

Our Problem: The Fall

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[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is Eric, if you don't know me. I'm the youth director here at Watermark Church. And last week, we started looking at the story of the Bible.

And we said each of us has a story that we're living in. And there are numerous different places and sources that try and influence and impact our story. We looked at the culture around us, and we said that the culture has a story that it wants us to live.

You can see this if you go to the movies, you know, like The Hunger Games, this huge movie this past few years, actually. And what is it? It's a story about this girl who fights against the evil authority and government in her country and is this great hero.

And what's the message? Culture wants us to be the hero who fights the authority, who stands up for what's right, and to be this autonomous hero fighting against the evil powers of the world.

Our story can also be impacted by our past experiences. You know, a lot of people who are super successful actually grew up poor. They didn't know whether they would have food on the table the next meal.

[1 : 05] And when they were children, they made a promise. They said, my family, when I am an adult, will never have to deal with this problem. They will always be well provided for beyond what we need.

And so they make this pledge to work hard, to rewrite their family's story, to make millions and billions of dollars so that their children never have to wonder where their next meal is coming from. And so our past experiences can shape our story. And then we have friends and family and parents and spouses that speak things and say things and live in certain ways that impact and influence the way that we live.

And the stories that we hear over and over again and the stories that we believe will shape the way that we live our lives. And we said that God has a story.

It's in the Bible. And God wants his story to shape our lives more than any other story out there. He's given us this amazing story of a great, big, generous creator God who loves his people, who made us for a relationship with him, who wants us to know him.

[2 : 16] But we as his people have rebelled against him. And so the Bible is the story of him working to bring us back into that relationship with him. And we said that if we know this story and live in our story, in this story, then our lives will be following the way that God wants us to live.

But the problem is that many of us don't know this story. We know the story of culture. We know the story of our friends and our family. We know what our past experiences have taught us. But we don't know the story of the Bible.

Maybe we know individual stories. But we don't know how they work together to create one big story that invites us to live inside of that story. So we're taking 11 weeks as a church to look through the story of the Bible to see how this big story comes together into something that can impact and shape our lives today.

And last week we started this story by looking at creation. We saw that in creation, God establishes his good, generous rule through his word. He speaks and it exists.

He creates man in his image and he speaks a word to the man to guide him and direct him and shape the way that the man is supposed to live. And then God establishes his special place.

[3 : 29] We said that all of creation really belongs to God. All of it is God's place. But then he, within creation, took this one special garden. And he said, this is my special place.

This is where I am putting the man and the woman that I have created in my image and entering into a relationship with them. And we said that in creation, God establishes his special people, the man and the woman, in his image, who live with an awareness of him and are called to live in a

relationship with him.

And we said that their proper response was obedience. When they saw how big God was, how good God was, how much God had done for them, how he had provided for them, their proper response then and our proper response now is obedience to God's rule.

And when we ended last week, God looked over everything that he made and he said, it is very good. Very good.

And then we left and we went out into a world where every moment of every day since then, we've had constant reminders that it is not very good.

[4 : 44] I was looking at the news this morning. There's a story about ISIS decapitating a Japanese man in the Middle East. It's not very good. There's another story in the news this morning about a girl.

They suspect that she's between age 12 and 14, who's been caught on video stealing a 36 million Hong Kong dollar diamond necklace.

A child. Grand theft. Not very good. Each of us have had conflict with parents or friends or neighbors or teachers or spouses.

Not very good. On my way to church this morning, I drove past the hospital, a reminder that sickness plagues our world today.

I drove by a cemetery, a reminder that death marks the world today. Not very good. Even sports, the place that so many of us turn to get away from the brokenness of the world and just get away from it for a little bit.

[5 : 47] What's the big sports story in the world this week? The New England Patriots, an American football team, are suspected of cheating in their semifinal game to give themselves a competitive advantage in a game that they should have won easily anyways.

The brokenness of the world goes into even the places that we seek to escape from brokenness.

And we look and we see that story last week where God said, it is very good.

And then we look at the world today and we say, something went very, very wrong. And today we're going to look at what is it that went very, very wrong.

And to do that, we're looking at Genesis chapter 3. We're in this garden, God's special place, with God's special people where he entered into a relationship with them.

