

The [parable](#) begins with a man who had two sons, and the younger of them asks his father to give him his share of the estate. The implication is the son could not wait for his father's death for his inheritance, he wanted it immediately. The father agrees and divides his estate between both sons.

Upon receiving his portion of the inheritance, the younger son travels to a distant country, where he indulges in extravagant living. It's implied that he drinks, gambles during this time. However, it isn't long before he has exhausted all his money, and immediately thereafter, a [famine](#) strikes the land; leaving him desperately poor. He is forced to take work as a [swineherd](#) where he reaches the point of envying the food of the pigs he is tending to. At this time, he finally comes to his senses.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

This implies the father was hopefully watching for the son's return.

The son starts his rehearsed speech, admitting his sins, and declaring himself unworthy of being his father's son, but in most versions of Luke, the son does not even finish, before his father accepts him back wholeheartedly without hesitation as the father calls for his servants to dress the son in the finest robe available, get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet, and to slaughter the "[fatted calf](#)" for a celebratory meal.

The older son, who was at work in the fields, hears the sound of celebration, and is told by a fellow servant about the return of his younger brother. He is not impressed, and becomes angry. He also has a speech for his father.

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

The parable concludes with the father explaining that while the older son has always been present, and everything the father owns also belongs to the older son, because the younger son had returned, in a sense, from the dead, celebration was necessary.

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.