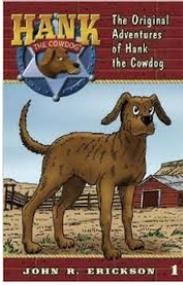


Sermon Notes

Marriage & Mystery

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

July 19, 2015



Introduction: *Hank the Cow Dog*

Many of you are aware of the series of books about a dog named Hank, who considered himself the Head of Ranch Security out on the west Texas ranch owned by High Loper and his wife Sally May. These are the Hank the Cow Dog series of books, and Hank is a dog who takes his responsibilities very seriously. Hank is also seriously concerned about his lazy side kick of a partner, a dog named Drover. What's this have to do with marriage? This sermon is titled "Marriage & Mystery" and this introduction may sound more like mystery than marriage. However, this introduction is influenced by, and borrowed from, the beginning of Nancy Pearcey's fine book, *Saving Leonardo*. This sermon has quite a bit to do with what's happened with Hank.

Why the Change?

What would move or motivate someone, writers and producers, to change the characters, their relationships, and the setting? Why would they move away from presenting a marriage and family setting for a series of children's books?

Because of what marriage is.

Because of what marriage is saying.

Marriage is appointed by the Lord and speaks of the Lord and His work. Marriage proclaims the Gospel; it is about Christ and the Church.

The Wonder of Marriage

The Story of the Bible

The Story of History

Marriage as a Mystery Made Known (Eph. 5:31-32)

This is a quotation from Genesis 2:24, and immediately followed Adam's poetic outburst: "This is now bone of my bone..." What about this "mystery"?

According to the Apostle Paul, marriage is not merely a mystery, it is a *great mystery*. Mystery, in this sense, does not refer to something completely unknown as in a "whodunit" type of story. Mystery, biblically speaking, is not some kind of secret, hidden code which needs to be deciphered.

Rather, mystery is something which is revealed in Christ. Paul speaks of his ministry as one which makes known the "mystery of Christ" (see Col. 1:24-27; 2:1-3; 4:2-3). The coming of Christ sheds light on all things, and this includes marriage. Now that Christ has come, we are seeing more of what the Lord intended all along. The Lord is always about His own testimony, and this is seen in that first marriage (Adam and Eve), through all subsequent marriages, and in our own marriages.

In marriage, our Lord is speaking of Christ and the Church. Your marriage is "gospel-form", and marriage is a vibrantly clear testimony of the Lord. This explains why there has been (and is) such opposition to marriage.

"Today I arranged a marriage. God grant that it may turn out well! It is well to pray, for the devil is hostile to this estate and quickly assails a marriage with poisonous tongues... Satan...is bitterly hostile to this estate" (Luther, *Table Talk*, No. 3538, pp. 224-25).

"It is the devil's custom to hate the works of the Lord. He's hostile to whatever God holds dear—the church, marriage, government" (*Table Talk*, No. 5435, p. 422).

Just how is it that marriage, our marriages, proclaim Christ and the Church?

Marriage displays love for sinners—

Faithfulness in marriage proclaims the true Gospel of a Faithful Savior—

Marriage is a community matter, essentially public—

Chuppah [k hoop-paw] חופה

