**Darlleniad / Reading:** Actau/Acts 9: 1-19

**Gweddi / Prayer:**

Duw, a Thad ein Harglwydd Iesu, helpa ni i ddod ger dy fron yn yr ysbryd cywir fel y gallwn ddysgu mwy amdanat, a chanfod dy bwrpas ar ein cyfer.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus, help us to come before you in the right spirit so we may learn more about you, and perceive your purpose for us.

Deuwn yn Enw Crist ei Hun. Amen

**Myfyrdod / Meditation:**

“Look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he prays” / “ Gofyn am ddyn o Darsus o’r enw Saul; cei hyd iddo yno, yn gweddïo” neu yn yr hen gyfieithiad, “Wele, y mae yn gweddïo.” *Actau 9:11*

“Behold, he prays” - These words are a sure sign that a person is at one with God. It’s a much surer sign than “Behold, he sings” or “Behold, he reads the Bible” or even as a preacher, “Behold, he preaches”! But if a person really *prays*, it’s a sure sign of spiritual awakening and spiritual life.

Byddai neb yn gweddïo ar Dduw am unrhyw beth, oni bai eu bod nhw’n credu bod yr Arglwydd yn mynd i’w bendithio rhywfodd neu’i gilydd.

The person who truly prays also *trusts*, and displays an act of great faith when actually praying. Who would ask God for mercy, forgiveness or guidance if they didn’t believe or expect to obtain what they were asking for?

Yet, after saying all of that - so many of us find it difficult to pray at times, don’t we?

Many people have told me that they find it difficult to pray, or even feel as if they don’t know how to pray properley - “Arglwydd dysg i ni weddïo / “Lord teach us how to pray” says R.S. Rogers in his hymn in Welsh, “priod waith pob duwiol yw” -it’s what every godly person should do.

Mae gweddi yn ffordd arbennig o gynnal cymundeb neu berthynas â Duw, ac mae’r person hwnnw sy’n gweddïo, yn amlwg â rhyw adnabyddiaeth a pherthynas agos â’r tragwyddol a’r anweledig ei Hun.

The words, “Behold, he prays” have a very peculiar and special meaning in relation to this converted Pharisee, once named Saul who became Paul; especially when we consider his previous life as a persecutor and reviler of the Christian faith and religion.

Jesus himself mentions it as a thing to be wondered at when he says to Ananias in a vision, “Behold, he prays”.

Rwyf am gymryd y tri gair o’n testun heddiw, ac edrych arnyn nhw mewn tair ffordd wahanol, gan rhoi pwyslais ar eiriau gwahanol yn eu tro.

1. Firstly today, I’d like to consider these words by placing the emphasis like this: “Behold, he **prays**.” Implying that Saul of Tarsus had never really prayed before, or at least never prayed in the *right* way before!

“Behold, he **prays**” could never be said of someone who was used to praying in the *right* way.

Mae’n rhyfedd yn achos Saul oherwydd ei fod yn Pharisead, ac felly yn arfer ail-adrodd a phentyrru gweddïau di-ri trwy’r dydd. Roedd y Pharisead yn ymfalchïo yn y nifer, cysondeb a hyd eu gweddïau. Mwy na thebyg, doedd yr un diwrnod wedi mynd heibio yn hanes Saul, heb iddo fynd “trwy” ei weddïau fel petai.

The Pharisees, as we read in the scriptures, would not only offer prayers in the Temple and in the Synagogue three times a day, but they’d also pray on the street corners where they could be seen and heard. Whatever the quality of their praying might be, there was certainly enough quantity!

Nobody could deny the fact that Saul of Tarsus had been much in prayer before this occasion, therefore it’s even more striking that Jesus should say to Ananias in a vision, “Behold, he **prays**”. He’d obviously done it many times before!

Gai awgrymu wrthoch chi heddiw, bod yr Arglwydd yn dweud, “o’r diwedd, mae Saul, neu’n hytrach Paul yn dechrau gweddïo *o ddifri*, yn y ffordd iawn!”

