



ALSO BY SALLY LLOYD-JONES

The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name

Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing

Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story

Bunny's First Spring

Just Because You're Mine

The Ultimate Guide to Grandmas and Grandpas

Baby's Hug-A-Bible

the
story of
God's
love
for you

WRITTEN BY **SALLY LLOYD-JONES**

ILLUSTRATION BY **JAGO**



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The Story of God's Love for You

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DEDICATION

For Harry, Olivia, Emily, Eleanor and Jonathan
Because the Fairy Tale really does come true!

SLJ

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the story and the song

INTRODUCTION FROM PSALM 19 AND HEBREWS 1

The Heavens are singing
about how great God is;
and the skies are shouting it out,
“See what God has made!”
Day after day . . . Night after night . . .
They are speaking to us.

PSALM 19:1 – 2 (PARAPHRASE)

GOD WROTE, “I LOVE YOU” — HE WROTE IT IN the sky, and on the earth, and under the sea. He wrote his message everywhere! Because God created everything in his world to reflect him like a mirror—to show us what he is like, to help us know him, to make our hearts sing.

The way a kitten chases her tail. The way red poppies grow wild. The way a dolphin swims.

And God put it into words, too, and wrote it in a book called “the Bible.”

Now, some people think the Bible is a book of rules, telling you what you should and shouldn't do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn't mainly about you and what you should be doing. It's about God and what he has done.

Other people think the Bible is a book of heroes, showing you people you should copy. The Bible does have some heroes in it, but (as you'll soon find out) most of the people in the Bible aren't heroes at all. They make some big mistakes (sometimes on purpose). They get afraid and run away. At times they are downright mean.

No, the Bible isn't a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It's an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne—everything—to rescue the one he loves. It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life!

You see, the best thing about this Story is—it's true.

There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them.

It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. And at the center of the Story, there is a baby. Every Story in the Bible whispers his name. He is like the missing piece in a puzzle—the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together, and suddenly you can see a beautiful picture.

And this is no ordinary baby. This is the Child upon whom everything would depend. This is the Child who would one day—but wait. Our Story starts where all good stories start. Right at the very beginning . . .



the beginning: a perfect home

THE SONG OF CREATION, FROM GENESIS 1 – 2

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS NOTHING.

Nothing to hear. Nothing to feel. Nothing to see.

Only emptiness. And darkness. And ... nothing but nothing.

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 the nothing, I'm going to make ... EVERYTHING!"

Like a mother bird flutters her wings over her eggs to help her babies hatch, God hovered over the deep, silent darkness. He was making life happen.

God spoke. That's all. And whatever he said, it happened.

God said, "Hello light!" and light shone into the darkness. God called the light, "Day" and the darkness, "Night." "You're good," God said. And they were.

Then God said, "Hello sea! Hello sky!" and a great space opened up, wide and deep and high. "You're good," God said. And they were.

Then God said, "Hello land!" and there—splashing up through the oceans—came cliffs, mountains, sandy beaches. "You're good," God said. And they were.

"Hello trees!" God said. "Hello grass and flowers!" And everything everywhere burst into life. He made buds bud; shoots shoot; flowers flower. "You're good," God said. And they were.

"Hello stars!" God said. "Hello sun! Hello moon!" And whizzing into the darkness came fiery globes, spinning around and around—whirling orange and purple and golden planets. "You're good," God said. And they were.

"Hello birds!" God said. And with a fluttering and flapping and chirping and singing, birds filled the skies. "Hello fish!" God said. And with a darting and dashing and wriggling and splashing, fish filled the seas! "You're good," God said. And they were.

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 skerfuffling. "You're good," God said. And they were.

God saw all that he had made and he loved them. And they were lovely because 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 would be their perfect home.

So God breathed life into Adam and Eve.

When they opened their eyes, the first thing they ever saw was God's face.

