

## Live

*“for this brother of your was dead, and has begun to live”*

**Luke 15:32**

**Live**—Here is the Greek verb *zao* (to live) coupled with *ana* (again). The translation in English misses the important point. This prodigal son has not suddenly “begun to live” because he has returned to the Father’s home. He was dead! Now he is living again.

The Father offers this explanation to the son who stayed obedient. The obedient son complains that he does not get the same celebration and honor as the son who was rebellious and left. The Father carefully explains that he has no lack of love for the obedient son. All of the Father’s possession are the son’s. But now is a time to celebrate. The one that was dead has come back to life. The one that was lost is found.

We often think that the Parable of the Prodigal Son is about the rebellious attitude and wanton disregard of the younger son. We imagine that the parable is about how wonderful it is to return to the Father. But this view misses two important elements. First, the parable is really about the character of the Father. He never gives up on us. He waits for time to run its course, always hoping that the younger son will come to his senses and return. This parable teaches the unfathomable patience of God.

Secondly, this parable is about the older brother, the one who is angry because he lives his life based on “what’s fair.” He argues that he deserves more because he has always been obedient. He does not see who his Father really is. He thinks of life as a system of just rewards, not as a celebration of the Father’s patience.

Too many times we play the role of the older brother. We see God’s blessings showered on rebellious souls who are broken in repentance and we say, “Wait, I’ve been faithful for years. Why don’t I get blessed like that? Why do I have to suffer through life when that one just waltzes in and heaven’s doors are flung wide open?” Have we forgotten who God is? He is the Father of infinite longing, waiting for each one of His children to return. His heart is poured out for those who have lost themselves in life’s maze. He invites us to celebrate with Him every time one comes home. Once we were wanderers too.