

“The Pain and Power of Exile”

Communion Meditation offered by the Rev. Dr. Bob Ballance

October 1, 2017

Lamentations 1:1-2 and Luke 6:18-19

It is good to be with you. While I’ve never had a chance to visit with you, I’ve known you for three decades. I first learned of Binkley when your past pastor, Robert Seymour, came to Mars Hill College to speak. After hearing him, I wanted to know more, and in my research about him and his writing, I learned all about you, and I’ve kept up with what you’ve been up to over the years by way of others who know you well and in more recent years by way of your website.

Meanwhile, the reason I am here today is because your moderator, Linda Vaughn. Linda, thank you for your wonderful hospitality throughout the past six weeks or so. She reached out to Bill Leonard, professor at Wake Forest’s Divinity School, for some names of a few people who might be able to fill in for a Sunday since Marcus’s departure.

Let me also thank your wonderful staff for their attention to detail and for getting to sit with them in their worship planning session. Also, I appreciate the group that met with me this past Tuesday as we looked together at the biblical texts for today—Sermon Shapers, I believe they are called. I enjoyed their humor, their stories and their insights. They are not to be blamed, however, for anything that follows—I take full responsibility.

Regarding today, several weeks ago, in our meeting about this service, Dale, Stephanie and Daniel filled me in on the theme of mental illness for your worship this morning, a focus that has been central in your life together for many years. I commend you in that regard. Statistics, by the way, indicate that in 66% of American congregations, mental illness is mentioned only one time per year, and even then, only in passing (National Alliance for Mental Illness). Mental illness, however, is a facet of human living that has always been very important to me, and an ongoing focus of my ministry, so this has worked out well. I am in fact, over the next eight weeks taking a class at Elon University on meditation and ministry with those who are mentally ill.

Our beginning prayer: Holy One, as we reflect together now, in preparation for this table, give us, yet again, your strength and wisdom, your peace and patience, your generosity and your grace that we, together, might be one in spirit at least for this moment. Amen.

I’m sure you’re already aware of many of these following statistics from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and you have many of these on your church website. Even so, let me call them to mind once again:

- 1 in 5 Americans experiences some form of mental illness.
- 1 in 25 lives with a serious form of mental illness.
- 1 in 100 wrestles with schizophrenia.
- 6 million live with bipolar disorder.
- 17 million live with major depression (that’s 1 in 19).
- 42 million live with some form of anxiety disorder (that’s 1 in 8).
- 26% of those living in homeless shelters suffer with a life-threatening form of mental illness.

46% of all homeless have some form of mental illness or suffer from serious substance abuse and addiction.

20% of those incarcerated have a recent history of mental illness.

(NOTE: All of these most recent statistics are from NAMI.)

Mental health experts at the Mayo Clinic tell us that mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect mood, thinking and behavior. Examples of mental illness include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors. Many of us have mental health concerns from time to time, but those concerns become a manifestation of mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect an individual's ability to function (mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/basics/definition/con).

Given these statistics and descriptions from mental health experts, we have ample evidence that mental illness has had, is having, or will have a major presence in most all of our lives at some point. Mental illness is a part of all of our lives. It affects many of us directly and all of us indirectly.

Let me stop there with the statistics to say that I am not a mental illness expert. I am, though, well acquainted with mental illness from several perspectives:

The first: Mental illness has always been present in my family of origin in a very significant way. My mother, just one of several in our larger family, wrestled with depression all of her life, and during the decade before she died, she became a recluse. She retreated from long-held friendships and significant family relations. Leaving the house and having to interact with anyone became overwhelming. She refused to answer the phone or return calls when messages were left. She would not answer the door, and if you left a voice message to say that you were coming over because you were concerned, she would be gone by the time you arrived.

And while she struggled with depression all her life, this behavior I've just described represented an unusual change from how she had functioned as a young- and middle-aged adult. During those earlier years, she was always the "life of the party." And since she and my dad had a very traditional marriage—dad worked and earned the income and mom took care of things at home—she always did her part extremely well.

By the beginning of her fifth decade, however, she began to hoard things and stopped taking care of essential household tasks. It literally became difficult for anyone to walk through the house because so many things were piled everywhere. And by the time she died, my old room during my growing up years, as well as my brother's, were packed to the ceiling with things she had purchased, but never needed and never used.