Paul was now, for the very first time in his life, offering his first “real” prayer. As we are taught by Jesus himself, one sentence of a true, heart-felt cry such as “God be merciful to me, a sinner”, is worth volumes and volumes of mere “lip-service” and reciting a string of words and phrases. Saul was becoming Paul.

Prayers must be “spiritual” and sincere in nature, and Paul’s prayers hadn’t been like that previously.

Roedd e’n defnyddio’r geiriau a’r ymadroddion cywir, ond heb weddïo o gwbwl mewn gwirionedd. Mae modd i ni weddïo heb yngan gair o gwbwl weithiau, ond oes? Roedd Hannah wedi cael ei chlywed yn y Deml, heb ddweud dim – dim ond ei gwefusau yn symud! Weithiau, mae’r gweddïau hynny sy’n amhosib i’w mynegi mewn geiriau – y rheiny yw’r gweddïau mwyaf dwys ac effeithiol yn aml.

Saul of Tarsus, before he became Paul the Apostle, was evidently full of hate and cruelty – how could such a person truly pray in earnest? Saul had such an intense hatred against the followers of Jesus that he even sent them to prison and helped condemn them to death.

Love is the essence of prayer, and if we go through life hating other people because they differ from us, how can we truly lift up our hearts in prayer to God?

Eto, Saul er ei holl weddïau cyn hynny – doedd dim arwydd o gwbwl o *ostyngeiddrwydd* yn perthyn i’w ddefosiwn. Roedd Saul yn teimlo’n hollol hyderus ei fod yn ddyn cyfiawn a chrefyddol. Yn gwisgo’r ysgrythurau mewn blwch ar ei dalcen, yn ymprydio a thalu degwm – doedd neb gwell nag e yn Israel gyfan, ei dyb e.

Any element of *humility* was totally absent from his devotions – his prayer was the expression of thankfulness that he was a, “Hebrew of the Hebrews”, blameless, and totally righteous in the eyes of the Law.

But we read that God delights in, and indeed, demands a *humble* and contrite spirit in order to pray properly. In fact, a *broken spirit* as we read in Psalm 51 – a “broken spirit and a contrite heart.”

Cofiwch - gallwn ni, hefyd, fod yn bobl weddigar, a hynny dros flynyddoedd lawer, ac eto i gyd *heb* weddïo o ddifri. Mae’n rhaid i ni geisio gweddïo gyda’r ysbryd a’r agwedd iawn bob amser hefyd.

Rwy’n meddwl am eiriau Elfed yn aml yn ei emyn, “I dawel lwybrau gweddi” sy’n ein hatgoffa ni i ofalu, “rhag imi gael fy nhwyllo gan ddim daearol fri; mae munud yn dy gwmni yn newid gwerth y byd, yn agos iawn i’th feddwl, O cadw fi o hyd.”

1. Which leads me to my second point today; after placing the emphasis on “Behold, he **prays**”, to now say, “Behold, **he** prays” – implying that it was a very remarkable thing that such a person was now praying, because it’s a marvellous thing for a person to truly pray, when throughout his or her life, they’ve been praying in the wrong way, or praying for the wrong thing!

Dyna chi wyrth – gweld Pharisead balch a hunangyfiawn fel Saul, yn ymbil am drugaredd a maddeuant. Roedd e’n dechrau newid i fod yn Paul go iawn.

During Christ’s ministry it was more usual to see such people as thieves, prostitutes and tax collectors coming to faith, before the self-righteous Pharisees. (Although some did!)

These Pharisees were bad at heart and needed forgiveness, but they didn’t feel the need at all, and didn’t seek for God’s forgiveness either.

As far as the “Law” of the Old Testament was concerned, they thought they’d done everything they ought to do - and certainly didn’t need to pray for forgiveness! It’s much more of an effort for a self-righteous person to stoop down and pray than anyone else.

Ein holl weithredoedd da “megis bratiau budron” fel mae Eseia yn dweud – all our righteousnesses as filthy rags.

