

Prayer by pastor Greg Pratt

Thank you, Greg. You know yesterday I listened to Wayne Krouse. Wayne has bred and grown a new church from scratch that is reaching people that we generally don't, don't reach, and he knows what he is talking about when he stands up and talks. But I hear Wayne every so often because he works in the same office as me, and, so that was good so err that was all right, you know. And then we heard Garry his brother, and Garry, he puts into practise what he is talking about in his own...*(too much noise, inaudible)* and his presentation I've heard at the general conference, ahhhm, many times and at different events. So, hearing Gary was good he knows what he is on about he shares really good, good stories, but yeah... it was all right. *(audience laughs)*

And then, and then you know our Canadian friend. Just to hear all those ministries that are impacting the community. Man, I was blessed. Weren't you? And and and going yeah look, I wish there were more churches that were making things happen like, like his. But you know that wasn't the highlight either for me yesterday. Sorry David, Gary and Wayne. The highlight for me yesterday was last night. Because you guys spoke to each other. And there were small country churches and big regional churches and, and, and, and different stories and I'm going, WOW. Ahhhm. You, you are speaking to yourself and you are encouraging each other and building each other up and, and, and creating a kind of a momentum that can lead to a movement. And that's what, I went to bed last night going, hey this is, this is good, that was the highlight, you know. Getting a new person who knows not to smoke in front of people, welcoming at, ahhm, the church that I actually started ministry in, which was in Southport at the...back in ancient history. And, and, and you know those kind of, kind of things you say hey, God is alive here. And, and, and for me that is really really positive. There is some vision, there is some complaining and winging and holy discontented and, and it's being channelled by God's grace through His Spirit. But you gonna go back and you gonna be inspired and you gonna be motivated and you, you, you wanting to share with some fellow leaders and they are gonna go, "yeah I've been to seminars too. Yeah I've, I, I went to a workshop once or twice. Yeah they were really really good. But you know nothing changed. Nothing happened. And its entirely likely that you might experience some blockages to your renewed vision. In fact, I would say you will. And, and not everybody is going to say How was your last weekend at the, Watson Park. What was this new leadership weekend like? And, and, and you know they might ask it in politeness and you will tell them in all the enthusiasm and their eyes will just glaze over, ahh yeah. That never happens to you does it? Never. And, and, and so, as, as leaders, because I, I believe you are here because you are a leader. Leaders need to expect opposition. Leaders need expect obstacles. Leaders need to be aware that it's not all rosy. And I want to share a, an insight from out of Habakkuk but in a different way. Because I believe leaders need to learn to meditate. Biblical meditation, because you, you look at the life of Jesus He often left the disciples and the villages and what ever and went on His own, particularly Luke records it, to go and to pray. To spend time with God and to reflect. And Joshua, this is a verse, well verse 9 is one of my favourite verses but verse 7 and 8 are really important. I want you to read this

with me. Are you ready? “This book,” ready 1, 2 “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.¹”

Who does want to be prosperous? Who doesn't want to be a success? And, and God here is, is ahm, handing a mantle of leadership from Moses to Joshua and is saying, Hey, mediate on this book of the law. So how many of you know how to meditate? Biblically meditate? Now as Adventist some of us a little scared of meditation. Because eastern meditation aims to empty your mind and gain a state of nothingness. And actually, there is research to show that eastern meditation works. You know what happens? There are less synapses working in your brain so actually you become dumber. That's how eastern meditation works. It actually does fill the mind with nothingness. Your mind does become blank. There is not much there. Are you with me? That's research, go, you go and Google it, it's there. But biblical meditation is completely opposite. And it fills your mind with God. His word, His teaching, His law, His principles. Do you see? And and it creates, and and they haven't done studies that I'm aware of but I imagine it does exactly the opposite of what eastern meditation does, and it actually creates more synapses and linkages in the brain so you actually become smarter.

Because this is God speaking, isn't it? God's saying, learn, you know, meditate as leaders. Joshua you need to be able to keep this you know within you, because He knows that just as Moses had the trouble with the people of Israel, you too Joshua will. And you need to have that inner strength to be strong and to be courageous, because that's not your natural strength. And you are going to get strength by meditating. And so, I want to suggest to us today that we will just learn very briefly how to meditate. And we gonna meditate on Habakkuk, two verses from Habakkuk chapter 2. Because in Habakkuk chapter 2 after God shares the vision with Habakkuk from verse 5 onwards He talks about all the obstacles to the vision. There will be greed, there will be dishonesty, there will be murder, there will be people kind of, you know, creating all kinds of issues, and you'll say wow this is terrible you know we can't do it, you know. But there are two verses. One half way through the chapter and one right at the end of the chapter, that we are going to meditate on. So how do you meditate? Well you read the text over and over again, emphasising a different key thought. This is how the Jewish people do it. Ahmm, and they pause to reflect on different phrases of the text at a different, different time. And if you've got a different translation that can deepen your perspective. But if you don't, you just... We'll, we'll do it. This is the verse in the middle of the chapter. Habakkuk's talking about all the, the, the, the terrible stuff still happening around, the obstacles to, to what God wants to do and then it says, because he thinks the earth is filled with the violence, and corruption, and greed, and murder and

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jos 1:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

dishonesty, and all of that. And God says “For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.”²

Habakkuk remember leaders are visionary, they lift their eyes above what they see and by faith they see God’s preferred future. Habakkuk, I’m actually showing you what it means to be the righteous who live by faith. So let’s, let’s do it.