Her reclusiveness kept her from being active, which affected her health and well-being in significant ways, and she died abruptly of a heart attack at the beginning of her 63rd year. That's just a brief bit about mental illness in my own family of origin. I could actually talk quite a while about other instances in our family, but I'll stop there.

I could also, I suppose, talk about the mental illness present in parishioners' lives over the years in congregations where I've served as pastor, but to do so would be, at least so it seems to me, a violation of a sacred trust, so I won't.

I suppose I could also talk about the many suicides that have occurred in the lives of parishioners over the years, too. But again, to talk of such intimate details would be a violation of a sacred trust, so I'll just say there have been far too many of those tragedies over the years.

I feel I can, however, talk about my experience in some detail while working with the mentally ill homeless during my time as pastor in downtown Boulder, Colorado, and I feel I can do that because that ministry was public and shared by many people in our congregation. So I don't feel I would be breaking any confidences, and that work was also several states away. I will also change the names of those I mention to protect their identities as completely as possible.

There we had dozens of homeless all around us, especially during the winter months, when being out in the cold was an issue of life and death. It would be in that setting that I would have an intensive and immersive experience regarding the toll mental illness was having on many who were homeless and on their families.

It would be there that I would get to see, at least in some cases, how the right medication, if taken exactly as prescribed, along with the right amount of talk therapy, and the right amount of encouragement, could make the difference between there being pretty good quality of life, or none at all, or even death. It would be there, too, though, that I would realize that in some cases, nothing at all would make any difference whatsoever: no amount of medication, no amount of counseling, care, or attempts at intervention.

In that setting, I would also have my first real experience in dealing with someone with very extreme schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and intense addiction and substance abuse.

Many were victims of sexual abuse or other forms of emotional, verbal or physical abuse. Others were veterans who had been in Vietnam, the Gulf War, or in Afghanistan or Iraq. I came to see that mental illness, while in some cases seemed to be mostly genetic, in many others it was a result of some sort of trauma or suffering: PTSD was rampant in the Boulder homeless community. I came to see how mental illness can sometimes be an intense form of exile, both for the one suffering, but also for the individual's family and circle of friends and caregivers.

So now let me tell you about Barry. Barry was my age. He had been homeless for many, many years. His addiction to alcohol had aged him and left him extremely gaunt. He started attending our worship services. We struck up a conversation and then, over a few months, a friendship. Eventually, I asked the congregation for permission to allow him to live in the building, which broke all the city's rules and that of our insurance carrier as well, but since I agreed to carefully supervise his presence, they agreed. We installed a shower for Barry to use, and we created a small place for him to have a bed and his own possessions, which were very few, mostly the contents of a backpack.

A wealthy member of the congregation offered funding for anything Barry needed, and since his teeth were a mess, I suggested we start there, and we did. Six thousand dollars later, Barry had new teeth, which greatly helped his self esteem.

Eventually, we began paying Barry to do some painting and small repairs, and he was very good at it, at least as long as he was not drinking. But when he was drinking, everything changed. He would disappear for several days, and when he would resurface, he would be thinner still.

But after about six months, Barry seemed unable to handle our embrace and attention, and his drinking became worse. And soon he disappeared, and we never saw him again.

Now let me tell you about my friend, Roberta, and I tell this with great love and affection. My life and ministry were changed by this woman. Roberta was a seventy-something homeless woman who attended our church for several years. As we got to know her, it became obvious to us that she had once lived a very different life. She could quote Shakespeare with grand eloquence and reflect meaningfully and powerfully on any one of his works with great insight. She could play a violin, and she could discuss in depth any piece of classical music and its composer. She spoke French well and knew Latin, too.

She would come and worship with us for spells and seem almost free of her illness, smiling and interacting, talking and laughing, often assisting with refreshments after the service. But from time to time she would disappear for days until we would see her searching for food in trash cans all around downtown. Her appearance at those times would once again be in shambles, she would be unbathed and bundled up on a hot summer day as if she were walking through a blizzard. Most of the time, she would be kind and gracious, but when she was like this, she could be disruptive, angry and confrontational.

From the stories she told, we knew she grew up in Boulder in a family of privilege, and many people there seemed to know her extremely well. She attended the city's schools as a child and teenager and then the university eight blocks away. Her family lived six blocks from the church, and they had tried for years to help Roberta in dramatic and deeply loving ways, but nothing worked, so they, and not without incredible distress over it, totally disowned Roberta, and she knew not ever to call upon them again.

