

THE PRODIGAL SON      Luke 15:11-31

“Jesus said to them: A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that is coming to me.’ So the father divided up the property. Some days later, this younger son collected all his belongings and went off to a distant land where he squandered his money on dissolute living. After he had spent everything, a great famine broke out in that country, and he was in dire need. So he attached himself to one of the propertied class of the place, who sent him to his farm to take care of the pigs. He longed to fill his belly with the husks that were fodder for the pigs, but no one made a move to give him anything. Coming to his senses at last, he said, ‘How many hired hands at my father’s place have more than enough to eat, while here am I starving! I will break away and return to my father, and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Treat me like one of your hired hands.’

With that, he set off to his father’s house. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was deeply moved. He ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. ‘Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.’

The father said to his servants, ‘Quick, bring out the finest robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Take the fatted calf and kill it. Let us eat and celebrate because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.’ Then the celebration began.

Meanwhile, the elder son was out on the land. As he neared the house on the way home, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked him the reason for the dancing and the music. The servant answered, ‘Your brother is home, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has come back in good health.’

The son grew angry at this and would not go in. But the father came out and began to plead with him. He said to his father in reply, ‘For years now I have slaved for you. I never disobeyed one of your orders, yet you never gave me so much as a kid goat to celebrate with my friends. Then, when this son of yours returns after having gone through your property with loose women, you kill the fatted calf for him.’

‘My son’, replied the father, ‘you are with me always, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice! This brother of yours was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.’”