A snake, one of God's creations, comes onto the scene and he starts a conversation with the woman. He starts a conversation tempting her to disobey God's command.

[7 : 00] He starts out by creating doubt in her mind. He doesn't come up and say, you know, Eve, God's a liar, you shouldn't listen to him. Right away, at least. He takes what God has said and he twists it in the most subtle of ways, in a way that you could easily see how he could get that from what God said, even though it's not what God said.

He says, did God really say that you can't eat from any tree in the garden? It's like, when we were a kid, we used to play a game, it's called telephone. The kids here call it Chinese whispers.

And one person whispers something into the first person's ear, then that person turns and whispers it into another person's ear, and then another person's ear, and eventually you get to the end of the line and the starting message sounds nothing like the original message.

But you can see some connection of how they got from the first place to the last place most of the time. And you can see how God's message could become Satan's message through that game.

God says, eat freely from any tree in the garden except this one. Then the next kid turns around and he's like, God said something about how we can't eat from that tree and something else about the rest of the trees.

[8 : 07] And then the next kid says, just don't eat from any of them. Right? And Satan comes in. It's a subtle twist. But what does it do?

It creates doubt in Eve's mind. It makes her think, hmm, maybe God's not that generous. Maybe God's not that good.

And Eve responds, no, no, no. He said, you know, we can eat from any tree in the garden except this one. We can't eat from it or touch it. She's adding to God's command or else we'll die.

And Satan now has her engaged in the conversation. He decides to keep going, to push harder, to get her, to take her eyes off of God. What does he say? You won't surely die.

Come on, God knows the day that you eat from this tree, your eyes will be opened and you will be like him. God's not good. God's not protecting you. God just is power hungry and doesn't want you

to be as powerful as him.

[9 : 11] So he's told you to stay away. He creates doubt. He gets her to take her eyes off of God and then he tempts her to sin. As long as her eyes are on God, she's safe.

But as soon as her eyes are off of God, she's liable or she's ready to go for that fruit. She looks at it, she sees that it looks good.

You know, in Genesis 1 and 2, God's going throughout creation. He's making everything. He's saying, this is good, this is good, this is good. And then he tells the man and woman, don't eat this fruit.

And she looks at it and what does she say? It's good. She's looking at something that God has said, no, and taking God's role and saying, it's good.

She looks at it, she sees that it's desirable, she listens to the serpent, she eats the fruit, and as a guy, it's obviously tempting to say all the problems in the world are the woman's fault at this point, but it's not.

[10 : 14] We'll see that later in the story. She eats the fruit, she turns and she hands it to her husband and she says, here, try some. And he's right there with her.

He's been listening to the conversation, he's done nothing, said nothing, he grabs it, he eats it. Now, the Bible will tell us later, Adam is not deceived by the snake.

Eve is tricked, Adam is not, Adam just rebels. Paul teaches us that in the New Testament. But do you see what Adam did? It's the classic older sibling thing, I'm an older brother, so I know how this trick works.

Mom and dad say, don't do this, don't go outside. And you get your little brother and you say, hey, you should try going outside and see what happens when you go outside.

And then, either your little brother goes outside and gets caught and you know that mom and dad are serious about the rule but you're not in trouble, or your little brother goes outside and doesn't get caught and you say, hey, I can go outside too.

[11 : 18] And you go outside and you know you're free and safe. Adam looks at God's command. He hears what the serpent's saying and is sort of curious, kind of wants to see whether this fruit will make him like God.

So he lets her take a bite. Figure it's better for her to die than me, right? It's better to see if God's serious on a guinea pig than to risk my own life.

So he lets her take a bite. She doesn't die. God must not be serious about these consequences. She's offering me some? Sure, why not? And he takes a bite.

And when he takes a bite, it says that their eyes are open. Part of what the serpent said was true. Their eyes are opened. But they don't become like God when their eyes are open.

No. When their eyes are open, what they see is that they are naked. Rather than being elevated to being deities, they're filled with guilt, they're filled with shame, and they try to hide.

[12 : 28] This perfect relationship that we talked about last week where they were naked and unashamed didn't have anything to hide from God, from each other, from themselves, all of a sudden it's gone. And their first response is to run and cover themselves up.

