

## THE TWO SONS

Tax collectors and other notorious people often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that Jesus was associating with sinners!

Jesus told them this story: A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, "I want my share of your estate now before you die." So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

A few days later the younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land.

As he had money to spend, he made many new friends.

He wasted his money on selfish living ...

...and on wild living.

About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve.

His so called friends no longer wanted to know him.

He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed the pigs. He was so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

He thought to himself, "At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!"

I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."

So he returned home to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

He sobbed, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son."

But his father said to the servants, "Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found."

Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house. When he found out his brother had returned and his arrival was being celebrated, he was very angry.

His father begged him to join the celebrations, but he replied, "All these years I've worked hard for you.

"And in all that time you have never given me a feast with my friends. Yet when my brother comes back after squandering money you kill the fattened calf."

His father said to him, "You have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!"