

18. NO LITTLE RED HEN (JOHN 4:35-38) 06/10/12
 FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

AN ATTITUDE I SEE A LOT OF TODAY IS THIS: WE DO NOT WANT TO SOW THE SEED OR HARVEST IT EITHER - WE WANT THE BREAD & WE WANT IT NOW! SUCH IS HUMAN NATURE. PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER THE STORY OF THE LITTLE RED HEN?

THE LITTLE RED HEN LIVED WITH A PIG, A DUCK & A CAT. THE LITTLE RED HEN WORKED VERY HARD TO KEEP HER HOUSE NEAT & TIDY - THE OTHERS NEVER HELPED. THEY MEANT TO HELP BUT WERE JUST TOO LAZY. THE PIG GRUNTED IN THE MUD, THE DUCK SWAM IN THE POND, THE CAT PURRED IN THE SUN. ONE DAY THE HEN FOUND SOME GRAIN OF CORN. "WHO WILL HELP ME PLANT THIS CORN?" SHE ASKED.

"NOT I," GRUNTED THE PIG.

"NOT I," QUACKED THE DUCK.

"NOT I," PURRED THE CAT.

SO THE LITTLE RED HEN SCRATCHED & PLANTED THE GRAIN **ALL BY HERSELF**. SURE NUFF, THE GRAIN GREW & WAS READY FOR HARVEST. "WHO WILL HELP ME HARVEST THE CORN?" ASKED THE LITTLE RED HEN. EACH REPLIED, "NOT I, NOT I, NOT I." SO THE HEN HARVESTED IT HERSELF. NO ONE BUT HER WOULD TAKE IT TO THE MILL FOR GRINDING IT TO FLOUR. "WHO WOULD BAKE THE BREAD NOW THAT IT WAS GROUND?" "NOT I, NOT I, NOT I!"

THE LOVELY SMELL OF THE FRESH BREAD FILLED THE LITTLE HOUSE. **YUMMY!** "WHO IS GOING TO EAT THIS BREAD?" ASKED THE LITTLE RED HEN.

"I WILL," GRUNTED THE PIG.

"I WILL," QUACKED THE DUCK.

"I WILL," PURRED THE CAT.

"OH NO, YOU WON'T," SAID THE LITTLE RED HEN. "I PLANTED THE SEED, GATHERED THE CORN, TOOK IT TO THE MILL, MADE THE BREAD - **ALL BY MYSELF**. I WILL EAT THE BREAD ALL BY MYSELF!" SO THE LITTLE RED HEN ENJOYED THE BREAD TO THE VERY LAST CRUMB - THE PIG, DUCK & CAT GOT NONE! WOW! SOUNDS FAIR TO ME - SUCH IS THE ECONOMY OF THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE.

THE AHA, THE SURPRISE OF JESUS' TEACHING IS THIS - THE PIG, THE DUCK, THE CAT, ALONG WITH THE LITTLE RED HEN WERE

TO ALL FEAST ON THE HARVEST - COME ONE, COME ALL! THE ECONOMY OF THE KINGDOM IS NOT LIKE THAT OF THE WORLD. BEING EAT UP WITH A STRONG WORK ETHIC I PROTEST - MANY HERE WOULD PROTEST - THAT JUST IS NOT FAIR! "WHAT IS GOING ON HERE, JESUS?"

JESUS' MESSAGE IS ONE OF HOPE & PROMISE - IT TOOK, IT TAKES A LOT OF FAITH, COMMITMENT & SACRIFICE TO TURN AWAY FROM YOUR OLD WAYS OF DOING THINGS TO FOLLOW JESUS. AT WHAT STAGE & WHAT AGE SHOULD WE MAKE SUCH LIFE CHANG-ING, ALTERING COURSE ADJUSTMENTS TO FOLLOW JESUS? WHEN IS THE TIMING JUST RIGHT & PERFECT TO COME TO JESUS? BEING A RECOVERING PERFECTIONIST - LIKE MANY OF YOU - WE WANT TO KNOW! IN PLANTING THE SEED - MAKING ALL THE PLANS & THE PREPARATIONS - WE MAY NOT REAP THE BENEFITS & SOMETIMES WE MIGHT ENJOY THE HARVEST FROM THOSE WHO PLANTED IT - WE MAY NOT HAVE DONE THE WORK - SUCH IS THE WAY IT IS IN GOD'S KINGDOM ECONOMY.

THE JEWS WERE PROTESTING THAT THE NEW UPSTART OUT-SIDER CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT PROSPER & BENEFIT FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD PROCLAIMED BY THE LAW & PROPHETS. FOR CENTURIES THE JEWS HAD BEEN FAITHFUL TO GOD'S LAW & WORD. NOW THESE NEWBIES WERE RUSHING IN TO CLAIM THE HARVEST - NOT FAIR, GOD! NOT FAIR! THE FAITHFUL JEWS HAD PLANTED & CULTIVATED THE SEED - LIKE WE HAVE PLANTED & CULTIVATED THIS CHURCH. LET THE JOY & SPLENDOR OF GOD'S GLORY & PRESENCE ABOUND EVEN FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT LABORED!