On one occasion, after Roberta had been missing from worship a while, I saw her sitting on a bench at one of the busiest street corners a few blocks from the church. She was surrounded by an ocean of people who were walking and talking, laughing and eating. Yet Roberta was in tears, staring off in the distance.

Come back with me now to Lamentations to the words we heard from the first of five poems, a collection of laments about the destruction of Jerusalem, the great ancient city, as the people of God were overtaken by the Babylonians. This would be the beginning of yet another period of exile that would last a generation.

While working with Roberta, I began looking through scripture for laments and prayers of honesty to God about the struggles life sometimes brings our way. Lamentations came to mind, and I reread these poems about corporate tragedy, and I began to think of how they could be rewritten as a personal lament during our own times of struggle and despair.

I thought of Roberta. when she would be in one of her tough times, and I rewrote the first part of the first poem with her in mind:

How lonely sits this woman now,
 who once was known by all these people.
 How like a widow she has become,
 she, who was great among them all!
 She, who was a princess in these streets,
 has now become a beggar.
²She, who weeps bitterly in the night now,
 with tears on her cheeks;
 in spite of all her friends and family,

she has no one now to comfort her;
for they all have abandoned her;
they have become to her like enemies.

Through Roberta—and others—like my mother, I've seen the tremendous pain *and* power of exile that mental illness can sometimes cause.

Witnessing Roberta's experience was so hard for us all, so hard that we all used to wish often, that we could just heal her; that we could make her well, all of them well. We wished and hoped that we, like Jesus, could listen and help them resolve their pain, to release them from the pain of their exile? Remember the scripture?

They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹ And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them (Luke 6:8-9).

Why couldn't we do what Jesus did with such ease? Healing issued from his being by way of the slightest glance, the lightest touch. And I would often wonder why, and this happened especially at night in the winters when the temperatures were below zero, when we would be feeding dozens, sometimes hundreds of homeless in our church's fellowship hall before they bedded down for the night on cots: Why was healing so far away for so many of the least of these? This wondering often became to me—and to others there, too—an exhausting and perplexing question.

Bless you for listening to these reflections. And if you have experienced the exilic-like pain and power of mental illness personally—or someone you care about has—know that you are not alone. Mental illness is as close to us all as the air we breathe.

It would be while working so closely with the homeless and seeing the depths of mental illness among them all that I would remember again how very instrumental Rosalyn Carter was to me personally regarding how I thought about mental illness. While working as editor of a publication that she and the former president read with great faithfulness, I found myself in a position to have at least some limited interaction with them both. So I asked Mrs. Carter's assistant one day if she could set up a time for me to interview the former first lady about her intense involvement in and advocacy for mental health issues. I knew that issue was extremely important to her and had been since she was a young adult.

Thankfully, her assistance arranged quickly for the interview, and my first question to Mrs. Carter was this: "Why mental health? Why did you choose that focus throughout all these years?"

She took a deep breath as she gathered her thoughts and then said:

I will not rest ... until the day arrives ... that treatment for mental health ... is seen as *just* as important as treatment for diabetes, heart disease and cancer, ... because there is no difference. I have never been able to understand why we focus so much time and money, energy and attention on healing for our physical bodies when these diseases cause a threat, and yet we are so unwilling to do the same when we are mentally ill or for others who are mentally ill? This just makes no sense to me at all."

She also said she would not rest until insurance providers would pay for mental health care on the same par with physical health care.

And it would be because of her focus on that issue, that shortly after assuming office as president, Jimmy Carter created a presidential commission on mental health in 1977. Prior to the formation of that Commission there had never been an entity on the federal level created to deal with the nation's ailing mental health system—and it was in shambles. But in spite of the Carters' intense efforts, not only did that Commission never produce a system designed to deliver more meaningful care for the mentally ill during Carter's presidency, as most of you probably know, Ronald Reagan's administration completely stripped funding for Carter's Commission and all institutional mental health care during the Reagan years.

So it took a while for any progress to be made regarding mental health and wellness, but thankfully there was some progress, at least until recent years. And in that regard, writing just a few months ago for the *Scientific American*, Dr. Edmund Higgins, a psychiatrist with an intense interest in research on where we are in this nation regarding mental health care, made these observations about the last two decades:

The 1990s and 2000s were glorious decades to be a psychiatrist. It seemed as though each year several new, potentially life-changing medications were brought to market. Options became available to tackle long-standing, treatment-resistant disorders.... Stigmas were falling, more people were seeking help than ever before, and just about any psychiatrist could brag about patients who, with the right medication and a little time, returned looking more confident and reporting fewer symptoms.

