

THE PRODIGAL SON

"A man had two sons. One day, the younger one went up to his father and said, 'Father, give me my share of your wealth now!' The father sadly turned over the son's portion of land and money to him. The son's eyes glinted at the sight of all that gold, and soon he was on his way, leaving his family's land without a backward glance.

"He travelled far with his gold, and spent it without a second thought. But when the gold was gone, the wild living and the wine stopped. His new friends sighed when they saw how thin his money bag was, and they slipped away. And just as he was down to his last few coins, the harvest failed. There was nothing to eat. He waited for work with other landless people in the market, and was hired by a pig farmer. His hollow stomach ached at the sight of the bean pods in the swill. He began to pick them greedily out of the pig's trough, but then stopped, straightening himself up.

"'My father always treats his workers well – they're never hungry. And here I am eating with pigs!' he said to himself. Then and there he decided to back home. 'I'll own up to how bad I've been – wronging my father and my God – and ask of my father to take me on as a servant. I can't ask to come back as his son.' So he walked away from the pigs and began the long, penniless trudge home. The nearer he got, the more anxious he became. Would his father even want to see him?

"He did not know that every day his father had been watching the road home, waiting, hoping, longing for his return. When the father saw the thin, ragged figure of his son in the distance, he came running, opening his arms wide. The son began his prepared speech: 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I'm not worthy to be your son.'

"But the father was laughing, tears rolling down his cheeks. He called over his shoulder to the servants scurrying to keep up. 'Go back, bring him the best clothes, get him some good sandals, and prepare a feast. It's my son! I thought he was dead, but he's alive. He was lost, but now he's found!'

"Now the older son heard the music and laughter as he made his way home from the fields. 'Your brother's back!' the servants smiled, but the older brother's hands tightened into fists. He would not go in. His father came out to see him.

"'I've slaved for you for years, and you never threw me a party,' the elder brother growled. 'Now this good-for-nothing son of yours is back, and look – you've roasted him the prize calf!'

"'Son, everything I have is yours, has always been yours. But we have to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and now he's alive; he was lost and now he's found.'"

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J	E	E	E	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C	N	U
E	S	R	G	F	A	M	I	N	E	I	E	E	S
N	O	A	E	D	A	R	R	N	I	B	N	I	G
C	M	H	N	A	S	H	O	H	R	J	N	S	O
S	A	S	R	N	I	I	B	R	E	N	R	H	A
O	H	L	H	C	E	O	E	S	E	E	R	B	N
N	E	U	F	I	N	N	G	R	N	G	J	R	M
S	O	R	N	N	R	D	S	M	U	A	O	U	E
L	O	S	T	G	R	G	O	S	S	B	S	S	C
G	N	I	R	B	E	N	R	G	E	I	S	R	U
F	O	U	N	D	E	R	I	L	C	N	G	A	N
I	O	S	E	Y	S	I	A	O	E	M	I	S	N
R	U	S	E	C	I	O	J	E	R	L	P	E	O
G	I	S	I	A	A	R	U	U	O	E	F	E	N

SINNERS	SHARE	RING	CELEBRATE
FAMINE	HUNGER	MUSIC	REJOICE
SONS	ROBE	DANCING	FOUND
PIGS	MONEY	CALF	LOST