

Thursday 6 May

Today is Thursday the 6 May, in the Fifth Week of Easter.

Luke Parker. Sings, 'Chase the World'. Can you make these words your own today?

Today's reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts 15:4-12

When Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them [for the pagans who join us] to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses." The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.

This glimpse into the early Christian community shows us a group struggling to understand how to respond to what God had done for them. Perhaps most important is how it ends: The assembly kept silence and listened to all the signs and wonders God had done. I might find myself asking if this is common in the Christian communities I know, or whether an insistence on routine and customs, "the way we do things around here", has all but obscured any sense of God doing signs and wonders.

Peter's testimony is refreshing - his assurance that God is at work beyond what is familiar, in "them" as well as in "us". This might prompt me to look afresh at my life, to wonder if God is touching me, reaching out to me, present in my life in ways I wouldn't normally expect, in people and places I wouldn't usually look.

In hearing today's reading again, listen for the encouragement in this story... that sense of



trust that the Spirit will guide change and development in the Christian community and in your life.....

God's power working in us can do infinitely more than we can hope or imagine. Take a few moments now to tell God about your hopes for living your life as a response to the Spirit.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.