Lia discovers God's Love



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Foreword for Parents and Educators

Dear Mum, Dad, parents and guardians,

Children's hearts are like little treasure chests - full of questions, wonder and a longing for safety and love. This book was written to speak straight into that treasure chest: **into the heart of a child.**

The stories about Lia, the little woodland mouse, are about more than exciting adventures in the forest. Each episode holds a deep truth from God's Word - lovingly woven into a story children can understand, accompanied by a short memory verse and a prayer.

Each story is meant to be **experienced together**, as well as read aloud. Perhaps at bedtime. Perhaps at the breakfast table. Perhaps in the middle **of a**n ordinary day, when a little heart needs comfort, courage or a gentle reminder that God is near.

The characters are deliberately gentle, without brash heroes or anything overwhelming. For **God often works in small, quiet and hidden ways.**

And that is exactly what children learn with Lia: that they are seen, loved and wanted, just as they are.

Let this book be a companion - for reading aloud, praying, wondering and laughing. And perhaps for rediscovering for yourself how deep and faithful God's love is - for young and old alike.

With warm blessings and quiet thanks to everyone who lovingly cares for children,

Julian Zeiger and Lilli Zeiger

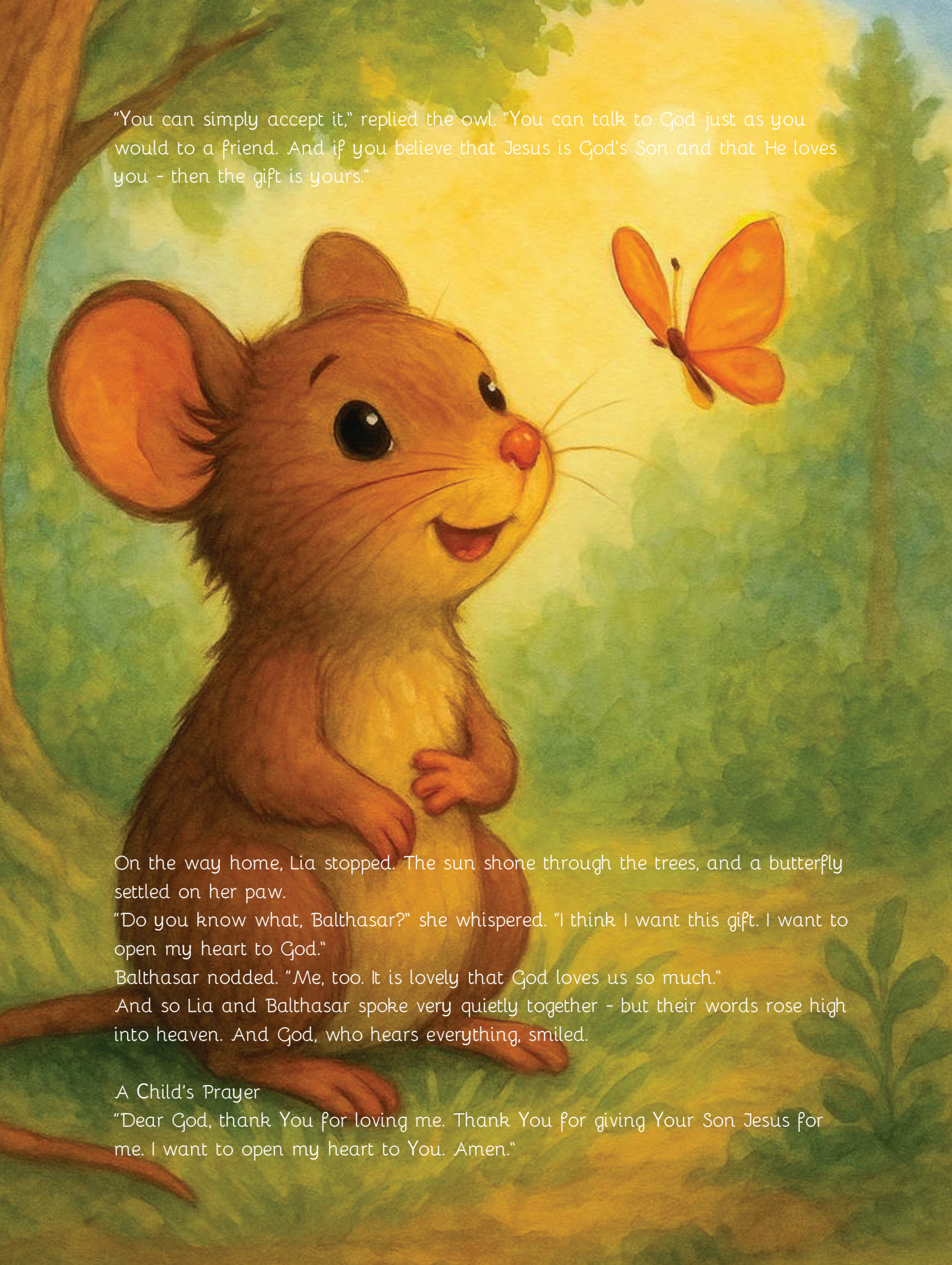
"Let the children come to Me ... for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14)

