

## **SEX AND THE CITY**

**PASTOR JOHN HICKS**

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**IT'S RACY. IT'S TITILLATING. IT'S, FRANKLY, MORE THAN WE WANTED TO KNOW. IT'S SEX AND THE CITY - THE WILDLY POPULAR HBO CREATION CHRONICLING THE SEXUAL MISADVENTURES OF FICTIONAL NEWSPAPER COLUMNIST CARRIE BRADSHAW - PLAYED BY SARAH JESSICA PARKER - AND HER PALS. CARRIE HANGS OUT WITH A GROUP OF ATTRACTIVE BUT LONELY, THIRTY-SOMETHING WOMEN LOOKING FOR SATISFACTION, WOMEN WHO EXPLORE THEIR SEXUALITY IN THE FAST LANE OF NEW YORK CITY.**

**EVEN THOSE OF US WHO HAVE NOT SEEN THE SHOW CAN'T HELP BUT KNOW OF SOME OF WHAT IT IS ABOUT – WE ARE INUNDATED WITH THE PUBLICITY AROUND THE OPENING OF THE SEX AND THE CITY MOVIE, AND EPISODES OF THE SHOW CAN NOW BE SEEN ON REGULAR TV. WHAT WAS ONCE LIMITED SEEING IS NOW COMMON VIEW. EVEN THE YOUNGEST CAN TURN ON THE TELEVISION AND GET AN EYE FULL.**

**AND YET, FOR ALL THE CASUAL ENCOUNTERS AND WILD FORAYS INTO "LIBERATION," A GLIMPSE OF TRADITIONAL VALUES PEEKS THROUGH OCCASIONALLY. AT LEAST ONE EPISODE DEALS WITH A SUBJECT FAMILIAR TO ALL - WHETHER YOU LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY OR PEORIA, IN THE 21ST CENTURY OR IN THE 10TH CENTURY B.C. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS CALL IT NUMBER SEVEN. SEX AND THE CITY COVERED IT IN EPISODE SIX. THE QUESTION IS RAISED, "IS SEXUAL CHEATING LIKE THE PROVERBIAL TREE IN THE FOREST? DOES IT EXIST IF THERE'S NO ONE TO CATCH YOU?" AFTER ALL, PRESIDENTS DO IT. BUSINESS MOGULS DO IT. CHRISTIANS DO IT.**

**SECOND SAMUEL INCLUDES ITS OWN EPISODE SIX OF SEX AND THE CITY. THE CITY IS JERUSALEM. THE CHEATER IS DAVID. BUT THERE THE SIMILARITIES END. CARRIE'S SEXUAL ADVENTURES ARE A LIFESTYLE CHOICE; DAVID'S SEXUAL MISADVENTURE IS A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME DISASTER. CARRIE'S GUILT-FREE; DAVID'S GUILT-LADEN. CARRIE BRAGS; DAVID BEGS. SEX AND THE CITY ATTEMPTS TO LINK SEXUAL PROMISCUITY WITH SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. SECOND SAMUEL LINKS SEXUAL INFIDELITY WITH TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES.**

**LET'S REVIEW THE STORY. IT WAS SPRINGTIME IN JERUSALEM, "THE TIME WHEN KINGS GO OUT TO BATTLE." BUT NOT ALL KINGS. THE KING OF ISRAEL SENT THE TROOPS OUT TO BATTLE WHILE HE LOUNGED ABOUT HIGH ATOP THE PALACE, WHICH AFFORDED HIM A SPECTACULAR VIEW OF THE CITY BELOW. AND THE VIEW WAS,**

SHALL WE SAY, BREATHTAKING - ESPECIALLY WHEN THE PANORAMIC VISTA INCLUDED THE SIGHT OF A GORGEOUS AND QUITE NAKED WOMAN TAKING A BATH.

BATHSHEBA WAS A FETCHING WOMAN AND SEX AND THE CITY WAS THE REASON SHE WAS FETCHED. AND WE QUICKLY LEARN THAT IT WAS NOT SAFE SEX AND THE CITY. BATHSHEBA, MARRIED TO A HITTITE MERCENARY NAMED URIAH, CONCEIVED A CHILD THAT DAY. SINCE URIAH WAS OFF AT WAR AND SHE VENTURED DIRECTLY FROM HER BATH TO DAVID'S BEDROOM, URIAH COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE THE FATHER OF HER BABY. AND YOU THOUGHT ONLY HBO AND TELEVISION REQUIRED PARENTAL DISCRETION!

DAVID, HOPING TO COVER THE INDISCRETION, COMMANDED URIAH TO COME HOME, TAKE A LOAD OFF, SPEND A LITTLE TIME WITH BATHSHEBA ... WINK, WINK. BUT URIAH WAS A MAN OF HONOR, AND AS LONG AS HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS WERE OUT IN THE FIELD, HE WOULD ABSTAIN FROM THE PLEASURES OF CIVILIAN LIFE, INCLUDING RELATIONS WITH HIS WIFE.

SO DAVID OPTED FOR PLAN B. HE SENT URIAH TO THE FRONT LINES, COMMANDED THE TROOPS TO BACK OFF AND SET UP URIAH FOR INEVITABLE SLAUGHTER. NO MORE URIAH. NO MORE ADULTERY. NO MORE PROBLEMS, RIGHT? NOT HARDLY.

LOOK AT DAVID. CHOSEN BY GOD, BLESSED WITH LOOKS AND TALENT AND CHARM. HE KNEW HIMSELF TO BE A MAN OF FAITH. AND YET THIS FAVORED ONE WAS NOT IMMUNE TO THE TEMPTATIONS OF REAL LIFE. CAN WE BLAME IT ON HIS SURROUNDINGS?

IN ANCIENT TIMES AS WELL AS CURRENT TIMES, THE CITY HAS HAD THE REPUTATION FOR LURING OTHERWISE WHOLESOME SOULS INTO A LIFE OF RAW CORRUPTION AND MANIFOLD SIN. BUT IT'S NOT MERELY AN URBAN THING. IT'S A HUMAN THING. AND OUR HUMAN SIN YIELDS PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES NO MATTER WHERE IT OCCURS. THE BIBLE KNOWS IT AND SPEAKS OF IT. WE KNOW IT, TOO, IF WE RERUN IN OUR MINDS THE DARKER EPISODES OF OUR LIVES. ONE SIN LEADS TO ANOTHER SIN AND ANOTHER AND ANOTHER.

ADULTERY IS SIN. A SIN AGAINST GOD, A SIN AGAINST THE PERSON WITH WHOM WE LIVE IN A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP, A SIN AGAINST THE PERSON WITH WHOM WE ARE CHEATING AND A SIN AGAINST OURSELVES.

ONE WOULD THINK THAT THIS MESSAGE IS NOT ONE WE WOULD NEED TO EXPLAIN TO AN AUDIENCE OF GOD-FEARING, FAITH-FILLED FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. BUT IN THIS AGE OF SEX-IN-THE-CITY CULTURE WHICH TENDS TO WINK AT SEXUAL INFIDELITY,

**EVEN CHRISTIANS CAN BEGIN TO BELIEVE THAT COVENANTAL UNFAITHFULNESS OR PROMISCUITY IS NO BIG DEAL.**

**IT IS A BIG DEAL.**