JESUS SAID, "***THE FIELDS ARE WHITE FOR HARVEST!***" THERE IS A REALLY BIG GROUP OF PEOPLE READY TO BE TOLD ABOUT JESUS. WE MUST LOOK AT SO-CALLED "SINNERS" DIFFERENTLY - THRU THE EYES OF JESUS. THEY ARE NOT TO BE RIDICULED, CON-DEMND, JUDGED & CRITICIZED - NEVER HAS WORKED & WILL NOT WORK TODAY. LOST PEOPLE ARE YEARNING FOR THE ENCOURAGE-MENT & AFFIRMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS. THE HARVEST IS KINGDOM BUILDING TIME - WE MUST MAKE OUR MESSAGE & OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & PROGRAMS USER FRIENDLY FOR THOSE ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN. AS BELIEVERS, WE ARE THE ONES ALREADY HARVESTED & NOW MAKING READY FOR NEW BELIEVERS - IT IS NO LONGER ABOUT US BUT ABOUT MAKING THE GOOD NEWS (THE SEED) YIELD

A HARVEST OF NEW BELIEVERS.

COULD YOU EVER IMAGINE A FARMER LETTING THEIR FARM EQUIPMENT SIT IDLE BECAUSE THEY HAD A BUMPER CROP LAST SEASON? I DON'T THINK SO! MUST BE CONSTANTLY HARVESTING NEW CROPS WITH NEW EQUIPMENT & APPROACHES TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH MODERN FARM TECHNOLOGIES. JESUS MUST ALWAYS BE NEW, VITAL & ON THE CUTTING EDGE FOR HARVESTING NEW AGE GENERATIONS. NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING STAYS THE SAME ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE HARVEST. I PRAISE GOD FOR THE ATTITUDE & STATEMENT, "***THAT'S NOT HOW WE DO THGS AROUND HERE!***" K JUST LOVE IT WHEN I HEAR THAT BECAUSE THAT MEANS WE JUST MIGHT BE UP TO DATE IN OUR HARVESTING OF NEW BELIEVERS. PEOPLE TODAY ARE WIRED & MOTIVATED ENTIRELY DIFFERENTLY - THAT IS NOT GOOD OR BAD BUT ABSOLUTELY TRUE. WE MUST BE ON THE CUTTING EDGE AS CHURCH SO THAT THE HARVEST MAY BE INCREASED!

"***WHITE FOR HARVEST....***" IF YOU ARE THE LEAST BIT SAVVY ABOUT THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD AROUND US - YOU MUST KNOW OUR WORK AS CHURCH IS **NOT DONE YET** - LORD KNOWS WE NEED BIGGER BARNES - BETTER TRAINING - FOR THE HARVEST! WE ARE NOT DOING OUR WORK AS BELIEVERS AS EFFECTIVELY & COM-PLETELY AS WE MIGHT SUPPOSE. WE MUST NEVER, EVER REST OUR EFFORTS ON OUR LAURELS OF THE PAST - LOOK AROUND US - SIN ABOUNDS - LOST PEOPLE ARE DROWNING. LIKE ON THE TITANIC WE ARE NOT FULLY LOADING OUR RESCUE BOATS - WE ARE NOT AS UP TO DATE IN OUR HARVESTING OF SOULS TECHNOLOGY AS WE MUST BECOME! JESUS HAD A GREAT SENSE OF **URGENCY** IN HIS VOICE & WITH HIS SPIRIT AS HE VISUALIZED THE HARVEST BEFORE HIM & BEFORE HIS DISCIPLES! LIKE FARMERS WE HAVE A SHORT WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO BRING IN THE CROPS WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE - THE SEED IS PLANTED, CULTIVATED, BRING IN THE HARVEST! GOD IS ALWAYS WORKING TO PREPARE NEW PEOPLE TO COME TO JESUS - NOT THE OLD TIME RELIGION BUT THE RIGHT NOW TIME RELIGION.

WE MUST NOT BE SHORT SIGHTED IN OUR VISIONING & PLANNING FOR THE HARVEST - GOD WAS & STILL IS DOING A NEW THING THRU JESUS IN REACHING OUT TO THE LOST. WE MUST NEVER BE CONTENT TO DO BUSINESS AS USUAL. THE DINOSAURS OF AGES PAST THOUGHT THEY WERE BIG ENOUGH & STRONG

ENOUGH TO OUT LAST THE CHANGES AROUND THEM. WHERE ARE THE DINOSAURS NOW? FOSSILS & FUELS THEY ARE. NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE HARVESTING CHURCH OF TODAY - WE MUST BE CONTINUOUSLY REINVENTING OUR MISSION & OUR MINISTRIES TO STAY UP WITH & OUT FRONT OF THE CHANGING TIMES. THAT IT WORKS FOR TODAY MAY NOT - PROBABLY WILL NOT BE - GOOD ENOUGH FOR TOMORROW. THE TIMES ARE MORE THAN CHANGING & AT NEW & MORE RAPID PACES. GET YOUR COMBINES READY - IT IS HARVEST TIME! THE HARVEST WAITS ON NO ONE!