



Words for the Way

An online Lent Course for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

Teacher

Wednesday 3 May



An Evening School by Gerrit Dou (c. 1655-1657) [Oil on Wood, Bequest of Lillian M. Ellis, 1940, Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA]

Acts 12:24-13:5a

But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherents. Then after completing their mission Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark. Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them.

In today's reading from the Acts of Apostles we hear of the growth of the early church, as the word of God spread and people chose to follow Jesus and join those assemblies and groups of Christ followers. We hear of places where the church was growing – Jerusalem, Antioch (in modern day Turkey), Seleucia (in modern day Iraq), Cyprus and Salamis (an island near Greece). However, we're told of prophets and teachers, those proclaiming the good news of Christ, the Word of God and helping others to understand and leading them to faith.

Today you're invited to think of those people who teach you and have taught you about faith. Perhaps godparents, parents, fellow congregation members, members of clergy, people you have met face-to-face and those you have encountered their teaching online, in books or other media. You're invited to thank God for these people, the role they have in your faith life and perhaps you might be led to write a note to one of them encouraging them in the role they have played in your journey of faith...

Trust Lessons by William Henry Dawson

Just a tiny, little bird flew down upon the ground,
And with seeming satisfaction swallowed what he found;
Then flew back to the branches of a nearby apple tree,
Seemingly as happy as a little bird could be.
Not a trace of worry could I see upon his face,
Though I knew that he knew not either the time or place:
When or where he'd gather crumbs for his next little meal.
Then I thought I'd give the world if I could only feel
Such simple and abiding trust in my own Father's care,
As little birds are teaching to men everywhere.
Just a tiny rabbit from his fur-lined burrow crept—
Where through the hours of sunshine he had securely slept—
To nibble leaves from clover, and his thirst to slake,
Then back into his burrow another nap to take.
Not a sign of worry could be seen in act or look:
I know that bunny did not learn that trust from any book.
Then why should I not have that trust in my own Father's care,
That little rabbits teach to doubting people everywhere?
A father placed his little child upon an open wall,
And said, "Now jump, my little man—papa won't let you fall:
Jump into papa's arms my boy—I'll surely catch you dear
The child leaped to his father's arms, without a sign of fear.
Why is it when my Father calls to me, I hesitate,
And doubt, and wait, and falter, and talk of unkind fate,
And pray to be excused from all unpleasant work?
Such conduct in a child of mine would brand him as a shirk.
I cannot understand why I don't trust my Father's care,
With that sweet trust that's being taught by children everywhere.

