October 18 Worship

Readers- Aaron, Sophie Hopkins

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* Romans 12:2

Opening Scripture- Psalm 96:1-9(page 519)

Opening Chorus- 380-Take My Life and Let it Be(vs 1,4)

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Sing a new song to the Lord!

People: Let the whole earth sing to the Lord!

Leader: Sing to the Lord; bless his name.

People: Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

Leader: Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.

People:Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.

Leader: For great is the Lord!

People: He is worthy of our praise!

Hymn of Praise- 47- Holy, Holy, Holy

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- You know each of us by name, O God, and in your sight we have found favor, yet our minds cannot comprehend the vision of your glory or the vastness of your love. Grant that as we glimpse your greatness, reflected in your many gifts, we may always return to you the praise that is yours alone. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray, saying...*Lord's Prayer...*

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Exodus 33:12-23(page 76)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 22:15-22(page 857)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 49- Come Christians Join to Sing

New Testament Scripture- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10(page 1029)

Message

"Gotcha"

When we read the gospel messages regarding Jesus' ministry, we tend to get a feeling that He was a respected preacher with a popular following all around the region where he taught. The truth is that no matter where He went, there were those whose mission, it seems, was to discredit or downplay whatever He said. There were even those who wanted to physical harm to Jesus. Why was what Jesus said and did such a threat to them? Was His message so detrimental to them that they attempted to harm Him? Who were these people?

While Jesus taught and ministered, he clashed with other Jewish religious groups. The two main Jewish doctrinal sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, continually challenged Christ and his followers. The Pharisees emerged during the Second Temple period, around the second century BC, as a group dedicated to strict adherence to the Torah (the Old Testament's first five books) and the oral traditions developed to support the Mosaic system. They believed in the importance of both the written and oral laws, which they argued had been passed down from Moses. The oral law included Torah interpretations and applications to everyday life, making it more adaptable to contemporary circumstances. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, angels and spirits, and divine providence. They emphasized personal piety, ritual purity, prayer, and charity. Pharisees were generally more popular with the common people due to their teachings on the importance of living a righteous life according to God's commandments, which translated well into the widespread synagogue system throughout the Roman Empire.

The Sadducees were a more aristocratic group. By Jesus' time, they were closely associated with the temple worship in Jerusalem and held significant power within the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. Sadducees accepted only the written Torah

and rejected the oral traditions upheld by the Pharisees. They did not believe in Jewish supernatural elements, the resurrection, angels, spirits, or an afterlife, even if the Old Testament could support it. Their focus was on maintaining the sacrificial system and temple rituals. The Sadducees, being from the wealthy class, had a closer relationship with the Roman authorities who occupied Judea. They sought to maintain their power and influence by cooperating with the Romans and ensuring their stable positions. Many embraced Hellenization, becoming more like Greeks and Romans. They could hold administrative or representative positions in the government. This often made them more resistant to changes that could disrupt the status quo.

Although willing to cooperate with the Romans, the Pharisees were more independent and often critical of the ruling powers. They were more concerned with Jewish everyday life and aimed to make the Law applicable to daily life, which sometimes put them at odds with the Sadducees, especially on religious interpretation and practice. There was a third group that opposed Jesus, the Herodians. The Herodians held political power, and most scholars believe that they were a political party that supported King Herod Antipas, the Roman Empire's ruler over much of the land of the Jews from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. The Herodians favored submitting to the Herods, and therefore to Rome, for political expediency. This support of Herod compromised Jewish independence in the minds of the Pharisees, making it difficult for the Herodians and Pharisees to unite and agree on anything. But one thing did unite them, opposing Jesus. Herod himself wanted Jesus dead, and the Pharisees had already hatched plots against Him, so they joined efforts to achieve their common goal. The first appearance of the Herodians in the public ministry of Jesus is recorded in Mark 3:6, "Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus." Jesus had been doing miracles, which caused some of the people to believe in Him for salvation, and that threatened the power and position of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians. The Herodians again joined with the Pharisees to challenge Jesus, to see if they could trap Jesus in His words by a trick question, to either discredit Him or to get Him to stop preaching.

When Jesus answered their questions in a manner that they could not dispute, they began to plot against Him. Since they were not able to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people, they needed to turn the Roman authorities against Him. If they could trick Jesus into saying or doing something that the Romans would consider treasonous, they would be forced to take action. When they asked the question regarding paying taxes to Rome, they were not expecting His answer. There were other attempts to force Jesus into showing He was against not only Rome, but in violation of religious laws. Each time, Jesus was able to argue His points in such a

way that they could not force Him to break either religious or Roman laws. What they didn't understand was that Jesus was speaking from a different perspective. He was trying to tell them of things that pertained to a spiritual plane rather than a worldly plane.

We often have the same problem with our own understanding of what God wants of us. We are caught between wanting to live up to God's expectations and the realities of living in this world. It is virtually impossible to do what God commands and still get by in our day-to-day experience. Everywhere we look there are temptations that steer us away from what we know is right. We are constantly bombarded by pressures to do this or that and we struggle to follow the right path. Trying to walk the path that God shows us is tough and there are many obstacles placed in our way.

Just remember that when the path seems to wander, all we need to do is call on Jesus to help us along. There are always going to be those who want to play "gotcha" with our faith. They are attempting to sow confusion and make us doubt our faith. Simply understand the difference from what is God's and what is of this world. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- Companion God, we praise you for the grace which is always on the move, from death to life, desolation to hope, famine to feasting. As we travel this road of pain and rejoicing, we give thanks that you go with us as our guardian and friend: that you have taken us by the hand and led us, giving guidance and support. Your presence travels with us: You will give us rest. You have strengthened us for the work of faith, the labor of love, the steadfastness of hope. You have made us imitators of your saints and disciples, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as we have received your Word with joy, even in the midst of our suffering, you have revealed to us your ways. We belong to you and you have shown us your glory. Through our example others have been encouraged and inspired. Your presence travels with us: You will give us rest. Be with all those we have lifted up this morning. Show your love and caring to all who need You and be with us as we go from here into the world. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and god the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 332- God Of Grace And God Of Glory

Benediction-Go now as those who have found favor in the sight of God.Be imitators of Jesus Christ and an example to all of the life of faith. To the world in which you live, give your love and service, and to God, give all that you are and all that you shall be. And may the glory of God's goodness be revealed to you; May the

grace and peace of Jesus Christ take root in you; And may the inspiration of the Holy Spirit fill you with joy. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, In the name of Christ. Amen.