They grab leaves and create loincloths to cover themselves so that Eve can't see Adam's nakedness and Adam can't see Eve's because now they know that they're naked.

They're scared of their nakedness. And then they hear God coming. And they run and they hide from God. God comes into the garden and he says, where are you?

Now interestingly, in English, we only have one word for you, whether we're talking to you as a guy, you as a girl, you as a group, it's you. If you're from down south in America, they'll say y'all for a group, but I don't say that.

But in the language the Bible was written in, they had different words for you if you're talking to you as an individual guy, you as an individual girl, you as a group of people. And when God says, where are you?

[13 : 41] He's talking to the man individually. God comes into the garden and he says, Adam is the one primarily responsible for this. I am looking for him.

He's the one that I'm going to hold to account for this sin. God comes into the garden and he says, where are you? It's not like he's clueless and he's like, oh no, I lost him so fast.

No, he's giving them a chance to repent for what they've done. Adam and Eve come out of their hiding and Adam says, well, you know God, sorry I hid, but I knew that I was naked and I was really

afraid for you to see me naked.

And again, God responds with a question. Great technique. Who told you you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? He's giving Adam, again, a chance to repent.

He's not playing Sherlock Holmes because he's trying to piece the clues together. No, he knows. He's giving Adam a chance to repent. And rather than own up to his action, Adam blames God for his sin.

[14:47] Adam says, well, you know that woman that you gave to me? She gave this to me so I wouldn't have eaten it if you hadn't given her to me in the first place so it's really your fault.

God turns to the woman and he says, what happened? She says, well, the snake, it tricked me. It's not my fault. I was tricked. And God, knowing the story, turns to the snake and doesn't ask any more questions but begins handing out punishments.

He says, the snake is cursed. It will go on its belly forever and eat the dust of the earth. It will be the enemy of the woman's offspring, the ones who are created in God's image and giving the responsibility of caring for it are now its enemies.

But even more, there's going to be a cosmic battle where one offspring of this woman will crush and defeat the serpent forever and we'll get back to that later. Then he turns to the woman and every woman since Eve has cursed her because of this and he says, you will have pain in childbirth.

Interestingly, and I know when I say this, every woman in this room is going to look at me with that look of confusion and anger but I'll explain it. This is a curse that comes with a blessing.

[16:16] Think about it. What did Adam and Eve deserve as the punishment for their sin? Death. God had told them the day you eat from the tree you will die.

But what is he promising them here? He's saying your species will not go extinct because of your sin. There will be more life that comes through you.

It's not going to be pleasant. It's not going to be easy. It's going to hurt but I'm not cutting you off completely. I'm giving your species another chance. You're going to have children in pain but you're going to have children.

It's a curse that comes with a blessing that he will not just wipe them out and destroy them. Then he tells her you will long for your husband but he will rule over you.

There's going to be conflict in marriage. This relationship that was supposed to be good and beautiful and perfect will now be marked by competition and strife and fighting.

[17:24] It's not all going to be butterflies and roses like you want it to be. Sorry Disney. Then he turns to the man and he says you because you listen to your wife the ground is cursed because of you.

Notice God doesn't curse the man. That will happen in Genesis 4 when the first murder happens when man acts out against God's image. God curses creation the ground because of the man and the man has to live with and suffer the consequences.

The ground is going to grow thorns and thistles and the man's work that he had been doing pleasantly in the garden is going to become difficult. It's going to be painful. It's going to be hard. There's one paraphrase of the Bible called the message. I found this hilarious. You can tell that it was written by a man. It says your pain in working the soil will be like the woman's pain in giving birth.

Obviously written by a man. But God says you're going to work in pain. It's not going to be pleasant. It's not going to be fun. And after this life of hard work and pain you're going to die.

[18:47] You're not going to live forever. It's going to be rough, brutal, hard work, suffering, death. That's your punishment. That's your punishment. God finishes handing out punishments.

Adam names his wife Eve. It says because she is the mother of all the living which is a kind of ironic name because of the role that she played in bringing death to the species. But it's a name given in hope that God will be faithful to his promise that he will use her to continue the species to give more life to the earth.

And then God makes garments for them, clothes out of animal skins to cover their nakedness. God looks out over the garden of Eden.

