

Just this past Fall... Saturday November 5th, 2011... University of Tennessee freshman Derrick Brodus was lying on the couch at his fraternity... It was Saturday evening... and he was waiting for the Tennessee Volunteers college football game to start at 7 P.M. ... Less than an hour before kickoff... Derrick fumbled for his cell phone as it began to ring. ... Imagine his surprise as the voice on the other end told him the coach was sending a police escort to get him to the stadium immediately.

*"I thought it was a dream,"* Derrick said. *"I was just lying on my couch relaxing... and I answer my phone... and they just tell me that I need to come to the stadium as soon as possible."*

Just minutes before that call... Tennessee backup kicker Chip Rhome pulled a muscle during pregame warm-ups. ... Starting kicker Michael Pardy was already out... injured in Thursday's practice. ... One hour before kickoff... and the Volunteers were out of kickers.

Derrick... a freshman... had tried out as a placekicker when he enrolled at Tennessee... but never made the team. ... But on that Saturday Derrick emerged as the Vols' only option.

Vols coach Derek Dooley told the press... *"I said, 'Let's get an APB out on Brodus. It's a good thing he wasn't [intoxicated]. Get him. Just get him here. Give him a Breathalyzer.' Fortunately he didn't do anything bad."*

Minutes after Derrick hung up his phone... the police escort arrived at the fraternity to rush him to the stadium. ...The team's trainer stretched him in the locker room while he put on his pads and a jersey that didn't even have his name on the back.

Early in the game... Derrick was called into duty... and he quickly made the most of his opportunity. ... Derrick made all three of his extra points... and he kicked a 21-yard field goal at the end of the first half. ...His team won 24-0.

Back in the locker room after the final whistle... the kicker who began the evening lying on the couch with a bag of chips... was celebrated as the hero. ... The team cheered as Coach Dooley gave Derrick the game ball.

.....

You never know when the Lord may call you to get off the couch and employ your gifts for the kingdom of God. ... Are you ready to answer His call...? ... Perhaps you don't see yourself as much of a leader... being able to do much for the Kingdom of God.

Author, Russell Moore recounts a memorable conversation with the evangelical theologian Carl F. H. Henry... Moore was of the mindset that the church was in miserable shape... and so he asked Dr. Henry if he saw any hope... in the coming generation of evangelicals.

Dr. Henry replied:

Of course, there is hope for the next generation of evangelicals. But the leaders of the next generation might not be coming from the current evangelical establishment. They are probably still pagans. Who knew that Saul of Tarsus was to be the great apostle to the Gentiles? Who knew that God would raise up a C. S. Lewis or a

Charles Colson? They were unbelievers who, once saved by the grace of God, were mighty warriors for the faith.

Those comments were enough to lift Russell Moore... as he added:

The next Jonathan Edwards might be the man driving in front of you with the Darwin Fish bumper decal. The next Charles Wesley might be a misogynist, profanity-spewing hip-hop artist right now. The next Billy Graham might be passed out drunk in a fraternity house right now. The next Charles Spurgeon might be making posters for a Gay Pride March right now. The next Mother Teresa might be managing an abortion clinic right now.

It is amazing to think along these lines... and I hope that this inspires you... because God can use **anyone** of us in amazing ways that we never thought was possible! And I believe that He has called many to rise up and be used by Him... but they were either too afraid... or they thought that there was too much in their past... that would prevent them.

I read – what is reported to be – and African proverb. ... Whether it actually is... or not... it makes a good point. *“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try spending the night in a closed room with a mosquito.”* (That should give you a clear perspective... of how motivating “small things” can be!)

The elders and I have been praying that God would raise up more men and women in our church to effective leadership. If you are already in leadership... or God is working in your heart to step up... you will need to exemplify with your life... the proper character of leadership... that Christ

points out in our passage today. As God raises these men and women up... we will **all** need to use these characteristics to **recognize** God's leaders... and to **affirm** them in their leadership.

Now in our passage today... we see Christ pointing to the **deficiencies** of the spiritual leaders of His day. Jesus goes on the **attack**. He has successfully handled the attacks of Pharisees... Scribes... Elders... and Sadducees... But now it is **His** turn to launch an offensive strike. ... So... as we look at the faults Jesus points to in these leaders... we need to make certain they do **not** exist... in any form... among church leadership today.