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

For the **earth will be filled** With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

For the **earth**.....

For the earth will be filled **With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD**, As the waters cover the sea.

For the earth will be filled With the **knowledge of the glory of the LORD**, As the waters cover the sea.

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, **As the waters cover the sea.**

For the earth will be **filled** With the **knowledge** of the glory of the **LORD**, As the **waters cover the sea**

Long Pause

An earth filled. Is the earth full now? What is the earth filled with now? And what will fullness look like and feel like? Will you know when the earth is full? Will others know that the earth is full? What does filled mean? Is it spiritual? Is it literal?

I don’t know about you, but when I just read it. I don’t think about it. Just stop. And just a few questions that I had as I meditated on this in the past. For the earth will be filled. Habakkuk is saying that the earth is full of violence and injustice. Dishonesty, murder, corruption, greed, power. That’s what Habakkuk’s saying the earth is full of, you read it. And what is God is saying. That the earth will be **filled** With the **knowledge** of the **glory** of the **LORD**. What is that? What is the knowledge of the glory of the Lord? I did a little bit of research in Psalm 72, people will be blessed when God’s name and character fills the earth. Yeah. The knowledge of the glory of God. And in Isaiah, there is harmony and peace between humans and animals there is no fear there’s no killing, because of the knowledge of the glory of God.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. The Lord is the great I AM. Yahweh, Jehovah, who ever was, who ever is, who ever will be, always everlasting.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Hab 2:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The earth will be filled with the glory, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. What is Lord's glory? Can you imagine the earth filled with Love, for God is love.

The earth will be filled with love for God is love. The earth will be filled with power for God is power. The earth will be filled with justice for God is just. The just live by faith. In the knowledge of the glory of God and His preferred future.

For the earth will be filled by the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. What else covers the sea but the waters? What does this mean? Totality? Completeness? No other option but the waters of the sea as people. Isn't it?

It reminds me of the song, deep, deep and wide. And yet the sea is so small, compared to God. How vast is His glory?

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk, when you've got vision you will see obstacles, the people won't always be excited. It will take effort to build a coalition of the willing. It will take effort to build, a compelling reason to change. It will take effort to paint a clear picture of where you need, God's people need to go. But remember, the righteous live by faith and that is what God wants. And you gotta keep claiming it by faith, and living it by faith, And seeing it by faith. And therefore you will work to it, by faith.

The next verse just blows me away when you stop and think about, meditation and what has just happened amongst us in a very short period. Cause when we get it, we get God. And we follow Jesus' clear principles. It happens. But you notice the next verse in the same chapter, the last verse.

"But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."³

And what has happened right now, right here. Without me asking (*do it???*) nothing to do with me. But when we elevate our minds with biblical meditation as leaders, that's just what happens. A peace, a calm. God is still on His throne. Yeah there is turmoil in the church there are people bickering, and whatever, yeah there...

We are not sure how this is all going to come together, we are wanting to get social engagement. We are wanting to have impact in the community and there are some that are saying, "yeah, we've tried that before and it didn't work 30 years ago." But God's still in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silent.... And we have. And for (*inaudible words???*)

So, before we finish, I've given you an example on meditating on Habakkuk 2 and verse 14, I'm just gonna give you a few minutes. We started late, we'll finish late. I'm just gonna give you 5 minutes and just do what we did in verse 14 and see what God comes through for you in Habakkuk 2:20. And then you may wanna get your bible might be KJV or New Living Translation or whatever. 5 minutes.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Hab 2:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

There is some talking between attendees. They are discussing the bible verse.

It's you and God, so if we can keep, keep the silence that would be great. Thank you.

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Let's read the version on the screen together. 1, 2

"But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

You know South Queensland Conference will not just be shaping for mission. They will be a thriving part of the Adventist movement. Every one of us will be living our hope in Jesus, and we will have a vision that we can transform the cities, through the power of God working in us.

Let's Pray.

Father thank you for your word. Thank you that we've been in your presence this morning, collectively. You're still on your throne, you're still in control. It looks like gods and people and situations are created all kinds of issues and obstacles for us. But one day the whole earth will be silent before you. They will bow and recognise Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And so, Lord you're on our side and may we be on yours. And as we go from here may we be true leaders. People of vision and faith. That despite what we see, we know that we are working with you for your preferred future. We claim it by faith. We love you. Can't wait to see you and we will serve you in the meantime. In Jesus name. Amen.