He sees the tree of life. He knows that if they eat from it now that they are sinners it will keep them separated from him forever. And so in an act of love and grace that is incredibly painful for the man and woman he kicks them out of the garden posts an angel there for their protection to keep them

from getting back in and eating from the tree of life.

And that is how we got from the very good world of creation to the broken messed up world that each of us lives in today.

[20 : 08] And as we look at this story what we see is that man by rebelling against God's good rule lost his home in God's special place and moved from being God's special people to being separated from God.

The three themes we saw last week God's rule man rebels against it God's place man is kicked out of it God's people are separated from God and this may seem like an extreme punishment all they did was eat a fruit it's not that big of a deal is it?

God had established his rule he was the king of the universe and not just of the universe on a grand scale but of Adam and Eve's lives individually he was the king who was also a father who was also generous who was also good and loving who provided for everything that they needed and established his rule in their life and when they reached out to grab the fruit and eat it what they were saying is we don't want God as our king we don't want God giving us commands and rules we want to be our own kings what they did is they committed cosmic treason they rebelled against the authority that was over them and just as earthly treason deserves death cosmic treason deserves death but God in his grace and in his love gives them another chance but there are consequences that go with their actions they re kicked out of God's special place because this tree of life that had been given to them as a good gift now becomes an object of unthinkable danger

Adam and Eve were created for this relationship with God they were created to know him to love him to be his people and then in their act of sin of rebellion they separated themselves from him they cut themselves off from that relationship with him and if they ate the fruit of the tree of life yeah their bodies would continue living forever but the source of life that were meant to live on that relationship with God would continue to be broken physically they would live forever but spiritually they would just be living a continual constant death and so God in his love removed them from his special place and they were separated by their own choice from being his special people and this story

I know it's one that happened who knows how long ago but it's one that impacts our lives in every way today we live in the world that's the result of this sin the world today is no longer that very very good place we now live in a world that's broken where things break where people die each of us has hearts that follow in Adam and Eve's example rebelling against God sinning saying God we don't want you as our king we want to be king of our lives and of our world each of us in our hearts on a continual constant more than daily basis follows Adam and Eve's example by committing cosmic treason against the king of the universe each of us like Adam and Eve says to the king of the universe you're no good you're not reliable you're not trustworthy you're withholding you're power hungry

[24 : 28] I know better than you because you're not actually wise I'm going to be my king I'm going to make my choices and each of us like Adam and Eve deserves death but like Adam and Eve God doesn't give up on us he's given us the bible he's given us his story to show that to us and there are ways that this story can actually help us in our attempts to live for him to turn from our rebellion and our treason and to follow after the proper king one way is by looking at this conversation between the serpent and Eve the serpent is indwelt by Satan Satan is speaking through the serpent's mouth and he follows this pattern in tempting Eve that he follows today when he tries to get any of us to sin

I've been reading the art of war recently it's a classic Chinese book on battle strategies and in the book he says if you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the result of a hundred battles if you know yourself but not the enemy for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat if you know neither the enemy nor yourself you will succumb in every battle a better knowledge of ourselves and a better knowledge of our enemies will help us to fight when temptation comes and obviously there's some exceptions to this rule because our hearts sometimes no matter how well we know ourselves and know our enemy we just want to do the wrong thing but a clearer knowledge of Satan and who he is and how he works can help us know how to fight back against him so let's take a minute and look at what he does here there's three steps in his conversation with Eve that lead him towards tempting her to sin first he creates doubt in her mind he twists God's words he doesn't come out and say God is bad turn from him no then she'd be like why should I listen to you he takes God's words and twists them he leaves a little bit of truth in there so that it's plausible but he creates doubt by what he changes next he causes her to take her eyes off

of God he feeds her lies about God that seem plausible in the story that he's telling and once she has doubt in her mind once her eyes are off of God he tempts her to sin and this is the same exact thing that he does in our lives today imagine this hypothetical scenario where Satan's talking to a Christian guy who's trying to follow God's sexual ethic who's trying to follow God's commands about sex God says sex is good but because it's so good it should only be used in the context of marriage imagine

