

Galatians 3:23-29 – The Message (MSG)

²³⁻²⁴ Until the time when we were mature enough to respond freely in faith to the living God, we were carefully surrounded and protected by the Mosaic law. The law was like those Greek tutors, with which you are familiar, who escort children to school and protect them from danger or distraction, making sure the children will really get to the place they set out for.

²⁵⁻²⁷ But now you have arrived at your destination: By faith in Christ you are in direct relationship with God. Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—Christ's life, the fulfillment of God's original promise.

Children's Sermon

At this time I'd like to invite all the young people in our church today to come forward so we can share a message together. Please, gather 'round, and in a few moments I'll ask some of you to stand up and help me tell a story. But first, I want to set the stage.

Today, I will be sharing some words from a book called "The Jesus Storybook Bible," written by Sally Lloyd-Jones.

God wrote, "I love you" in the sky, and on the earth, and under the sea. God wrote this message everywhere! Because God created everything in this world to reflect God like a mirror – to show us what God is like, to help us know God, and to make our hearts sing.

And God put it into words, too, and we find those words 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. But the Bible isn't just about what you should be doing. It's about God and what God 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 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 just a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It's an adventure story. It's a love story. It's a fairy tale that's come true!

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

There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all of them are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves God's children.

It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. And at the center of the Story, there is a child. He's 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 child. This is the Child named Jesus, who would one day lift us up and show us the way – but wait. Our Story starts where all good stories start. Right at the very beginning...

And to tell this story, I'll need your help. **So if you're a part of our storytelling group today, please stand up and gather where our teachers show you.**

In the Beginning, there was 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!"

God spoke. That's all. And whatever God 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 God had made and loved them.

But God saved the best for last. God would make people. They would be God’s children, and the world would be their home.

So God breathed life into the first people, who we call **Adam and Eve**. When they opened their eyes, the first thing they ever saw was God’s face.

And God was like a brand-new parent. “You’re the most beautiful thing I’ve ever made!”

God loved them with all God’s heart.

God looked around at everything. “Perfect!” God said. And it was.

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

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

Thank you, you can sit back down here in front of me.

Now, as the Story goes, Adam and Eve left the garden God made for them because they thought they had learned everything God had to teach them, and they didn't want to follow God's instructions anymore. So they went out to seek their fortune on their own, them and their children and their children's children and on and on.

But it wasn't until the child Jesus was born that we people realized we still had more to learn from God. And Jesus taught us so much. You've been learning a lot of it in Sunday School all year. And when Jesus was done teaching us, He sent us on our way to try to live a Christian life everywhere we go. To share God's love with all the people, and animals, and plants of this world God has created.

Today marks the end of Sunday School for the summer. If you come to church next Sunday—which I hope you do if you can—there won't be any Sunday School, and you'll get to stay here during church the whole time like you did today. Sunday School won't start up again until September. But until September, you've graduated for the year. Sunday School has taught you all it can this school year, and it's up to you to be as grown-up as you can until we start back up again. Carry the stories and the lessons Jesus has taught you this year with you everywhere you go, and wrap yourself in the love of Christ every step of the way. God loves you, and God loves every bit of this wonderful world we get to share. All I ask you to do this summer... is act like it. Act like God loves you, act like God loves everyone you meet as God's children, and see the love God has written into everything God has created.

In Jesus' name, all this we pray. Amen.