for doubt.

But here's the safeguard, return to what God actually said. Rehearse His Word, not your feelings. Ask: *Is this thought in line with truth or tinted by the tempter?*

Maybe your Eden has been invaded not by an act of sin, but by a question. One that's been nagging at your confidence in God. Take it captive today. Don't let suspicion build a nest in your thoughts.

Because every division from God begins with a distortion of what He said.

Don't answer the serpent. Turn back to the voice of your Shepherd and let truth drive the predator out.

## Day 3

### Separation by Seduction

Sin often wears a mask. It doesn't stomp into our lives demanding allegiance, it slips in quietly, dressed like wisdom, wrapped in appeal. In Eden, the enemy didn't drag Eve away by force. He seduced her with a suggestion. And in doing so, he severed what once was whole.

***“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:3***

Notice Paul's word: *beguiled*. Not overwhelmed. Not overpowered. *Beguiled*. That's the language of seduction. It speaks of charm, smoothness, persuasion. The predator didn't roar, he whispered. And with a few carefully chosen words, he made Eve question what she once knew and crave what she didn't need.

A pastor once spoke of a man in his church, faithful, sincere, deeply committed, who slowly stopped coming to prayer meetings. Then Sunday mornings. Then altogether. When the pastor gently visited him, the man said, “I haven't rejected God. I just started thinking differently. What once seemed clear... now seems complicated.” No scandal. No rebellion. Just a slow drift from the simplicity of devotion.

That's how seduction works. It makes the forbidden look fruitful. It makes God's boundaries look burdensome. It complicates what once was clear. Eve didn't fall in a moment of defiance; she fell in a fog of distortion.

We must remember: the serpent's goal is not merely to tempt us to do wrong, but to *divide* us from Christ. Paul feared the

church in Corinth would be drawn away from the pure, simple, life-giving devotion to Jesus, not by scandal, but by subtlety.

So what does that mean for us?

It means we must guard not just our actions, but our *affections*. To stay close to Christ, we must keep our hearts from being seduced by “other loves”, worldly wisdom, shiny distractions, half-truths that promise freedom but breed bondage. We must continually return to the clear, simple beauty of walking with Jesus.

Ask yourself today: What has drawn your gaze away from Christ? What voices have charmed your thoughts, causing you to question the very Word that once gave you peace?

The enemy still seduces, not to delight you, but to divide you. But you don’t have to fall for his subtleties. Cling to Christ. Stay near. Stay simple. Stay true.

Because the safest place in any paradise, or wilderness, is still at the side of the One who made it.

## Day 4

### Eyes Opened, Glory Lost

It sounded like a gain. “Your eyes shall be opened,” the serpent promised. He made disobedience seem like enlightenment, as if God were withholding something essential. And when they took the bait, their eyes were indeed opened, but not to beauty, not to freedom. They saw something far more painful: their shame.

***“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked...” Genesis 3:7***

Before sin, they walked unashamed in the presence of God, clothed in innocence, bathed in glory. But one act of disobedience, one moment of misplaced trust, stripped them of that covering. Suddenly, what was once pure now felt exposed. What was once confident now crouched in fear. Their eyes were opened, but they lost far more than they gained.

A counselor once shared the story of a young woman who had been lured away by promises of a bigger life, more excitement, more success, more attention. For a while, it seemed she had everything. But one day, sitting across from him in tears, she said, “I thought I was leveling up. But I lost something I can’t explain. I’m not who I was.” Her eyes were open now, open to the weight of regret.

Sin has a way of advertising like a blessing and delivering like a thief. It never tells you upfront what it will cost. It never warns you that what you see will change you, and not for the better.

Adam and Eve didn’t just lose their garments that day. They lost their covering of glory. The light of innocence dimmed.

The peace of presence was replaced by the panic of exposure. And they did what most of us do when conviction strikes, they hid.

But here's the truth: God never intended for us to live in shame. He didn't abandon Adam and Eve in their nakedness. He came looking. Even when we've lost what made us whole, He seeks to clothe us again, not in fig leaves of our own effort, but in His mercy.

So, what about you? Are your eyes open to something you wish you'd never seen? Has sin exposed you in a way that leaves you feeling uncovered and ashamed?

There's grace for that. Today can be the beginning of restoration. Let Him cover what's been uncovered. Let Him replace shame with peace. Let Him bring glory back to the places that feel empty.

Because even when our eyes are opened the wrong way, His eyes are still on us, ready to restore what was lost.

## Day 5

### When We Lose Dominion

God gave Adam dominion before He gave him a wife, before the serpent ever slithered near, before sin crept through the leaves. It was part of the original blessing, *rule, tend, guard, name, subdue*. But the moment Adam disobeyed, something shifted. Paradise wasn't the only thing he lost. He lost his authority.

***“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it...”***

***Genesis 2:16–17***

Dominion is the ability to walk in what God has entrusted you with, confidently, obediently, and under His covering. But when we step outside of obedience, we don't just displease God; we surrender authority. Adam didn't lose his strength or his identity overnight. He lost his place. He lost his influence. He lost the garden.

There's a story of a young man who inherited a family business. He had the training, the tools, the trust of his late father. But in a moment of pressure, he made a dishonest deal to gain quick profit. It worked, for a while. But word spread, and slowly, respect vanished. Clients left. Doors closed. He hadn't lost the business; he lost the authority to lead it.

Disobedience always costs more than we expect. Adam may have still been alive, still walking, still breathing, but he was no longer ruling. Thorns and sweat replaced ease and joy. What was once his to tend now resisted him.

The same happens to us. When we allow sin to guide our choices, even good ground becomes hard. Peace gives way to



striving. We lose traction. We wonder why what once thrived now withers. And if we trace it back, it often begins with a moment where obedience was set aside.