And this is why I chose the passage from Luke for today. With regard to mental illness, we had a pretty significant decrease in the stigmatization of the disease; we had many new discoveries for treatments; and insurance providers and employers were covering more and more of the costs for mental health treatment. But now listen to the rest of Dr. Higgins' research in this same *Scientific-American* article:

Today, though, the shine has dimmed. The mental health of the nation may have even declined in the past 20 years. This trend is what Thomas Insel, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health, calls one of the "inconvenient truths" of mental illness. Suicide rates per 100,000 people have increased to a 30-year high. Substance abuse, particularly of opiates, has become epidemic. Disability awards for mental disorders have dramatically increased since 1980, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is struggling to keep up with the surge in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The most discouraging assessment came in 2013 from an in-depth analysis by the U.S. Burden of Disease Collaborators. Hundreds of investigators gathered data on 291 diseases and injuries between 1990 and 2010. Combining premature death and disability to calculate the burden of each disease, they found that the toll of mental disorders had grown in the past two decades, even as other serious conditions became more manageable.

Obviously, while much has been accomplished, there is much work left to be done. And it is in and through congregations like yours that work can receive at least some of the attention that is needed for meaningful and useful change. Blessings upon you as you do.

Amen.

We are still the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the history of humankind. And yet the statistics on poverty, health care and mental health care, are increasingly appalling. And it seems that there is now a crushing effort taking shape that will cause our progress in all of these areas, and especially in the area of mental health care, to continue in steep decline.

When I was a pastor in downtown Boulder, Colorado, however, my personal experience or working extensively with the 1,200 homeless there revealed that among the homeless there was rampant schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety disorder and PTSD. Many had been sexually molested or assaulted, suffered horrible abuse as children, or had been in the armed services in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Afghanistan or Iraq. And many suffered from extreme substance abuse.

To make matters worse, in far too many churches across the country, the “prayer list” is mostly made up of those suffering from physical illnesses. Even when it’s public knowledge to the congregation, rarely is anyone listed on the prayer list who is struggling with PTSD, addiction, or any serious mental illness. In many ways, congregations are complicit in the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Sometimes mental illness is the result of genetics. It’s DNA-produced. Yet in many instances, mental illness, especially depression, is generated by circumstances and surroundings. It’s environmental.

In the passage from Lamentations—from the Hebrew Testament—the suffering recounted is from environment. A prosperous, educated, cultured people who had been living in prosperity and peace, have been taken captive abruptly by a hostile power. Their women have been raped, their homes pillaged, their cities burned, their culture decimated. Individual and corporate depression have swallowed their hope and robbed them of purpose, and anyone suffering from genetic mental illness is in all the worse condition. A generation would pass before hope would even begin to return.

Meanwhile, in the passage today from the Christian Testament, hope comes in the form of a man named Jesus. The people he heals have also known suffering by way of environment: Roman occupation, oppressive taxation, and minimal time for anything but work to earn money merely to survive, they have been hopeless for generations again, longing for a deliverer like Moses or a leader like David, and suddenly Jesus appears.

What, though, happens when there is no deliverer? Or when Jesus is too remote? When hope is not present? When the exile seems crushing and lament the only option?

Nassir Ghaemi, professor of psychiatry at Tufts University School of Medicine, has spent a huge portion of his profession researching the link between leadership and mental illness. He’s done this through the study of significant modern historical figures, those whose lives are “public,” meaning there is much that has been written about them and much to observe. He’s done it by observing their ability to lead with power while immersed in an environment teeming with danger, disaster imminent.

In his book, *A First Rate Madness*, he shares a decade of research. One of his key subjects in the volume is Martin Luther King Jr. Ghaemi’s research and observation, at least from his perspective, indicate that King struggled with depression. Few realize, in fact, that King attempted suicide two times in

his young life. Ghaemi concludes, in fact, that King's depression was similar to that of Ghandi's, also brought about by environmental factors.

READ PASSAGE HERE.