And when God saw them he was like a new dad. "You look like me," he said. "You're the most beautiful thing I've ever made!"

God loved them with all of his heart. And they were lovely because he loved them.

And Adam and Eve joined in the song of the stars and the streams and the wind in the trees, the wonderful song of love to the one who made them. Their hearts were filled with happiness. And nothing ever made them sad or lonely or sick or afraid.

God looked at everything he had made. "Perfect!" he said. And it was.

the story of God's love for you

But all the stars and the mountains and oceans and galaxies and everything were nothing compared to how much God loved his children. He would move heaven and earth to be near them. Always. Whatever happened, whatever it cost him, he would always love them.

And so it was that the wonderful love story began ...



the terrible lie

ADAM AND EVE LOSE EVERYTHING,
FROM GENESIS 3

ADAM AND EVE LIVED HAPPILY TOGETHER IN their beautiful new home. And everything was perfect—for a while.

Until the day when everything went wrong.

God had a horrible enemy. His name was Satan. Satan had once been the most beautiful angel, but he didn't want to be just an angel—he wanted to be God. He grew proud and evil and full of hate, and God had to send him out of heaven. Satan was seething with anger and looking for a way to hurt God. He wanted to stop God's plan, stop this love story, right there. So he disguised himself as a snake and waited in the garden.

Now, God had given Adam and Eve only one rule: "Don't eat the fruit on that tree," God told them. "Because if you

do, you'll think you know everything. You'll stop trusting me. And then death and sadness and tears will come."

(You see, God knew if they ate the fruit, they would think they didn't need him. And they would try to make themselves happy without him. But God knew there was no such thing as happiness without him, and life without him wouldn't be life at all.)

As soon as the snake saw his chance, he slithered silently up to Eve. "Does God really love you?" the serpent whispered. "If he does, why won't he let you eat the nice, juicy, delicious fruit? Poor you, perhaps God doesn't want you to be happy."

The snake's words hissed into her ears and sunk down deep into her heart, like poison. *Does God love me?* Eve wondered. Suddenly she didn't know anymore.

"Just trust me," the serpent whispered. "You don't need God. One small taste, that's all, and you'll be happier than you could ever dream ..."

Eve picked the fruit and ate some. And Adam ate some, too.

And a terrible lie came into the world. It would never leave. It would live on in every human heart, whispering to every one of God's children: "God doesn't love me."

And it wasn't a dream. It was a nightmare.

A dove flew from Adam's hand. A deer darted in a thicket. It was as if they were frightened by something. A chill was in the air. Something strange was happening. They had always been naked—but now they felt naked, and wrong, and they didn't want anyone to see them. So they hid.

Later that evening, as God was taking his walk, he called to them. "Children?"

Usually Adam and Eve loved to hear God's voice and would run to him. But this time, they ran away from him and hid in the shadows.

"Where are you?" God called.

"Hiding," Adam said. "We're afraid of you."

"Did you eat the fruit I told you not to eat?" God asked them.

Adam said, "Eve made me do it!"

"What have you done?" God asked.

Eve said, "The serpent made me do it!"

And terrible pain came into God's heart. His children hadn't just broken the one rule; they had broken God's heart. They had broken their wonderful relationship with him. And now he knew everything else would break. God's creation would start to unravel, and come undone, and go wrong. From now on everything would die—even though it was all supposed to last forever.

the story of God's love for you

You see, sin had come into God's perfect world. And it would never leave. God's children would be always running away from him and hiding in the dark. Their hearts would break now, and never work properly again.

God couldn't let his children live forever, not in such pain, not without him. There was only one way to protect them.

"You will have to leave the garden now," God told his children, his eyes filling with tears. "This is no longer your true home, it's not the place for you anymore."

But before they left the garden, God made clothes for his children, to cover them. He gently clothed them and then he sent them away on a long, long journey—out of the garden, out of their home.

Well, in another story, it would all be over and that would have been . . .

the end.