The religious leaders who Christ points to... **1)** did not have a firm grasp on the Lordship of Jesus Christ... **2)** ignored Scripture that taught contrary to their own desires... **3)** lived an abominable personal lifestyle... and **4)** will receive greater condemnation.

The specific objects of Jesus' counterattack... were the scribes... the Biblical scholars. ... Scribes were easy to recognize... because they wore white linen robes... with long white fringes that reached to their feet. ... They were religious "power dressers" — Kent Hughes calls them "ecclesiastical swans regally gliding among the mudhens of common humanity..."

More than one New Testament scholar says... the common folk were taught to rise respectfully... whenever a scribe passed by... and only tradesmen who happened to be busy at their work... were exempt. ... They were greeted respectfully as "Rabbi" (which means "my great one")... or they were greeted with such titles as "Master" or "Father." ... When the wealthy gave feasts... scribes were considered necessary ornaments to

adorn the meal. ... They were always given a place of honor... reclining to the right or left of the host. ... These teachers of the Law were honored above the elderly... and even above their own parents. ... When they came to the synagogue... they sat in the place of ultimate honor — facing the congregation with their backs against the chest holding the Torah... so all could see their pious visages

### **Luke 20:41-47**

After being grilled by the Jewish leaders... as we have been seeing in our past weeks of passages... before this one that we come to this morning... Jesus turned the tables and asked **them** a question... "*How can they say that Christ is David's son?*" ... Jesus then quoted David from Psalm 110.

#### **Psalm 110:1 (ESV)**

*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."*

The reason Jesus is challenging them about this question is because these folks have not carefully searched out the Scriptures about the coming Messiah. ... They were the spiritual leaders and they were careless about understanding Who the Messiah would be.

Jesus is getting right to the heart of the most important issue of any spiritual leader... or anyone's life... for that matter. ... **What** you believe about Jesus Christ is the most important matter in life... because your eternal destiny... and the manner of live that you live now... will be **determined** by what you believe. ...

Now... for the spiritual leader... **many** people's lives are held in the balance... and the way all ministry is to operate... must have the solid foundation of Who Christ is... and how He relates to the ministry... under its framework ... He is more than just a prophet and teacher... Who the preacher uses to challenge people to love one another... on Sunday mornings.

In the case of the Pharisees and Sadducees... they could not come to an accurate conclusion about the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ. ... Their lust for power... popularity... and comfort **clouded** their thinking.

Please do not be naïve enough to think that this was just a problem with the religious leaders of Christ's day. Leaders of fine upstanding Christian ministries can be just as clouded in their thinking... and by these same influences. ... A lot of ministry today is run by leaders... who because a lust for power... popularity... and comfort... has clouded their thinking... do not have an accurate conclusion about the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is only "Lord"... in **word**... but not in **deed**... and He is certainly not the **head** of many local congregations. (I will say more about this in just a moment...)

It was a commonly held belief that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David... and Jesus made reference to this by the question that He asks: "How can they say that the Christ is the David's son?" ... There was no doubt that the Messiah would be a physical... hereditary descendant of David. There is plenty of Scriptural evidence that shows this. Here is just one:

**Isaiah 9:7 (ESV)**

*Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

Because of this and other passages... there was no question that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David. ... But what Jesus was trying to drive home by this question... was an unfortunate... and very limited... misconception of Messiah... that was prevalent. ... The common view was that the son of David would be a gifted **human** leader... who would bring in a new political kingdom... just like the golden triumphant days of David of old. ... The problem was that the scribes had not read the messianic prophecies with spiritual eyes. ... They were clouded.

The first word LORD is from the word **Yahweh** ... which was the Hebrew name for God the Father. ... The second "Lord" mentioned... is from the Hebrew word **Adonai** ... which means "master." ... "Yahweh said to my Master... sit at my right hand..."

From David's perspective the coming Christ would be his *Lord*. ... David said that he heard God speak to his Anointed One... and tell him to sit at his right hand until his enemies became his footstool... and in it David calls the Messiah "my *Lord*." ... If the Scribes would look at this through unclouded eyes... they would see that the Messiah would be someone greater than David. He would be supra-human.