Satan comes up to this guy and he says did God really say that you can never have sex and the guy responds well you know he says it's bad so we can only do it in marriage and Satan responds is it bad come on it's actually good and it's actually fun and God knows that if you do it you'll have fun and he doesn't want you to have fun because he's like that so you should go do it and so the man looks he sees that the girl is hot or delightful to the eyes he sees that it would be pleasurable and he sins what happens here Satan comes in he starts by twisting God's commands God says sex is a good thing but because it's so good and because it's so powerful it's only to be used in the right context which is marriage between a man and a woman but

Satan takes that small restriction and expands it and says did God really say you just can't have sex with anyone creating doubt in the mind the Christian responds well you know it's just that it's bad so we have to do it only at certain contexts what happens some well-meaning parent or Sunday school teacher or youth leader tried to scare the kid away from making sexual mistakes and taught them that sex is bad and so stay away until you're married and Satan hears this and jumps on it he takes the misinformation that this person has received and mixes a little bit of truth to correct that error with lots of lies about God and his character well you know sex actually isn't bad it's a good thing it's pleasurable it's fun God knows that if you have sex you will have fun true things but then watch what he goes to

[29 : 45] God is withholding God doesn't want you to have fun no that's not the truth the truth is that God loves us God wants to protect us God wants us to do this in the right context for our own good and protection so that we can get the maximum pleasure out of it but he twists that he gets us to take our eyes off of God to question God's goodness and then once our eyes are taken off of God he tempts us to sin it's the same process today as it was in the garden of Eden he gets us to create doubt in our minds he gets us to take our eyes off of God and then he tempts us to sin so we need to know Satan's tactics and we need to know how to fight against them we need to know God's words so that when Satan tries to get us to take our eyes off of him we can be reminded of his goodness we need to know

Satan's tactics so we can fight against them and there will be times when we fail and in those times we need a savior who can be there with us you know the story introduces us to the brokenness of the world and in the world today there's lots of brokenness there's lots of theories about where that brokenness comes from what's responsible for and each different theory proposes a savior to fix the problems in the world some people they look at the fact that so many people are starving in the world today and they say the biggest problem in the world today is poverty if we could just get rid of poverty then everything in the world would be better and so the solution the savior is creating more NGOs getting the government to do more poverty relief programs volunteering our time and giving our money to get rid of poverty in the world other people look at the problems in the world they see that children are being abducted off the streets and sold as sex slaves and they look at this brokenness and they say the solution is education people do the wrong thing because they don't really know the right thing to do so the savior is build more schools create more adult education programs so that people can know the right thing to do and do it other people say it's a lack of tolerance people don't understand why others are different than them people are prejudiced because they don't understand so we just got to do more education so that people can understand the differences and be more tolerant of one another but here's the thing if the Bible story is true if the story of Adam and Eve is true then our biggest problem isn't poverty our biggest problem isn't education our biggest problem isn't a lack of tolerance our biggest problem is sin and poverty and lack of education and lack of tolerance are real problems but all of them are problems because of sin poverty is only a problem because the wealthy hoard resources greedily and won't share them with the poor education can't fix our problems because even though we know the right thing to do we choose to do the wrong thing and I think everyone in here can relate to that there have been multiple times in each of our lives probably multiple times in the past week where we have known the right thing to do and said in our hearts I don't want to do that tolerance can't fix

the problem because it can't put food on the table of the starving people but sin is the problem that the

Bible points to and this is difficult this is something our culture does not want to hear our culture wants us to think that we can be the solution to every problem ever look at interstellar another movie that came out this past year what happens the earth its resources are going away there is no way life here can survive so we humanity go out we find other inhabitable planets we keep the species alive we are the solution to our problem and if the biggest problem that humanity has is poverty or lack of education or lack of tolerance then we can be the solution we can give more money we can teach more people we can give more time we can fix it but if sin is our biggest problem then we are the problem each of our hearts and in order to fix the problem it needs to start with us being fixed and this isn't sexy this isn't something that the culture looks at and says ooh wonderful no going in digging wells in Africa is sexy the culture loves that look at Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie everyone eats that stuff up and I'm not saying that's a bad thing that's good that's necessary but it's necessary not because poverty is our biggest problem but because sin is our biggest problem no one wants to hear the biggest problem with the world is that we are broken we want it to be outside ourselves there was a

British writer back around the turn of the last century and there was a newspaper writer who had written out a question what's wrong with the world and invited the newspaper's readers to send in responses and this author G.K. Chesterton wrote in a two word answer that I think sums this up pretty clearly he wrote back and said I am and here's the thing if sin is the biggest problem in the world then giving more teaching more being more tolerant can't fix that problem the only thing that can fix that problem is a savior who can transform our hearts if sin is the biggest problem in the world then the only thing that can fix that problem is a savior who can transform our hearts and this story, the story of Adam and Eve, points us towards that savior. Let's go back to the story and look at it. God comes down to the garden, finds Adam and Eve, talks to them, says what happened.

