[Narrator] Many people asked Jesus about God's love. They wanted to know if God loved people who worked hard to follow the rules more than those than people who didn't. Often he responded by telling a story, trying to show them and us how much God loves us, and that God's love is forever. Today, we are going to hear one of these stories.

In our story are Jesus, a teacher of the law, a father and his younger son, another farmer who lives in a country far away, a lot of pigs, and a group of people who will be playing many roles. When our story starts, Jesus is talking with a teacher of the law.

[Scene] Jesus and teacher are talking

[Teacher] Mr. Jesus, why do you spend so much time with those tax collectors and soldiers, and other riff raff like that. Doesn't it take up the time that you could spend with people like me who are trying to do what God wants us to do?

[Jesus] I spend time with lots of people. God loves us all, and God's love is forever for everyone and I want to let everyone know.

[Teacher] Well, maybe that's true but wouldn't it just make more sense for you to spend your time with people who really know how important God's love is and appreciate it?

[Jesus] Hmmm, Let me tell you a story.

[Scene] Jesus and teacher walk off so that they are not in the center any longer but they are not totally gone.

[Narrator] This is the story that Jesus told the teacher of the law. Once upon a time, there was a wealthy farmer. Well this farmer had two sons.

[Scene] Farmer and son walk on

[Son] Dad, I don't want to be a farmer. I want to get out of here. Give me what I'd get when you die right now so that I can go.

[Narrator] Well the farmer thought about it and decided to take a risk because he loved his son very much and so.

[Scene] Father goes and picks up bag of money.

[Father] Here my Son, this is what you would get from my inheritance if I were to die right now.

[Scene] Father leaves

 [son] Wow, this is enough money to keep me going for ever. I'm out of here.

[Scene] walks over to group of people on the side.

[Son] Hey guys, do you want to be my friend?

[Scene] They walk back into the center with son handing out money. Everyone takes money until the bag is empty. Then group drifts back to where they were.

[Son] I thought that if I shared my money with them that they would be my friend for ever and share their money with me but they didn't. Now my money is all gone. What am I going to do? I know, I've worked on a farm all my life. I'll get a job on a farm. I won't live the way I thought I would but I'll be alright.

[Scene] Group returns. One of them is carrying a bucket or basket or some kind of large container. The group also has a farmer who has joined it.

[Farmer] So you'd like to work on my farm with my workers here.

[Son] Yes sir.

[Farmer] Well, the only job I have is feeding the pigs. How does that sound?

[Son] I, ah, well sir, I'm Jewish and my people don't have anything to do with pigs.

[Farmer] Laughs, well, do you want the job or not.

[Son] Alright, I'll take it.

[Farmer] And you make sure that the pigs get all of the food in this bucket. You're back on the road if we catch you eating anything other than the food we give you. After you've worked a day or two and earned it you can eat then.

[Scene] Farmer and followers leave.

[Narrator] So off the son went to feed the pigs.

[Scene] The pigs are everyone. Encourage them to make pig noises for a moment.

[Son] My father never treated anyone like that man just treated me. My father was always fare, and kind, and he always wanted to help people. You know, I'd be better off working for him as a laborer. I'm going to go home and ask if he'll let me work for him as a worker. I've totally lost my chance to be his son, but maybe he'll let me work for him and my brother.

[Scene] Son takes container to the side and leaves it, he walks off and around.

[Narrator] So the son started the long walk home. As he walked he practiced what he would say to his father.

[Son] I'm not worthy of being your son and I know it. Please let me work for you. I promise to work very hard and to never make any trouble again. I'm so sorry that I have caused you so much hurt.

[Scene] Father and workers walk on. Father looks out toward son.

[Father] Hey!!! That's my son coming.

[scene] father Rushes off and hugs son.

[Son] Father, could I please come and work for you. I'm not worthy of...

[Father] nonsense!! you are my son.

[scene] Looks at one of the followers.

[Father] Call our favorite pizza place, tell them to bring all of the best food that they have over here, no call all of the places we like and get them over here. We're going to have a huge party because my son is home and safe.

[Scene] Jesus and teacher return.

[Jesus] God's love is like that of the farmer toward his son, but even more. God's love is so strong that even when we do things that hurt ourselves or others, we will be welcomed back and loved. Even if we think we've been so bad that nobody could ever love us again, God does love us because God Loves us forever and that's why I want everyone, especially people who may believe that God doesn't love them to know that they are wrong because God does love them, God loves them forever.

[Narrator]This is just one of the stories that Jesus told people about God's love. He wants us to imagine how incredible it is to be confident that God's love for us is forever, and because God's love is forever, we can love others like God loves us.