The issue that Jesus was raising here was... "How can the Messiah be at once David's son and David's Lord?" ... The only explanation is that Messiah must be **both** God and man. ... David himself didn't think the

Messiah would be just one of his descendants. ... Instead... David... under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit... said that the Messiah would be God.

As eternal **God**... the Messiah is David's Lord... but as **man**... He is David's son or descendant. ... No father calls a son his "Lord." ... Sons are subservient to fathers. ... Therefore... if David called his natural... physical descendant (the Messiah) his "*Lord*" ... it could only be because the One to come... would somehow be greater than David was. ... The only way that could happen... was if the Messiah were more than a mere man. ... He would have to be a divine Messiah... that is... He had to be God. ... This is what the Lord was trying to get the Jewish leaders to see.

The Messiah is God. ... Jesus Christ is the Messiah of the world. Do you believe this or not? ... The long white-robed clergy had never thought of this. This was quite a puzzle!

The problem with these teachers of the law... is that they had a "*studied ignorance*" ... of God's Word... and a practiced **inability** to think beyond rabbinical traditions. ... They read Scripture through a *political* lens... that reduced the Messiah to a mere man – the Son of David.

But as I indicated earlier... Church leaders do the very same thing TODAY... ... With a lens that subjectivizes Holy Scripture into "what it means to me"... wrongful church leadership reduce Christ's authority to something far **less** than His being head of the church.

**Colossians 1:18 (ESV)**

*And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*



In the 1980's there was a big push among evangelical churches... that if they wanted to grow... they must develop a specific and clear vision for the church... and to continually keep that vision in front of the members of the congregation... reminding them of it frequently. ... Every cool and cutting edge church in America... and many not-so-cool ministries... had a profound-sounding vision statement. ... Not everyone will agree with me on this... but I think that so much of that ... resulted in nothing more than the pastor's own ego... getting projected into the future for the people to fulfill. To me... it seems more like the pastor saying: "THIS is what **I** want to see happen... Now go out and see if you can make this happen for me..."

Today... we also see the Headship of Christ being reduced ... any time a church leader... pastor... elder...deacon... deaconess... ministry director... make any ministry decision without a strong sense that "This is what Christ wants for us at this time..." ... Too often ego and personality gets involved in the decision making... and it becomes the implementation of the leader's will. Whoever has the most clout... the highest status... or the most charismatic disposition has the final say. ... Whenever a spiritual leader tries to make a decision without recognizing that their own desire... may or may not be Christ's will... the headship of Christ is reduced... feelings get hurt... church fights and politicizing (rallying each other to one's side) becomes commonplace.

There has to be an agreement among all the leaders of a church where Christ is indeed the Head... that whenever a proposal is made... it will be evaluated on the basis of Scriptural principle... and a prayerful sense of what Christ's will is. ... Who the person is that makes the proposal is FAR

FAR less important. And then... if Christ is in His rightful place as head... a ministry leader will not be offended if his/her idea (no matter how good it is) is not adopted... or gets adjusted... in the process of exploring Christ's will together... Every board and every ministry... must be have the constant mindset that it is Christ's will that we are after... and it really doesn't matter NEARLY as much what I want or what anyone else wants. I will merely propose my idea and then we will explore if it is Christ's will or not.

Church Leaders... **1)** must have a firm grasp on the Lordship of Jesus Christ... ... **2)** Church Leaders must be aware of and remove any lens from our eyes that prevent us from seeing what Scripture teaches...

If we have a "strong American values" lens... we need to be careful not to neglect the Scriptures that teach how DEPENDANT we are on each other in the body of Christ... If we have a strong political lens... we have to remove it to see the Scriptures that teach us to love our enemies... and to pray for those who persecute us... If we have an *economic* lens... it might be turning every Scripture into advice for financial well-being. ... A *racial* lens... not too long ago... edited out the Scriptural teachings on ethnic equality in our otherwise fine upstanding churches. ... A *feminist* lens will re-interpret or reject the Scriptures that teach male headship in the home...

(LISTEN!) ... I don't care who you are... We **all** have our lenses! ...And our lenses **blind** us to the glory of God's Word. ... A Christian leader must be asking God to show him/her what lenses we wear... from our upbringing... personal experiences... and improper value system or worldview... So that we are better able to read God's Word for what it is. ...

