

# THE LEADER'S “CRUCIFICTION & JOY”

Mark 12:38-40



## GOSPEL CENTERED LEADERS

- ◆ Are Not Entitled
- ◆ Are Not Elite
- ◆ Are Not Exempt

**“Beware of those who parade themselves and love the best seats in the house.”**  
(V. 38, 39)

## Bill Kirk

# THE “CRUCIFIED” LEADER

**Text:** Mark 12:38-40

**Subject:** What the innermost core of a healthy leader looks like.

### Introduction

1. Something in all of us loves to win!
2. People love to watch contests and root for their team to come out on top.
  - ◆ The Super Bowl (a winning touchdown)
  - ◆ The World Series (a winning home run)
  - ◆ The NBA Finals (a winning 3-pointer)
  - ◆ The Stanley Cup (a winning goal)
  - ◆ Boxing matches, chess, Bass Pros, Ninja Warrior, New York Marathon, CrossFit, weight-lifting, swimming, bowling, golf, etc.

**(But in Jesus’ day, there were none of these contests)**

**Question:** So, how did people compete, root for winners and be entertained?

**Answer:** They loved to listen to the rabbis’ debate one another.

- ◆ Intellectual volleys back and forth (A verbal ping-pong match of words)

### So here’s The Context of Mark 12

1. The crowd had gathered around Jesus in the temple courts
2. It was the Tuesday before his death on Friday
3. There were five debates and Jesus came out the winner in all five:
  - ◆ In Mark 11:27 - 12:12, He bested the opponents about His authority question.
  - ◆ In V. 13-17, He won the debate about paying taxes to Caesar.
  - ◆ In V. 18-27, He demolished the Sadducees argument over the widow who married seven brothers.
  - ◆ In v. 28-34, He answered the question about what is the greatest commandment.
  - ◆ In V. 35-37, Jesus finished off the jousting by showing how He was David’s son and also David’s Lord (both human and divine).

**(And the crowd loved it – because Jesus silenced His critics)**

- ◆ He trounced the religious hypocrites (and beat them hands down).
- ◆ He confounded their wisdom with greater wisdom.
- ◆ **And in the middle of all this, Jesus responds to the hearts of these leaders**

(Mark 12:38 records these words)

“As He taught, Jesus said, **“Watch out for the teachers of the law.”**

**Question:** Why did Jesus say **“watch out”** for the religious leaders?

**Question:** What did Jesus say here about leaders in the church?

**Question:** Why did Jesus say in V. 40 “These leaders will be punished severely”?

**Question:** What kind of leader brings glory to God and enjoys what they do?

### **It’s Good News - Bad News**

- ◆ The **bad news** is – here’s how to spot a fake or phony leader in the church world.
- ◆ The **good news** is – here’s how to be a healthy Gospel Centered leader in the church.

Notice the phrase “**Watch out for these**” kind of leaders in V. 38-40

1. “They like to walk around in **flowing robes.**”
2. “They like to be **greeted** in the market places.”
3. “They love the **best seats** in the synagogue.”
4. “They love **places of honor** at banquets.”
5. “They **devour** widow’s houses.”
6. “They show off with **lengthy prayers.**”

**Question:** So what is a crucified leader who leaves their ego at the door?

**Question:** What kind of healthy leader builds a great \_\_\_\_\_ church?  
(Your church name)

**Question:** What are the signs that grace is at work in the heart of the leader?

## **I. The “Flowing Robe” Leader**

**Question:** What’s a “Flowing Robe” leader?

**Answer:** In Jesus’ day, “**flowing robes**” were to attract attention. In our day, its showing how cool and hip we can dress to impress others with our persona and attire.

### **In Other Words**

- ◆ The issue is the intent of the wearer of the clothes.
- ◆ The issue is wanting to convey a mystique as a leader!
- ◆ The issue is – do I want to impress the people I lead – or do I want to develop a hunger for God in those I lead?

### **So what’s the Take-A-Way?**

- ◆ A healthy leader never seeks to attract attention to themselves (like a “flowing robe” leader).

### **In Other Words**

- ◆ A healthy leader (with a crucified ego) is fine with serving – when no one is looking.
- ◆ Or, their service is never tied to the thought of “I wonder who is watching me?”

### **So #1 – To Write Down**

- ◆ A Gospel-centered heart serves with joy regardless of the attention it receives!

## **II. The “Love To Be Greeted” Leader**

**Question:** What’s a “love to be greeted” leader?

**Answer:** In Jesus day, some leaders loved to be greeted in the marketplaces. (Why?)

- ◆ This is not a verse against friendliness (instead)
- ◆ It's a warning about something else.
- ◆ The very title "Rabbi" means "My Great One"

#### **In Other Words**

- ◆ There were spiritual leaders who loved to be recognized and considered more important than other people.
- ◆ These "greeters" in Mark 12 were consumed with self-congratulations.

#### **In Other Words**

- ◆ They were "greeters" for the purpose of gaining recognition.