Might the same be true of Jesus: in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night of his arrest prior to crucifixion, we're told in Luke's gospel that Jesus' sweat became like "great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44). And not that long before this scene, Jesus' mother and his brothers came for him, because, from what they were hearing, they thought him mentally ill (Mark 3:20 ff).

one out of every When I was pastor of a congregation in downtown Boulder, Colorado, I found myself immersed in the challenges mental illness

How lonely sits the city
 that once was full of people!
 How like a widow she has become,
 she that was great among the nations!
 She that was a princess among the provinces
 has become a vassal.
²She weeps bitterly in the night,
 with tears on her cheeks;
 among all her lovers
 she has no one to comfort her;
 all her friends have dealt treacherously with her,
 they have become her enemies.

Structure [\[edit\]](#)

"Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem" ([Rembrandt](#))

Lamentations consists of five distinct poems, corresponding to its five chapters. The first four are written as [acrostics](#) – chapters 1, 2, and 4 each have 22 verses, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the first lines beginning with the first letter of the alphabet, the second with the second letter, and so on. Chapter 3 has 66 verses, so that each letter begins three lines, and the fifth poem is not acrostic but still has 22 lines.^[5] The purpose or function of this form is unknown.^[6]

Summary [\[edit\]](#)

The book consists of five separate poems. In the first (chapter 1), the city sits as a desolate weeping widow overcome with miseries. In Chapter 2 these miseries are described in connection with national sins and acts of God. Chapter 3 speaks of hope for the people of God: the chastisement would only be for their good; a better day would dawn for them. Chapter 4 laments the ruin and desolation of the city and temple, but traces it to the people's sins. Chapter 5 is a prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people.

Composition[[edit](#)]

Lamentations has traditionally been ascribed to [Jeremiah](#), probably on the grounds of the reference in 2 Chronicles 35:25 to the prophet composing a lament on the death of King [Josiah](#), but there is no reference to Josiah in the book and no reason to connect it to Jeremiah.^[6] The language fits an [Exilic](#) date (586–520 BCE), and the poems probably originated from Judeans who remained in the land.^[7] Scholars are divided over whether they are the work of one or multiple authors.^[7] One clue pointing to multiple authors is that the gender and situation of the first-person witness changes – the narration is feminine in the first and second lamentation, and masculine in the third, while the fourth and fifth are eyewitness reports of Jerusalem's destruction;^[8] conversely, the similarities of style, vocabulary, and theological outlook, as well as the uniform historical setting, are arguments for one author.^[9]

Themes[[edit](#)]

Lamentations combines elements of the *qinah*, a funeral dirge for the loss of the city, and the "communal lament" pleading for the restoration of its people.^[10] It reflects the view, traceable to [Sumerian](#) literature of a thousand years earlier, that the destruction of the holy city was a punishment by God for the communal sin of its people.^[6]

Beginning with the reality of disaster, Lamentations concludes with the bitter possibility that God may have finally rejected Israel (chapter 5:22). Sufferers in the face of grief are not urged to a confidence in the goodness of God; in fact God is accountable for the disaster. The poet acknowledges that this suffering is a just punishment, still God is held to have had choice over whether to act in this way and at this time. Hope arises from a recollection of God's past goodness, but although this justifies a cry to God to act in deliverance, there is no guarantee that he will. Repentance will not persuade God to be gracious, since he is free to give or withhold grace as he chooses. In the end, the possibility is that God has finally rejected his people and may not again deliver them: if God is predictable, then God is just a tool of humans. Nevertheless, it also affirms confidence that the mercies of Yahweh (the God of Israel) never end, but are new every morning (3:22–33).

Lamentations 1:1-2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

The Deserted City

1 How lonely sits the city
 that once was full of people!
 How like a widow she has become,
 she that was great among the nations!
 She that was a princess among the provinces
 has become a vassal.

2 She weeps bitterly in the night,
 with tears on her cheeks;
 among all her lovers
 she has no one to comfort her;
 all her friends have dealt treacherously with her,
 they have become her enemies.

Luke 6:18-19 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹⁸They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Luke 6 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**The Question about the Sabbath**

6 One sabbath while Jesus was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. ²But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" ³Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?" ⁵Then he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

The Man with a Withered Hand

⁶On another sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. ⁷The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. ⁸Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come and stand here." He got up and stood there. ⁹Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" ¹⁰After looking around at all of them, he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles

¹²Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. ¹³And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: ¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Jesus Teaches and Heals

¹⁷ He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹ And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Blessings and Woes

²⁰ Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Love for Enemies

²⁷ “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

³⁹ He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴² Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

A Tree and Its Fruit

⁴³ "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

The Two Foundations

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. ⁴⁸ That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house."