Wedi’r cyfan, onid yw person hunan-gyfiawn yn gwybod ei fod yn iawn, ac yn gwybod bod pawb arall yn gwybod ei fod yn iawn?! Does dim rhaid i’r person hwnnw weddïo a chyffesu ei ffaeleddau a’i wendidau (yn ei dyb ei hunan beth bynnag!)

A beth amdanon ni? Onid ydyn ni’n Gristnogion? Y rhan fwyaf, os nad pawb ohonom yn dod o deuluoedd Cristnogol, wedi ein geni a’n magu yn y ffydd. Does bosib bod angen i *ni* newid ein ffyrdd?! Does dim pechod eithriadol, arbennig yn perthyn i ni, ys bosib?

But even we as professing followers of Christ, claiming the name of Christians – if we’ve never prayed with longing in our souls, “God be merciful to me a sinner”, then perhaps we’ve never prayed properly either!

Na, mae’n bosibl hyd yn oed i Gristnogion peidio â gweddïo o ddifri. Fel soniais ynghynt, mae’n rhaid i ni ‘gyd mabwysiadu’r agwedd a'r ysbryd iawn wrth gyflwyno ein gweddïau.

1. Which leads me to my final point today, having placed the emphasis on “Behold, he **prays**” and then “Behold, **he** prays”, I’d like to consider briefly the words of our text in this light – “**Behold**, he prays”

Bydden i wedi dwli clywed Paul yn gweddïo! Dyma fe, y Pharisead hunan-gyfiawn wedi ei blygu a’i ddarostwng – wedi “darostwng ben y balch i lawr”, yn offrymu ei weddi o edifeirwch a chywilydd. Saul wedi troi’n Paul yn bendant.

He acknowledges, of course, that he was the “chief of sinners” – he weeps, he cries, he groans and humbles himself before the Lord – yes “**Behold**, he prays”!

Mae’n cyfaddef bellach ei angen mawr mewn bywyd – heb Grist doedd dim ganddo. Tynnwch Iesu Grist allan o’ch bywyd, a beth sy gyda chi ar ôl? Roedd angen ei olwg yn ôl wrth gwrs, ond roedd angen mwy na’i olwg gorfforol – roedd angen ei olwg *ysbrydol* hefyd. Mae’n sylweddoli ei fod ei wedi bod yn ymfalchïo yn y pethau anghywir ar hyd yr amser.

And when we come to the realisation that we’ve been proud and boastful in regard to the wrong things in life, then, and only then can we truly sing with Isaac Watts:

“Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.”

Paul knew the Old Testament scriptures better than we do. The words of Isaiah must have rushed through his mind – “a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”.

Knowing these biblical references as he did, he must have found them the greatest of comfort, that now, in finding Jesus for himself, he had found the key to them all.

Taswn ni wedi gallu sefyll tu fâs i’r drws a chlustfeinio ar weddi Paul, byddwn ni wedi deall yn iawn pam ddwedodd yr Arglwydd “**Wele,** y mae yn gweddïo”. Cyn hynny, bydden ni wedi ei glywed yn ail-adrodd geiriau yn unig ; cyn hynny bydden ni wedi ei glywed yn “dweud ei bader” yn unig mynd trwy’r “motions” yn unig.

All previous prayers were empty and meaningless, but now he did the real thing – “**Behold**, he prays”.

Can it be said of us today, as individuals and as a church, “Behold, they pray”?

The old spiritual, “There is balm in Gilead” reminds us, “If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus, and say he died for all.” That’s a great prayer of supplication and praise if ever there was one!

Ac wrth i ni nesáu at fwrdd y Cymun unwaith eto heddiw, bydded i Dduw ein cynorthwyo ninnau hefyd i weddïo yn ddidwyll ac yn ostyngedig, fel y gwnaeth Paul, fel y bo’r Arglwydd ei hun yn gallu dweud amdanon ni yn ogystal, “Wele, y mae yn gweddïo”.

Er gogoniant i’w Enw.

Amen.