

“The Very Best Friend”

Adapted from The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones

In the beginning, there was nothing, nothing to hear, nothing to feel. Only emptiness and darkness.

But God was there. And God had a wonderful plan. “I’ll take this emptiness,” God said, “And I’ll fill it up!” “Out of the darkness, I’m going to make light! And out of nothing, I’m going to make everything!”

God hovered over the deep silent darkness and He spoke. And as He spoke, God made the world.

God said, “Hello light!” And beautiful warm light shone into the darkness. Then God said, “Hello sea! Hello sky!” And a great space opened up for cool winds and warm breezes to blow. Then God said, “Hello land!” And there, splashing up through the oceans - came cliffs, mountains, brown moist dirt, and sandy beaches. “Hello trees!” God said, “Hello grass and flowers!” And everywhere, everything burst into life. “Hello stars!” God said, “Hello sun! Hello moon!” And whizzing through the darkness came fiery globes spinning around and around - whirling orange and purple planets. “Hello birds!” God said. And with a fluttering and flapping and chirping and singing, birds filled the skies. “Hello fish!” God said, and with darting and dashing, wriggling and splashing, fish filled the seas! Then God said, “Hello animals!” And everyone came out to play. The earth was filled with noisy noises - growling and gobbling and snapping and snorting and happy skerfluffing.

God saw all that He made and He loved them. But God saved the best for last. From the beginning, God had a shining dream in His heart. He would make people to share His forever happiness. They would be His children, and the world He created would be their happy home. So God breathed life into Adam and Eve. When they opened their eyes, the first thing they saw was God’s face. And when God saw them He was like a new dad. “You’re the most beautiful thing I’ve ever made!” He said. God loved them with all of His heart.

Adam and Eve joined God in His beautiful world. Their hearts filled with happiness. And nothing ever made them sad or lonely or sick or afraid. They were God's family, and everything was perfect, for a while. Until one day, when everything went wrong. You see, God had a horrible enemy. This enemy was evil, seething with anger, and full of hate. He wanted to stop God's plan and hurt God's family.

Now, in God's beautiful, perfect world, God had given Adam and Eve only one rule "Don't eat the fruit from that one tree," God told them. "Because if you do, death and sickness and sadness and tears will come. (You see God knew that if they ate the fruit that they'd have to leave God's family and be away from Him, and life without Him would never be happy. It wouldn't be any life at all.)

God's enemy heard about the one rule God gave, and he wanted Adam and Eve to disobey God and break it. God's enemy wanted to stop this love story and stop God's plan, so he came up with a plan of his own...to disguise himself as a snake and trick Adam and Eve.

So very quietly and very carefully, God's enemy snuck into the garden and found God's children, Adam and Eve. The snake slithered up to Eve. "Does God really love you?" the snake whispered. "If He does, why doesn't He let you eat this nice, juicy, tasty fruit? You don't need God. Just take one small taste. That's all." The snake's words hissed into Eve's ears and slithered all the way down into her heart, like poison. Eve picked the fruit and ate some, and Adam ate some too.

As soon as Adam and Eve disobeyed God a terrible lie came into the world. It would never leave and it would live in every heart, whispering to God's children: "God doesn't love me."

And a terrible pain came into God's heart. His children hadn't just broken the one rule; they had broken God's heart and their hearts too were broken. And now everything else would break, and all of God's beautiful and perfect creation would start to be ruined and come undone. From now on, everything would die, even though it was supposed to last forever. "You will have to leave the garden now," God told His children, His eyes filling up

with tears. And God gently sent His children away on a long, long journey - out of the garden, out of their home.

God loved His children too much to let the story end there. God had a plan - a magnificent dream. One day, He would get His children back. One day, He would make the world their perfect home again. You see no matter what, God would love His children - with a never stopping, never giving up, never breaking, always and forever love. You see, before they left the garden, God whispered a promise to Adam and Eve: "I will come to rescue you and fix your broken hearts! I'll get rid of the sadness you let in here. I'm coming back to save you!"

Because God loved His children so very much, He sent them the very best friend. His name is Jesus.

Jesus was with God in Heaven and He saw God's perfect world being undone. He saw God's children filled with suffering sadness, sickness and pain. He saw their tears and their broken hearts. Jesus knew that if He came to God's broken world that God could help Him fix it and make it brand new again. That God could save His children.

So Jesus came to earth and did what only a best friend would do. He loved us by giving us His very own heart.

Jesus took the sad, dirty, broken hearts of God's children and replaced them with a new, clean, happy, never breaking heart. This was how God rescued the world. Jesus' life would break and God's world would be put back together. Jesus' heart would tear apart and God's children's hearts would heal. God would pour all of the sadness and brokenness into Jesus and fill His children with happiness and goodness and never breaking love. God sent Jesus to the world to be the very best friend.