[36 : 57] They blame God, then blame the snake. He turns to the snake and he gives the snake a curse. He says, you will be at enmity with the offspring of the woman.

He says, you will bite his heel, but he will crush your head. He's saying there is going to be a battle. Someday someone's going to come, a descendant of this woman, and you are going to fight against him.

You are going to fight with all your might, with all your strength to bring him down. You will bite him in the heel, but you are going to lose. He is going to defeat you by crushing you in the head.

The snake, like we said, is indwelt by Satan. And one day there would come a descendant of this woman who would undo what Adam and Eve did in the garden. He would be tempted by Satan just like Adam and Eve were, but rather than giving in to temptation, he would fight back using God's word.

He, just like they, would be in a garden where he felt a strong desire not to follow God's will for his life. But unlike Adam and Eve, who followed their own desires, he said, not my will, but yours be done.

[38 : 33] Adam and Eve, in rebellion, bound humanity under curse and made us deserve a punishment. But the book of Galatians tells us that Jesus, this descendant of Eve, became a curse for us to set us free and bore the punishment that we deserve so that we are no longer held by that punishment that they deserved.

Adam and Eve, in this garden, brought sin into the world. And Jesus, after dying for our sins, would be buried in a garden, defeating sin and death and rising again.

Right here, in this story of Adam and Eve, when God says, you will bite his heel, but he will crush your head, it's the first promise in the Bible of the Savior, Jesus, who will come to fix our problem of sin, who will come to make things right in a way that none of us ourselves can do.

And as you look further into the story, we see an even clearer pointer towards Jesus. At the end of the story, God comes, and it says, he made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and he clothed them.

The Bible teaches that without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. And right here, we have the first death. An animal is killed because of Adam and Eve's sin, literally so that its skin can cover their nakedness, but also so that its blood can cover their sin.

[40 : 19] It's a pointer towards Jesus, whose blood would cover all of our sin. And in this place where God makes Adam and Eve clothes, what we see is, in Genesis 1 and 2, God makes, God

makes, God makes, God makes all of creation.

And then on the seventh day, he rests. Because the work is complete, and there is nothing more to make. And in the six days of creation, every day it ends with, there was evening, there was morning, the first day, the second day, the third day.

The seventh day doesn't have that. And most commentators would say, that's because it was supposed to be continual. It was supposed to be a continuing rest where God oversaw his good creation working like it was supposed to, as the good God ruling over it.

But what happens is creation doesn't work like it's supposed to. Man rebels. Man acts out in treason against God. But God doesn't stay resting.

God comes back down to the creation that he had made, and once again, he makes. He makes clothes for the man and woman to cover their nakedness. And what we're going to see as we look through the rest of the story of the Bible in the weeks to come is that God again and again is going to step down and make and fix and restore and bring us back to what he created the world to be.

[41 : 50] and he won't stop until we get to the new heavens and the new earth and everything that has been lost in this sin by Adam and Eve is restored finally and fully to the way that it should be.

God sends us a savior. God comes and he works to do what we ourselves cannot do. as we look at this this week I hope that it drives us to love God more.

I hope that it causes us to look at him and say wow how amazing what a savior that he would come that he would forgive that he would save us from what we can't save ourselves from that he would love a sinner a rebel like me.

Let's pray. Father we confess that we are the problem with the world that we are sinners that we are rebels that we are broken that we cannot fix ourselves and that we desperately need you.

God I pray that as we go throughout our weeks this week we would reflect on this we would see how amazing and powerful of a savior you are. we would trust in you to be that savior we would stop trying to be our own kings and fix ourselves.

[43 : 23] God give us a love for you let us live our lives in obedience to you let us trust in you and follow you in Jesus name Amen.

Let us now let us pray during the our Dawg