

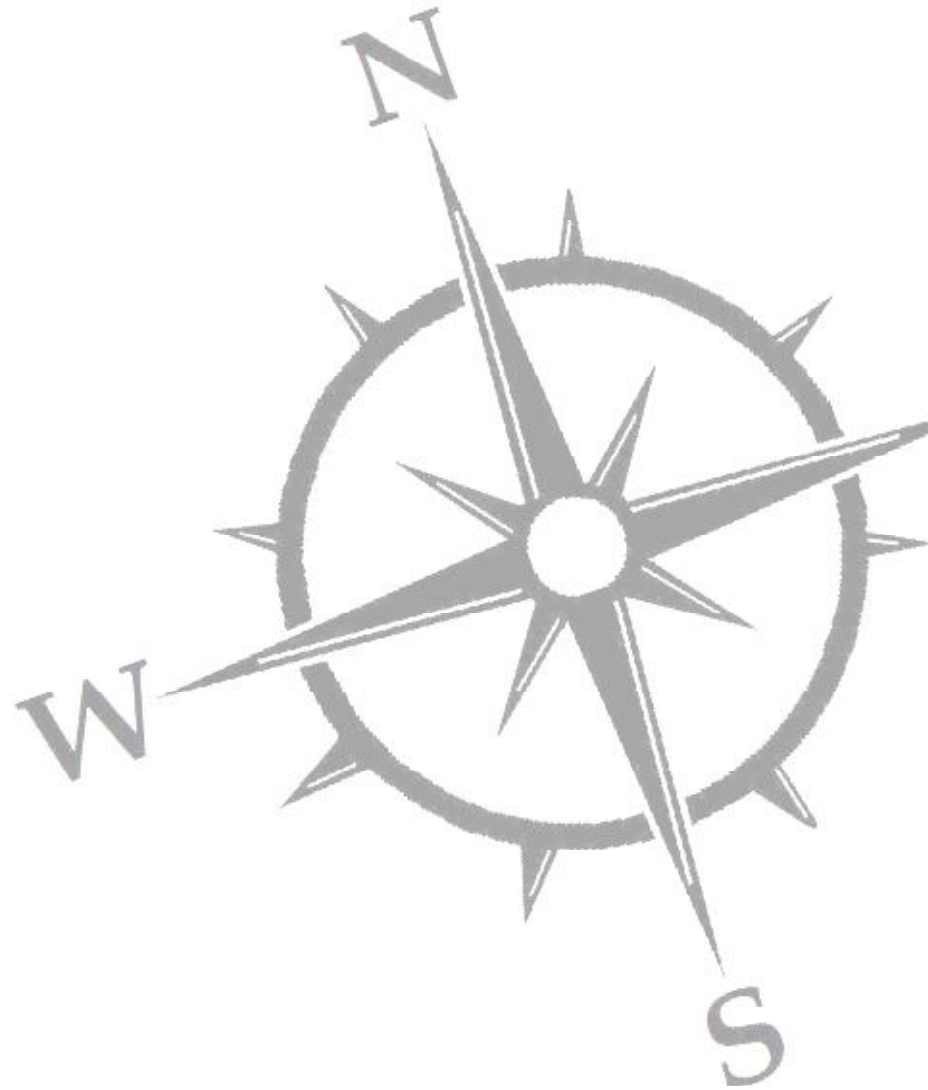
The Life of David Brainerd

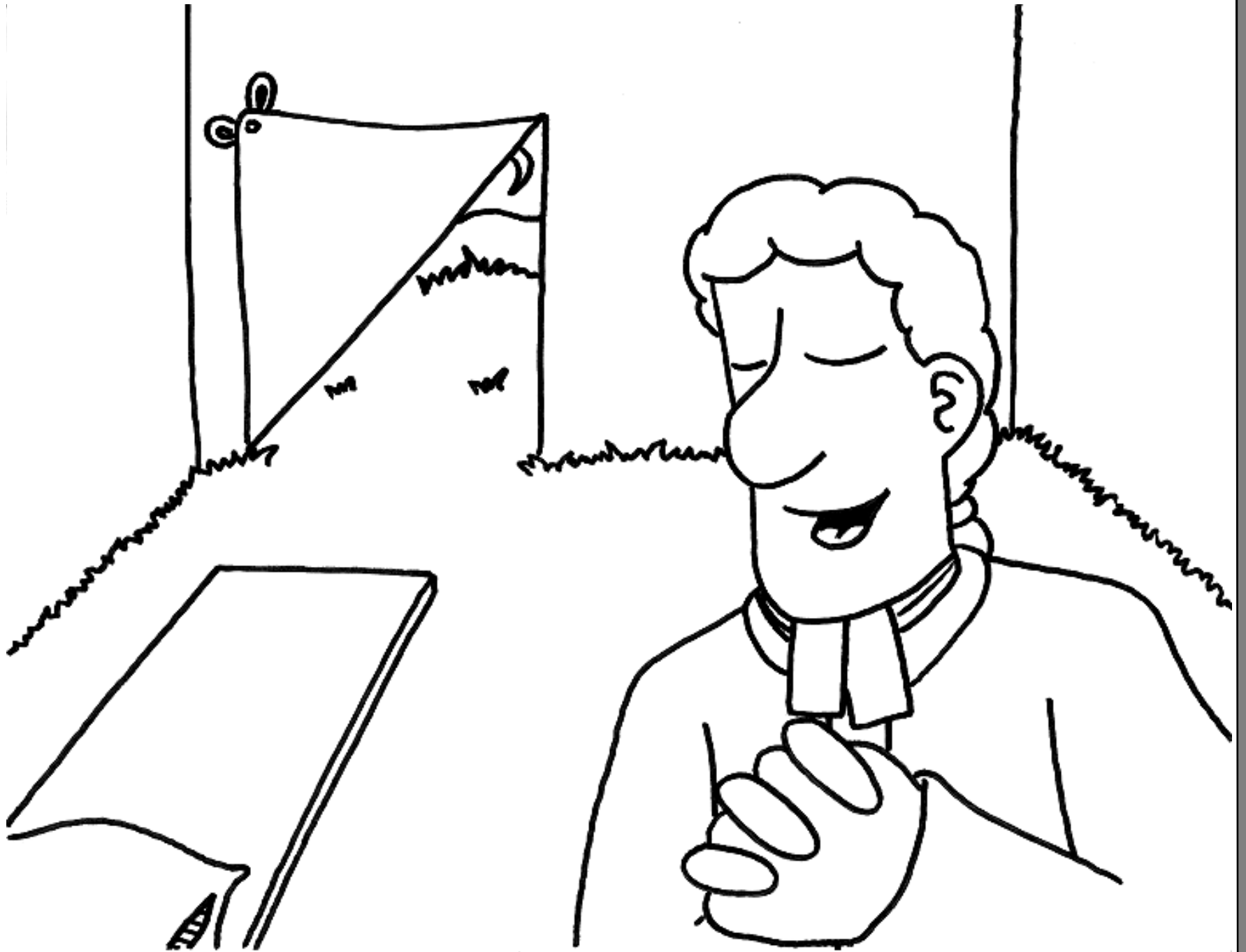
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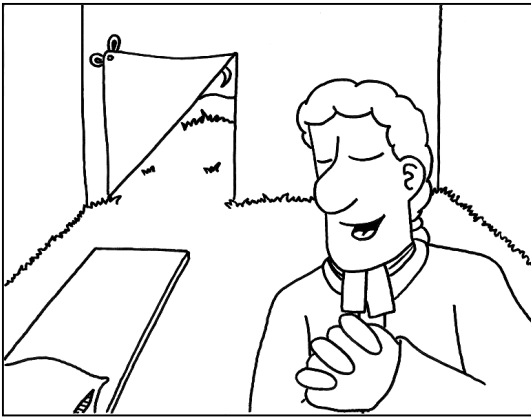
Lesson: 3.26 – Protection Missionary Snapshot Series

This lesson reminds us that the Lord is ever-present to protect and care for His children. When God is on our side, regardless of the opposition, we are never outnumbered. Having Jesus in our hearts is like wrapping us up in the biggest and strongest football pad in the world. Nothing can harm us! David Brainerd was about to face some very scary things. He would have to trust in the Lord to protect him and keep him safe.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." - Psalm 18:2







Introduction:

Have you ever seen a lion tamer or a tiger tamer in a circus, or perhaps a picture of one? These trainers and tamers step into a cage surrounded by ferocious beasts that could tear them apart at any minute. One interesting thing that they do is go into the cage without any kind of armor or protection. Our story today is about a missionary to the Native American Indians. This missionary risked his life to go and tell these people about Jesus' love. There were many times that he could have been killed or seriously hurt. Would God keep him safe and protect him? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about David Brainerd...

Missionary Story:

"Steady, steady," I said as I gently patted my horse's neck as she stumbled on the root of a tree that was sticking up in the path along the wilderness trail. Riding on the back of a horse was nothing new to me. I had spent many, many hours traveling through the wilderness in the hopes of sharing Jesus with the many American Indian tribes of

Delaware.