Lia Discovers the Greatest Gift

Memory Verse:

"For God so loved the world ..." - John 3:16a

In a thick, green forest, among tall fir trees and mossy roots, there lived a little brown woodland mouse named Lia.
Lia was curious and quick on her feet, and she loved asking lots of questions. Best of all, she liked sitting beneath the big, branching tree beside her burrow in the evenings and looking up at the sky. The stars sparkled there like tiny lights, and Lia often wondered who had lit them all up there.
One morning, Lia woke up early. The sun was just peeping over the hill, and the dew glittered on the leaves.
Lia heard a cheerful whistle - it was her best friend, Balthasar the hedgehog.
"Good morning, Lia!" called Balthasar, sniffing the air. "Today is a special day!"
"Really?" asked Lia, standing up on her hind paws. "Why?"
"Yesterday, Amos the old owl told us about a gift that is greater than any other. It is invisible, but it changes everything."
Lia pricked up her ears. "An invisible gift? Is there really such a thing?"
Balthasar nodded seriously. "Yes! And do you know what? The owl said this gift is for everyone. For you and me, too."
Lia wanted to know all about it. So the two friends set off for the tallest tree in the forest, where Amos the owl lived.
Amos was sitting on his favourite branch. He sleepily opened one eye when Lia and Balthasar stood beneath him.
"What brings you here, little mouse paws and prickly fluffy snout?" he rumbled kindly.
"We want to know more about the gift!" called Lia.
The old owl smiled. "Ah, the greatest gift ... It comes from God. You see, God loves this world so much that He gave His own Son - so that everyone who believes in Him will not be lost, but may live with God for ever. That is the greatest gift of all."
Lia was amazed. "God ... loves us? Me, too?"
"Yes, little mouse," said Amos, his eyes shining. "Especially you."
Lia felt something warm in her little heart. "But ... what do I have to do to receive the gift?"



"You can simply accept it," replied the owl. "You can talk to God just as you would to a friend. And if you believe that Jesus is God's Son and that He loves you - then the gift is yours."

On the way home, Lia stopped. The sun shone through the trees, and a butterfly settled on her paw.
"Do you know what, Balthasar?" she whispered. "I think I want this gift. I want to open my heart to God."
Balthasar nodded. "Me, too. It is lovely that God loves us so much."
And so Lia and Balthasar spoke very quietly together - but their words rose high into heaven. And God, who hears everything, smiled.

A Child's Prayer
"Dear God, thank You for loving me. Thank You for giving Your Son Jesus for me. I want to open my heart to You. Amen."

The Journey Through the Dark Forest

Memory Verse:

"For He has commanded His angels to watch over you wherever you go." - Psalm 91:11

The sun had just disappeared behind the hill, and a cool wind swept through the forest. Lia sat shivering outside her burrow. Today, she had to do something she had never dared to do before: cross the dark fir forest to fetch herbs for Mama Mouse.
"You do not need to be afraid," Mama said gently. "God is with you - always."
Lia nodded bravely, but her tummy fluttered. She thought of the memory verse she had learnt from Amos the owl: "For He has commanded His angels to watch over you wherever you go." She took a deep breath. God sends angels, she thought. For me, too? Then she set off.
The forest was quieter than usual. The tall trees seemed to whisper, and here and there a branch cracked in the undergrowth. Lia pressed her little paws tightly against her chest. "You are not alone," she whispered to herself.
Suddenly, something rustled in a bush. Lia froze. Her ears twitched.
"Lia? Is that you?"
She gave a squeak of relief. It was Balthasar! "What are you doing here?" she asked.
"I had a feeling you were afraid. And I thought: you do not leave your friends all alone."
They padded on together, but soon the forest grew even darker.
Mist began to rise, and Lia tripped over a root. "Ouch!" she cried.
Then they heard a soft, steady fluttering. A large white owl landed on a branch above them. Her eyes shone gently. "Do not be afraid," she said in a deep voice. "God has sent me to go with you."
"An angel?" whispered Lia in awe.
The owl simply nodded. "Sometimes God sends His angels with feathers, sometimes as people - but they are always there when you trust them."
With the owl beside them, the path grew brighter. A moonbeam fell through the trees, and soon they reached the field of herbs. Lia gathered the herbs, her heart full of courage and peace. Now she knew:
Even in the dark, God was with her. On the way back, she said softly: