

PK's Perspectives ... "The Little Red Hen"

It's interesting to me that many of the best known children's fables contain whispers of spiritual truth...which may explain why the really good ones have stood the test of time! Consider the well-known children's fable "The Little Red Hen":

One day as the Little Red Hen was scratching in a field, she found a grain of wheat. "This wheat should be planted," she said. "Who will plant this grain of wheat?" "Not I," said the Duck. "Not I," said the Cat. "Not I," said the Pig.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen. And she did.

Soon the wheat grew to be tall and yellow. "The wheat is ripe," said the Little Red Hen. "Who will cut the wheat?" "Not I," said the Duck. "Not I," said the Cat. "Not I," said the Pig.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen. And she did.

When the wheat was cut, the Little Red Hen said, "Who will thresh the wheat?" "Not I," said the Duck. "Not I," said the Cat. "Not I," said the Pig.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen. And she did.

When the wheat was threshed, the Little Red Hen said, "Who will take this wheat to the mill?" "Not I," said the Duck. "Not I," said the Cat. "Not I," said the Pig.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen. And she did.

She took the wheat to the mill and had it ground into flour. Then she said, "Who will make this flour into bread?" "Not I," said the Duck. "Not I," said the Cat. "Not I," said the Pig.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen. And she did.

She made and baked the bread. Then she said, "Who will eat this bread?" "Oh! I will," said the Duck. "And I will," said the Cat. "And I will," said the Pig.

"Nope!" said the Little Red Hen. "I will do that." And she did.

Now, consider verses 15/16 from Ephesians 4: "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." Or reflect on the tenth verse in chapter three of 2 Thessalonians: "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." Certainly Proverbs 6:9-11 describes the plight of the lazy duck, cat, and pig: "How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man."

I think The Little Red Hen is also very instructive for any church that desires an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit within its fellowship and community. There exists no divine plan for genuine spiritual revival that does not include the hands and feet of the members of the Body of Christ. In Paul's words, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Cor. 3:6). I think the ordering here is important — Paul planted, Apollos watered; the human responsibility to work and to act in obedience to God in this world does not disappear because "God gave the growth." They work side-by-side. Praying for revival does not mean we stop working for the kingdom's sake. We should plan out our ministry and create a culture in which we rely on God's Word and trust in the Gospel alone. Then God gives the growth. Such effort rightly relativizes our work and magnifies God's work: "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (1 Cor. 3:8).

Most church membership rolls are 25% Little Red Hen and 75% "Not I...but I'll show up for the food." Imagine what God might do in a church bursting with Little Red Hens. Grace & peace, love you. PK.