

Many years ago, there were two brothers. Though they lived together, they were very different. As is common in Chinese culture, we will refer to them as Elder Brother and Younger Brother.

Younger Brother was wild and willful. His primary interests seemed to be only pleasure and plunder. Elder Brother, on the other hand, was a respectable and responsible man. He was very distressed by Younger Brother's behavior and often warned Younger Brother that he was headed for serious trouble. Elder Brother truly loved Younger Brother—and the more Younger Brother laughed at Elder Brother, the more Elder Brother prayed to God for him.

Very late one evening, Younger Brother rushed into their house, calling out for Elder Brother and exclaiming, "Help me! Hide me! I have killed a man! The police are after me! The blood..." Oh yes, the blood! It was on his clothes. His guilt was plain. What could he do? Where or how could he hide?

Elder Brother responded, "Quick! Change clothes with me." Younger Brother quickly complied. The police came. There stood Elder Brother in the bloody clothes. He said nothing and did not resist. The police assumed that they had caught the criminal.

Trials were shorter in those days. Since Elder Brother said nothing more than what was required—and said nothing to defend himself—his trial was soon over, and the judge condemned him to death.

However, the evening before his scheduled execution, he asked his jailer to provide him with the material to write a letter and to promise to deliver that letter after his death. Something about Elder Brother appealed to the jailer. He agreed to provide the necessary materials, and he promised to arrange for the letter to be delivered after Elder Brother's death.

The next morning, Elder Brother paid the penalty for Younger Brother's crime. A little while later, a messenger knocked on Younger Brother's door. Fearfully, he opened the door and accepted the letter.

Then, Younger Brother opened the letter—and he cried out as he read it! What did it say? The heart of the letter was this message:

***Tomorrow, dressed in your clothes, I will die in your place. And you, dressed in my clothes, will live a righteous and holy life in my memory from now on.***

Now, Younger Brother was so upset that he hardly knew what to do. He thought that just possibly his brother had not yet been executed. He rushed out to see the judge. He showed him the letter and confessed to his crimes, to the killing, and to his cowardice. But the judge told him that his brother had already died in his place. Seeing how the law had been satisfied by such a sacrifice of love, the judge declined to press any further charges against Younger Brother. Younger Brother was free! But at what a price! How do you suppose his brother's sacrifice affected him? I will tell you.

Younger Brother saw his guilt as never before. He saw his brother's love as never before. He turned to God, and he discovered that God's greater love and power through Jesus Christ could deliver him from what he had been and would enable him to live as Elder Brother had lived. His old friends found it difficult to believe that he had become so different. When invited to go with them where he and they had gone before, he said, "In my brother's clothes I cannot go there. He would never go there."

After a life of service to God and man, he was buried as he had requested—in Elder Brother's clothes. Now Elder Brother and Younger Brother live together again.

That is a great true story, but God wrote a better one. God sent His Son to die in your place. Jesus died to give you life—and He lives to live His life in those who trust in Him.

***Please carefully consider what God says in His Word, the Bible:***

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (*John 3:16*).

“He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (*2 Corinthians 5:21*).

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (*1 Peter 2:24*).

“If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (*Romans 5:10*).

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (*Romans 6:23*).

***New life in the risen Christ who died for you!***

***Do you have it, and do you live it?***

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# The Tale of Two Brothers

