

Luke 15:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

Analysis

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country (συναγαγὼν πάντα ὁ νεώτερος υἱὸς ἀπεδήμησεν εἰς χώραν μακράν, synagagōn panta ho neōteros huios apedēmēsen eis chōran makran)—The phrase 'not many days' shows impatience; he converts assets to cash immediately. Apodēmeō (ἀποδημέω, to travel abroad) indicates intentional distance. The 'far country' (χώραν μακράν, chōran makran) is geographical and spiritual—Gentile territory where Jewish law doesn't govern.

And there wasted his substance with riotous living (ἐσκόρπισεν τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ ζῶν ἀσώτως, eskorpisen tēn ousian autou zōn asōtōs)—The verb skorpizō (σκορπίζω, to scatter, squander) implies careless dissipation. Asōtōs (ἀσώτως, dissolutely, wastefully) suggests debauchery and excess. The elder brother later specifies prostitutes (v.30). The son sought freedom but found slavery; pursued pleasure but harvested emptiness. Sin always promises more than it delivers.

Historical Context

Jewish sons leaving Palestine for Gentile lands typically sought commercial opportunities or escaped family obligations. Converting inheritance to portable wealth and traveling abroad was feasible but risky—bandits, dishonest business partners, and foreign legal systems posed dangers. 'Riotous living' in Gentile territory would include sexual immorality, idol feasts, and ritual uncleanness—

complete abandonment of covenant identity. For Jesus's audience, the son's journey represented apostasy, not mere geographical relocation.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What 'far country' are you tempted to flee to in order to escape God's presence and pursue autonomy?
2. How has the pursuit of freedom from God's authority paradoxically led to slavery to sin, appetite, or addiction in your experience?
3. In what ways does sin's promise of satisfaction always prove to be scattering and waste rather than genuine fulfillment?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------|
| καὶ | μετ' | οὐ | πολλὰς | ἡμέρας | συναγαγὼν | ἅπαντα | ὁ |
| And | after | not | many | days | gathered | all | G3588 |
| G2532 | G3326 | G3756 | G4183 | G2250 | G4863 | G537 | |
| νεώτερος | υἱὸς | ἀπεδήμησεν | εἰς | χώραν | μακράν | καὶ | |
| the younger | son | and took his journey | into | country | a far | And | |
| G3501 | G5207 | G589 | G1519 | G5561 | G3117 | G2532 | |
| ἐκεῖ | διεσκόρπισεν | τὴν | οὐσίαν | αὐτοῦ | ζῶν | ἀσώτως | |
| there | wasted | G3588 | substance | G846 | living | with riotous | |
| G1563 | G1287 | | G3776 | | G2198 | G811 | |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 21:17 (Parallel theme): He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

Proverbs 29:3 (Parallel theme): Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

Jeremiah 2:5 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

Proverbs 28:7 (Parallel theme): Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

Luke 16:1 (Parallel theme): And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luke 16:19 (Parallel theme): There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Luke 15:30 (Parallel theme): But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.