And we must humbly seek the Holy Spirit's help in bowing to what we read. The responsibility comes doubly upon teachers of the Word.

Among too many Church leaders there is too much "proof-texting" (and by that I mean... lifting a text from its context to prove a doctrine)... and also there is too much "text-proofing" (or - ignoring any text that does not fit our categories). ... There are far too many things I read by Christian authors... where a Scripture reference is cited and pious evangelical themes are plucked that have nothing to do with the text. ... This is wrong! ... And it is happening because we don't even realize that we wear improper lenses. I have them... every imperfect human leader does. Pray for me that God will reveal them to me and that I will remove them as they are shown to me.

A Christian leader must recognize this problem and depend on the Holy Spirit's help to overcome it.

Church Leaders... **1)** must have a firm grasp on the Lordship of Jesus Christ... ... **2)** must be aware of the problem and remove any lens from our eyes that prevent us from seeing what Scripture teaches... **3)** There is a proud lifestyle to be avoided...

### **Luke 20:45-47a**

Rod Mattoon writes: *"The religious leaders were adamant in their attitude of unbelief... rigid in their rebellion... petrified in their pride... hooked in their hypocrisy... and stuck in their selfishness..."*

The scribes were very proud men and loved attention. ... For this reason they would parade in long robes that were usually white in color because it

was the color of purity. ... White robes were to be worn for religious duties... but these men resorted to wearing them in public all the time to make them stick out in the crowd... and gain the attention... and bows... and respectful greetings... of the people. ... White robes were considered as garments of status and authority. ... Dressing in this attire was done to feed the ego and vanity of these men.

Let's stop for a second. ... Church leader:

Do you find yourself entertaining the same attitudes and desires?

Do you insist on titles... positioning... and symbols of authority?

Are you more motivated by service or by receiving attention and adulation?

You will find that whatever you do... to gain the attention of people... it will not satisfy you. ... Certainly aspiring to be in church leadership for these reasons will not bring the fulfillment that is sought.

The scribes craved the seats in the synagogues and banquets that were reserved for the most important people. ... The honored seats in the synagogue were located in front of the box that contained the scrolls. These seats faced the people. ... They also sought the seats that were nearest the host at banquets... because people in these places of honor received special treatment during the meal. ... These men or lawyers were egomaniacs... and thought they were better... and deserved better than anyone else. ... These people were arrogant and cocky and Jesus exposes them.

Why were honor... prestige... and recognition so important to these men?

I believe that inwardly... these men had such a low opinion of themselves... that they felt they needed to exalt themselves... to feel important. ... They tried to fill their emptiness with prestige. ... Their cockiness and arrogance was a camouflage for insecurity. ... Such attempts at promoting themselves left them hollow. ... Repeatedly... God tells us to avoid vanity... pride... and exalting ourselves before others.

Church Leaders... **1)** must have a firm grasp on the Lordship of Jesus Christ... ... **2)** must be aware of the problem and remove any lens from our eyes that prevent us from seeing what Scripture teaches... **3)** There is a proud lifestyle to be avoided... **4)** There is greater condemnation when we stray...

Making a parallel from these Jewish spiritual leaders... Jesus seems to affirm that sin which is committed by those who are in **Christian** leadership... is greater than sin committed by others. If these Scribes were culpable to a more severe condemnation... how much more would the spiritual leader of today...? ... This is true because: 1) those in leadership usually have been Christians for a longer time period and therefore have greater experiences of grace... 2) they not only offend God... but very often the souls of weaker brethren who revere them as Christian leaders.

All this serves to emphasize that the sins of Christian leaders are particularly heinous. ... They have every advantage... but sometimes chose sin. ... Doing so can defile a whole ministry.

Is God calling you to Christian leadership...? I believe that He is... or will be calling many more from among us. ... How will we recognize them...?

These will be the ones who: **1)** Have a firm grasp on the Lordship of Christ in their life and over Christ's church **2)** Are aware and praying for God to remove any improper lens that prevents them from seeing Scripture for what it says **3)** Are not seeking personal attention for themselves through leadership ...and **4)** have a sober awareness that there is a greater condemnation for unrepented sin in their life.

Please join me in praying... as we close... that God will raise more of these leaders from among us.