It was a cool, summer morning with not a cloud in the sky. "At least there aren't any rivers nearby," I said with a chuckle as I patted my horse's neck once again. Only a few months before, on a cool winter morning, I had been traveling to meet up with Pastor Sergeant in the town of Stockbridge. I was riding all alone and was making my way along the edge of a small river when my horse's feet began to slip. "Whoa there, girl!" I shouted, pulling up hard on the reins. It was too late, though...my horse's feet had begun to slide on the icy slope. To try to keep from falling, she had reared back up on her back legs, which threw me off her back and headfirst into the icy river below.

The freezing water instantly wrapped all around me and caused me to lose my breath and start to panic. I clawed my way back to the surface and spun around, waving my arms in every direction, trying to reach for anything to be able to pull myself out with. Very soon, my hand caught hold of the snowy bank on the side of the river. I quickly pulled myself out of the water and stood there, soaked and shivering in the snow. I knew that I would not have long before I would go into hypothermia and freeze to death in this cold winter air. I crawled up the small hill to where my horse now stood, looking at me. I climbed up onto her back. "Hiyah!" I yelled, kicking her sides hard. She took off running fast. The cool wind stung my face and skin. I was still a little ways off from the pastor's house...far enough that I might just freeze to death. Thankfully, after

what seemed like ages, I saw a light and then smoke billowing from a chimney. Pastor Sergeant welcomed me in, gave me dry blankets, and sat me down in front of a nice, warm fire.

It was true, God had protected me many times just like that along these dangerous trails. Today, it wasn't the trail that I was worried about, though. I was on my way to an Indian village.

"How much further do you think we have?" I asked my Indian interpreter friend, Moses Tattamy. "Not far," he said with a worried look on his face. "The powwows or the warriors might kill you for doing this, you know," he said. "Powwow" was the Indian name for their evil witch doctors.

"Yes, I know," I said, "but I prayed to the Lord throughout the day yesterday. I know this is what the Lord wants me to do. I must do what I can to stop this. I can trust the Lord to protect me," I said as we continued.

I knew how important prayer was to a Christian's life. I spent hours praying to the Lord, asking for His help, and God had protected me many times in my life. I thought back to the first night that I arrived here in the Forks of the Delaware. I had set up camp just outside an Indian village. Little did I know that the Indians had been watching me set up my camp. The warriors of the tribe had been told to creep out to my tent and kill me once it got dark. The braves arrived at my tent a few hours after dark. They had their bows and tomahawks ready. The lead warrior quietly peered inside my tent. He saw me on my knees with my hands folded in prayer.





He signaled his men to go in and attack me, but then something happened that made everyone freeze in their tracks. As I was praying, a rattlesnake quietly slithered up right next to me in my tent. The snake raised its head, coiled up, and was ready to strike me. The braves watched as the snake flickered his tongue in and out, almost touching my nose. Then, for no reason, the snake lowered itself back to the ground and slithered out of the tent without harming me.

"The Great Spirit must be with the paleface!" the Indians said to themselves as they hurried back to their village. The following morning, the people welcomed me into their village. They thought I must be some kind of prophet for the snake not to have bothered me. It took several days before one of the older braves told me the story about seeing the snake in my tent.

"Lord, you protected me from the snake and from the braves who had come there to kill me. Here I am again in need of your protection today," I prayed silently as we came to a clearing in the forest. Now I could hear the beating of drums in the

distance. "We're nearly there," Moses spoke up, "we can still turn back."

God had recently begun to work in the Indians' hearts. Only a few weeks before, as I was preaching to a group of Indians, they suddenly began crying out because of their sin. The Holy Spirit was convicting their hearts and showing them that they needed to be saved. But it was very hard for them to give up their old beliefs and practices.

