

Luke 15:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

Analysis

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat (καὶ ἐπεθύμει χορτασθῆναι ἐκ τῶν κερατίων ὧν ἤσθιον οἱ χοῖροι, kai epethymeï chortasthēnai ek tōn keratiōn hōn ēsthion hoi choiroi)—The verb epithymeō (ἐπιθυμέω, to desire strongly) indicates intense craving. He 'desired to be satisfied' (chortasthēnai, χορτασθῆναι) with carob pods (keratia, κεράτια), animal fodder. This images humanity's spiritual starvation: attempting to satisfy soul-hunger with what is fit only for beasts.

And no man gave unto him (καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδίδου αὐτῷ, kai oudeis edidou autō)—The imperfect tense 'was giving' shows continuous refusal. The world that seemed so attractive during rebellion now withholds even survival-level charity. This is the bankruptcy of the far country: it takes everything and gives nothing. Yet this destitution becomes the crisis of grace—only when cisterns fail do we return to the fountain (Jeremiah 2:13).

Historical Context

Carob pods (κεράτια, keratia) were edible but considered animal food, eaten by humans only in extreme famine. The long brown pods from the carob tree provided some nutrition but were fodder, not food. That no one gave him even these scraps shows his complete social abandonment. In Mediterranean culture, hospitality was sacred; refusing to feed even a destitute stranger was shocking. The son had

become less than human in his new society's eyes—not even worthy of animal feed. This is sin's destination.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'husks'—inadequate substitutes for God—are you attempting to satisfy your soul with?
2. How does the experience of 'no one gave to him' reveal the bankruptcy of seeking life, meaning, and satisfaction apart from the Father?
3. In what ways is your current spiritual hunger actually God's severe mercy to make you dissatisfied with anything less than Himself?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐπεθύμει	γεμίσαι	τὴν	κοιλίαν	αὐτῷ	ἀπὸ	τῶν
And	he would fain	have filled	G3588	belly	unto him	with	G3588
G2532	G1937	G1072		G2836	G846	G575	

κερατίων	ὧν	ἤσθιον	οἱ	χοῖροι	καὶ	οὐδεὶς	ἐδίδου
the husks	that	did eat	G3588	the swine	And	no man	gave
G2769	G3739	G2068		G5519	G2532	G3762	G1325

αὐτῷ
unto him
G846

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 44:20 (Parallel theme): He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Psalms 142:4 (Parallel theme): I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

Lamentations 4:5 (Parallel theme): They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills.

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