Footnotes:

- a. [Luke 6:1](#) Other ancient authorities read *On the second first sabbath*
- b. [Luke 6:1](#) Gk *he*
- c. [Luke 6:2](#) Other ancient authorities add *to do*
- d. [Luke 6:22](#) Gk *cast out your name as evil*
- e. [Luke 6:35](#) Other ancient authorities read *despairing of no one*
- f. [Luke 6:41](#) Gk *brother's*
- g. [Luke 6:42](#) Gk *brother*
- h. [Luke 6:42](#) Gk *brother*
- i. [Luke 6:42](#) Gk *brother's*
- j. [Luke 6:48](#) Other ancient authorities read *founded upon the rock*
- k. **JUDAEA**
- l. joo-de'-a, ju-de'-a (Ioudaia):
- m. The "land of the Jews," the Greco-Roman equivalent of Judah. As most of the Israelites returning from the captivity belonged to the tribe of Judah, they came to be called Jews and their land Judea. In Tobit 1:18 the name is applied to the old kingdom of Judah. For a general description of the physical geography and early history of this region see [JUDAH](#). The limits of this district varied greatly, extending as the Jewish population increased, but in many periods with very indefinite boundaries.
- n. Under the Persian empire, Judea (or Judah) was a district administered by a governor who, like Zerubbabel ([Haggai 1:14](#); [2:2](#)), was probably usually a Jew. Even as late as Judas Maccabeus, Hebron and its surroundings--the very heart of old Judah was under the domination of the Edomites, whom, however, Judas conquered (1 Macc 5:65); in the time of his brother Jonathan (145 BC), three tetrarchies of Samaria, Aphaerema, Lydda and Ramathaim, were added to Judea (1 Macc 10:30,38; 11:34); in some passages it is referred to at this time as the "land of Judah" (Iouda) (1 Macc 10:30,33,37). The land was then roughly limited by what may be called the "natural boundaries of Judah" (see [JUDAH](#)).
- o. Strabo (xvi.11, 21) extends the name Judea to include practically all Palestine; as does Lu (4:44 m; 23:5; [Acts 2:9](#); [10:37](#), etc.). In several New Testament references ([Matthew 4:25](#); [Mark 1:5](#); [3:7](#); [Luke 5:17](#); [John 3:22](#); [Acts 1:8](#)), Judea is contrasted with its capital Jerusalem. The country bordering on the shores of the Dead Sea for some miles inland was known as the Wilderness of Judea (see [JUDAH](#); [JESHIMON](#)) ([Matthew 3:1](#)), or "the wilderness" ([Mark 1:4](#); [Luke 3:2](#)); here John the Baptist appeared as a preacher. According to [Matthew 19:1](#) (but compare [Mark 10:1](#), where the Revised Version (British and American) has "Judaea and beyond Jordan"), some cities beyond Jordan belonged to Judea. That this was an actual fact we know from Ptolemy (v.16,9) and Josephus (Ant., XII, iv, 11).
- p. According to Josephus (BJ, III, iii, 5), Judea extended from Anuath-Borkaeos (i.e. Khan Berkit near Khan es Saweh, close to the most northerly frontier of Judah as described in [JUDAH](#) (which see)) to the village Jordan, possibly Tell `Arad, near Arabia in the South. Its breadth was from Joppa in the West to Jordan in the East. The seacoast also as far north as Ptolemais (`Akka), except Jamnia, Joppa and (according to the Talm) Caesarea, belonged to this province.

- q. After the death of Herod the Great, Archelaus received Judea, Samaria and Idumea as his ethnarchy, but on his deposition Judea was absorbed into the Roman province of Syria, the procurator of which lived at Caesarea.
- r. Of later history it is only necessary to notice that in the 5th century Judea became part of the land known as Palaestina Prima; that at the time of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem (12th century) all the hill country of Judah from Sinjil to Tekoa was the royal domain, while the southern section to Beersheba belonged to the Seigneur de Abraham (i.e. of Hebron); and lastly that a district, the rough equivalent of the kingdom of Judah, though larger, and of the Judea described by Josephus (BJ, III, iii, 5), though slightly smaller, forms today the Mutaserraflic of el Kuds, an administrative area where more than in any spot in the world the problem of the "land of the Jews" is today increasingly acute.
- s. E. W. G. Masterman