



## WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS! (Children's Story/Parable)

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Hello, boys and girls! How many of you have a best friend? Raise your hand if you have a best friend you love doing all sorts of things with, like playing games, studying, hobbies, all sorts of things? That's great! So do I!

I have a friend who is really dear to me. She lives far away from me, and I love her like my own sister. She had something bad happen to her and decided to stop going to church, reading her Bible, and even praying to God.

Sometimes unpleasant things happen to us and we're tempted to blame God when they don't turn out like we think they should. We may think, 'If God is in control, why is this bad thing happening to me? It's not fair!' Sometimes bad things happen because of the choices we make or the bad influences of so-called "friends." God still loves us and wants to use us in a special way.

Do you think God likes to see us suffer? Or that God causes bad things to happen to us? Of course not! God loves us and wants to do everything in His power to save us from Satan and his evil desire to kill and destroy us. But we live in a sinful world, and as long as we're on this sinful earth, we're going to experience hardship, sadness, and death. Our only safety is trusting in God to save us.

Sometimes we forget that bad things also happened to Jesus, God's own Son. We forget that men were mean to Him and finally crucified Him. Jesus endured this cruel death in order to save us from sin. Because of Jesus's death, we can have hope not only for this life on earth but for eternity.

I have a promise for you to remember. It's found in John 3:16. Does anybody know what this verse says? [*Give children a chance to respond or perhaps say the verse together. You could even have a poster or overhead slide with the words for everyone to follow along.*] "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It reminds us that God loves us so much that He doesn't want anybody to die.

In Joshua 1:5 God tells us that He will never forsake us. That means He's right here and will never leave. He will always be taking care of us, but we have to believe and trust in Him. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful," which means He will always forgive us.

Do you know what that means? God wants us to do what is right. He says that if we realize we have not done what was right, , and confess our sin, He is always willing to forgive us.

Doesn't that make you feel special? Don't you think God wants us to tell others about His promise of forgiveness and love? Can you think of someone that you could tell about the wonderful promises and love of Jesus? Let's make a promise to Jesus to tell everyone we know that "Jesus loves you, and He will never stop loving you." Is that a deal? Great! Let's pray.  
*[Offer short prayer or choose one or two children to offer a prayer.]*