

The Pharisees and scribes were grumbling about Jesus. * They didn't like the way he welcomed sinners and ate with them. * So Jesus told them this story:

'A man had two sons. The younger son said, "Father, I want my share of the property right now." So the father divided the property up. Before long the younger son took his share, packed his bags and left for a faraway country.

He had a great time spending his money until it was all gone. Then a famine hit the land. Nothing grew and there was no food. Poor and hungry, the young man took a job feeding pigs in a field. **He was so hungry, he could have eaten the pigs' food!** But no one gave him anything.

'As he sat there, he realised, "My father's workers have enough food to eat. Here I am dying of hunger. I must go home. I will tell my father that I have done wrong before him and before God. **I will say that I am not good enough to be called his son any more.** He should just treat me like one of his workers."

'So the young man set off home. **But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, ran to him and hugged**

him. The son told his father everything he had planned to say, but his father shouted to the servants, "Bring out the best robes, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Kill the fatted calf and we shall celebrate!" * And the party began.

'Now the elder son was working in the field and heard music and dancing. "What is happening?" he asked one of the workers. He replied, "Your brother has come home and your father is holding a party." **The elder brother was very angry.** His father came to speak to him, but the son shouted, "I have worked hard! I have never disobeyed you. You never threw a party for me. He comes back, he's wasted all your money, and you kill the fatted calf for him!" His father answered, "My son, you are always with me, everything I have is yours. **But we are celebrating because I thought your brother was dead, and he's alive. He was lost but now he's found!**"

Luke 15.1-3,11b-32

* See *Share the Word*.