But here's the beauty: the Second Adam came to restore what the first one forfeited. Through Christ, dominion is reclaimed. You don't have to live beneath what God has placed under your feet. But it starts with realignment. Return to obedience, and power returns with it.

What have you lost hold of lately? Influence? Clarity? Confidence? It may not be gone; it may just be waiting on your surrender.

Today, ask the Lord where you've stepped out of position. Invite Him to restore your footing. Because in His presence, dominion isn't something you fight for, it's something you walk in.

And paradise, even lost, begins to be restored when we kneel.

## Day 6

### Hidden from Presence, Stripped of Power

The most tragic consequence of Eden's fall wasn't thorns or toil, it was distance. Before sin, Adam and Eve walked with God, unashamed and unhindered. After sin, they hid. Not just from accountability, but from the very presence that once defined them.

***“And the eyes of them both were opened... and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” Genesis 3:7–8***

Shame has a strange power. It doesn't just make us regret what we've done, it makes us retreat from the One who can restore us. Sin not only breaks fellowship, it convinces us we're no longer worthy of it. And so, like Adam and Eve, we reach for fig leaves, find a tree to crouch behind, and hope God doesn't come looking.

A soldier once told of returning home after years of war, carrying the weight of things he'd seen and done. Though his family welcomed him with open arms, he still withdrew. “I stayed in my room most days,” he said, “not because they didn't love me, but because I didn't know how to stand in their love anymore.”

That's what sin does. It rewrites how we see God. The same presence that once brought comfort now feels threatening. We forget that God's first response to failure isn't fury, it's pursuit. “Adam, where art thou?” wasn't shouted in anger but spoken with sorrow. God wasn't confused. He knew where Adam was. But He wanted Adam to know it too, and to step back into the light.

When we hide from God, we cut ourselves off from the very power that restores us. Our strength was never in the fruit of the garden but in the presence of the Gardener. Without Him, even paradise feels empty. But with Him, even wilderness becomes holy ground.

Are you hiding today? Not physically, but spiritually? Have guilt and shame driven you from prayer, from worship, from the nearness you once knew?

Hear His voice calling. Not in condemnation, but in love. “Where are you?” is not a demand. It’s an invitation. He already knows. He simply wants you to stop running and come home.

Because hiding may feel safe, but it will never make you whole.

Step back into the presence. Power waits there. Healing waits there. And the same God who once walked with man in the cool of the day is still walking... still calling... still restoring those who return.

## Day 7

### The Way Back

Paradise lost might feel like a story of final defeat, but the gospel tells us it's really a story of hopeful restoration. When Adam fell, he broke more than a command, he fractured the perfect fellowship God intended. But God's plan didn't end in exile. Through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, the way back to paradise is made clear and sure.

***“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:3***

Paul's words remind us how easily we can be drawn away from the simple truth of Christ's redemption. The enemy still prowls, seeking to deceive, to divide, and to distract. But Christ came to restore what was lost, to bring us back into dominion, back into presence, and back into peace.

A pastor once told of a man who, after years of wandering far from the faith, came back to the church with tears in his eyes. “I thought I was too far gone,” he said. “But when I knelt down that day and prayed, I felt the chains break. It was like stepping back into the garden, feeling the sun on my face again.” That's the power of restoration, no matter how far you've strayed, the way back is open.

The enemy tries to divide us from God's purpose with doubt, deception, and distraction. But Christ's cross bridges the gap sin made. His resurrection breaks the hold of shame and fear. And His Spirit walks beside us, leading us into new life.

So today, hear the invitation: Return. Repent. Reclaim your place. Your Eden isn't lost forever. Dominion can be restored. Fellowship can be renewed. And the paradise God designed

for you can be lived again, not just in some distant heaven, but here, now.

What step will you take today toward restoration? Will you trust the One who conquered the serpent and opened the way?

Paradise was never about perfection; it was about presence. And Jesus invites you back into His presence, where lost dominion is reclaimed and broken hearts are made whole.

Walk forward with confidence, the way back is paved with grace.

## **Epilogue**

### **From Lost to Restored**

The story of Eden is often told as a tale of loss; a perfect garden lost to human failure. But when we look closely, we see something far more hopeful: a God who doesn't abandon, a love that pursues, and a promise of restoration that spans from the first man to the last.

God placed Adam and Eve in paradise with purpose, giving them dominion, relationship, and provision. Yet, the enemy came, a predator cloaked in subtlety, twisting truth and breeding division. The serpent's question cracked open doubt; his seduction led to separation; and sin's consequences stripped away authority and presence.

But the story didn't end there.

Through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, the way back to paradise is opened wide. The dominion lost in disobedience is reclaimed through obedience to the Savior. The separation caused by sin is healed by grace. The shame that drove Adam and Eve into hiding is overcome by the invitation to come boldly before the throne of grace.

Today, wherever you find yourself, whether standing in a place of blessing or wandering in a wilderness, remember that God's good purposes have not failed. His love remains unchanging. His power to restore remains undiminished.

You may feel broken, divided, or far from the garden God intended for you. But His promise is sure: restoration is possible. Dominion can be recovered. Intimacy with God can be renewed. Peace can replace fear.

The enemy is still prowling, still whispering doubts and planting division. Yet Christ stands as the defender of your paradise, calling you back into the fullness of life He offers.

Take heart. The garden awaits. The way back is marked by grace, paved by the cross, and led by the resurrected King.

And in His presence, paradise is restored, not just in a distant future, but in the here and now.

**Predator in Paradise** is a seven day devotional based on the message preached by Rev. Shad McDowell Wednesday morning June 25th, 2025 during the camp meeting at Savannah Holy Church of God in Savannah Ga.

***“The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”***

***Psalm 111:2***

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