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Deception

Matthew 28:12-14

A meeting of all the religious leaders was called, and they decided to bribe the soldiers. They told the soldier, "You must say Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body! If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you and everything will be all right".

In the aftermath of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection the religious leaders who had convinced Pilate to kill Jesus had a terrible dilemma. If the people came to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead it would confirm that Jesus was who he said he was. No ordinary person had ever been resurrected. None of the great Patriarchs, Prophets, or even Moses had died only to return to life. A resurrected Jesus was unthinkable because it would mean that they had conspired to kill the Messiah, the long awaited Christ.

The empty tomb forced the hand of Pharisees and Sadducees. If they were to try and deflect the power of the resurrection they would have to resort to deception. Somehow they had to squelch this burgeoning new cult of followers that had been drawn to his ministry of reconciliation. Certainly, if the story of his resurrection was to spread, this following would become a major problem for them and their religious control. The Romans had much to gain as well by this deception. They too knew the risks of the reaction the masses would have if they came to believe that Jesus really was the Messiah. It was an unholy alliance conceived in deception and designed to keep the agendas of both the religious establishment and the government in control. They of course, did not understand that the mission of Jesus was not to win religious or political control; it was to bring salvation to all of

humankind. It was a ministry of servanthood not of theocratic control.

In the life of the church today, people outside of the church often question the honesty of the motives of the church. Too many people feel that the church's agenda is not always what they say it is. The church says it is about compassionate ministry to all of God's children but then excludes certain groups of people based on factors like race, economic status, or behavior. This comes across to those outside of the church as inauthentic and deceptive.

People outside of the church often feel that people inside the church are hypocritical. They say that they are Christians but then they live lives that do not reflect the love of Christ. Sadly many people are Sunday morning Christians only that think as long as they are baptized, confirmed, and go to church on occasion they are Christians. They forget that unselfish service to the least, the last and the lost was a central theme of the ministry of Jesus Christ. These people deceive themselves and are perceived as deceptive to those on the outside as well.

If you are looking for an honest, committed relationship with Christ Jesus and his church we invite you to join us. We love, we serve, we worship and we pray. May God bless your journey.