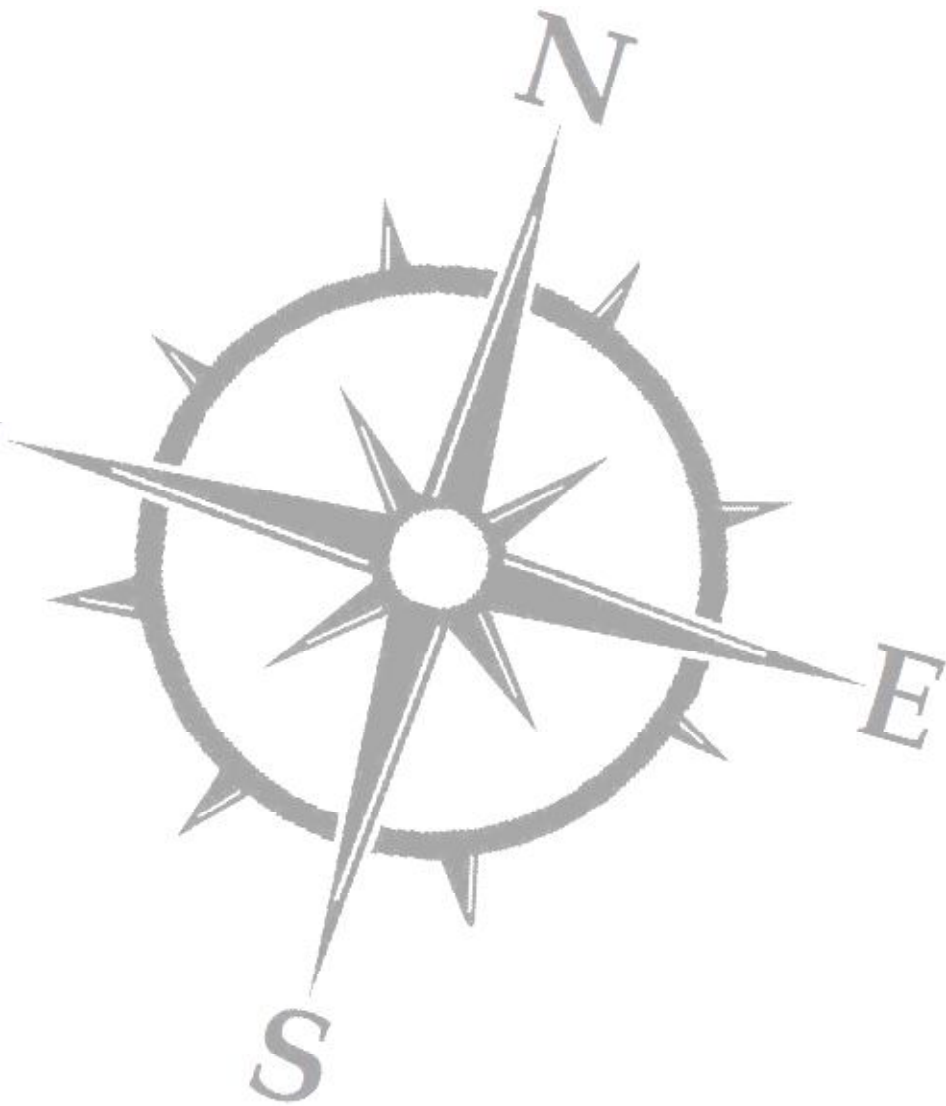
After meeting with them one afternoon, I heard about a festival that they were going to hold on July 21st. The festival was an entire day filled with worship of satanic powers and gods, wild dances, and feasts. I had been so worried about the souls of these Indians. Last night, I had prayed and cried all through the night for them. I knew that God was asking me to break up this meeting and tell them about Jesus. There would be many warriors there, and at any time, someone might order me to be killed. "Please give me courage!" I prayed as we came through the last row of trees into the village. The Indians were all dancing around in a large circle. Many of them seemed to be controlled by evil spirits and didn't even see us ride up. "Hello, people of the Delaware!" I shouted as loudly as I could. The drums came to a sudden stop. The dancers turned and looked at me with very angry faces. Many of them were still holding their tomahawks raised in their hands. The entire village was looking at me now. Everyone was silent. I took a deep breath and spoke slowly, "I need to speak with you today. This feast makes the Almighty God very unhappy. I beg you to listen to what I have to say."

The Indians looked around at each other. The silence made me worry about what they were going to do next. Then they put their drums down and took their festival masks and festival clothes off. Moses and I jumped down from our horses, and I walked towards the people. I spent many weeks with this village. I watched God work in many lives. Before long, nearly fifty Indians were coming to hear my sermons each day and listening closely. They even canceled one of their hunting trips to listen to the Word of God. God was using His Word to change the hearts of these precious souls.

Application:

You know, boys and girls, Psalm 18:2 tells us that God is like a strong castle that we can run to for protection. The safest place that we can be is right where God wants us to be. God protected David Brainerd as he worked with the Indian tribes of the Delaware. David spent much of his time praying to God. God took David home to Heaven at a young age of 27. At the time of his death, many Indians had accepted Jesus as their Savior. Jonathan Edwards wrote a book about David's life that has encouraged many people to pray just like David Brainerd did. Missionaries like William Carey, Adoniram Judson, and Jim Elliot were inspired by David's life of prayer.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson, please refer to **lesson 3.26** on **page 90** in your **Vanuatu Expedition - Leader's Guide.**)*



References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained information from:

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