#### **So, what's the Take-A-Way?**

- ◆ A healthy leader doesn't need to be recognized to be motivated, or feel important.

#### **In Other Words**

- ◆ A healthy leader (with a crucified ego) doesn't need to be "thanked" or "noticed" and thereby is protected from ever feeling underappreciated.

**(#2 – A Gospel Centered Heart needs no recognition to be motivated or validated.)**

### **III. The "Best Seats In The Synagogue" Leader**

**Question:** What's a "Best Seat" Leader?

**Answer:** In Jesus day, some leaders used their gifting and talent to show off.

- ◆ These leaders sought for a following
- ◆ They wanted the "most important seats" so people would "look up" to them.

#### **In Other Words**

- ◆ They yielded to the temptation of drawing people to themselves – instead of pointing people to the unseen God.

1. The "flowing robe" leader wanted attention.
2. The "marketplace greeting" leader wanted recognition.
3. But the "best seat in the synagogue" leader wanted a personal following for themselves.

- ◆ That's why they sat on a bench (facing the congregation) to be envied and admired.  
**(So what's the take-a-way?)**
- ◆ A healthy leader always stewards their gifting for the good of the church – never for a personal following.

#### **In Other Words**

- ◆ It's a John the Baptist spirit of deferring his followers to Jesus.
- ◆ It's the opposite of an Absalom spirit that said "Follow me because I'm smarter than the appointed leader".

**#3 – A Gospel Centered Heart defers to others and seeks no following for itself!**

**IV. The “Place of Honor at Banquets” Leader**

**Question:** What’s a ‘hungry for honor’ at the banquet leader?

**Answer:** In Jesus’ day, the leaders used religion as a prop (to elevate themselves).

- ◆ They “loved places of honor at banquets” because they felt entitled (or thought they deserved it).
- ◆ This leader sought to sit on the right and left of the host at every feast.

**In Other Words**

- ◆ Pride caused the leader to want other people to elevate and serve them.
- ◆ Pride had blinded the leaders of their purpose in leading. **So what’s the take-a-way?**
- ◆ A healthy leader (with a crucified ego) understands that leadership is not about being on top with everyone supporting them, it’s working your way to the bottom to support everyone else.

**In Other Words**

- ◆ I’m not elite (above anyone else) because I’m a sinner only made holy by the work of another.
- ◆ I’m not entitled (to special treatment) because the reality is, I deserve the wrath of God – but have been given grace instead.
- ◆ I’m not exempt (from difficulties in life) because the cross proves there is nothing that God cannot ask of us.

**Jesus Said in Luke 22:26**

“Whoever is chiefest among you is one that serves.”

**#4 – A Gospel Centered Heart never feels cheated and needs no “thank yous” to serve the Lord!**

**V. The “Devourer of Widows Houses” Leader**

**Question:** What’s a “devouring” leader?

**Answer:** In Jesus’ day, some leaders took advantage of other people:

- ◆ Unethical behavior replaced trusted behavior (merchandizing replaced ministry).

**In Other Words**

- ◆ A generous heart was replaced by a greedy heart.
- ◆ What’s in it for you – was replaced with – what’s in it for me.

**In Other Words**

- ◆ Some leaders felt they were being cheated and deserved a little more; therefore took a little more (they shifted from a giver to a taker).

- ◆ Today we call them charlatans – Jesus called them “devourers of widow’s houses”.

**Question:** How many of you know that givers are happier than takers?

**Here’s my discovery:**

1. The more grateful you are, the more generous you are.
2. Takers may eat better but givers will sleep better.
3. Loving never empties the heart and giving never empties the purse!
4. We shovel it out, God shovels it in, and His shovel is bigger than our shovel!
5. Making money is how you make a living, giving it away is how you make a life!

**So #5 – A Gospel Centered Heart is grateful and full of extreme generosity!**

**VI. The “Show Off With Lengthy Prayer” Leader**

**Question:** What’s the “Long Praying” Leader?

**Answer:** In Jesus’ day, some religious leaders would mask their shallowness.

- ◆ They covered up their lack of secret devotion, with public “lengthy prayers.”

**In Other Words**

- ◆ They pretended to be spiritual, advertised their devotion, boasted of their spirituality, and refused to be transparent, humble or poor in spirit.
- ◆ They didn’t pray in secret – but loved to pray in public.

**In Other Words**

- ◆ They prayed to be impressive, to be seen and to be honored.
- ◆ They forgot that the greatest liberty in life is having nothing to prove and no one to impress.
- ◆ Their main concern was, “What do others think of me?”
- ◆ They never learned that humility lessens stress in your life.
- ◆ They forgot what we do in secret is more important than what we do in public.

**#6 – A Gospel Centered Heart never needs a public audience to participate in spiritual disciplines!**

**Fact:** No one can lift up themselves and Jesus at the same time!

**Fact:** To the extent that man is seen – God isn’t.

Nuf Sed!  
Bill Kirk

