

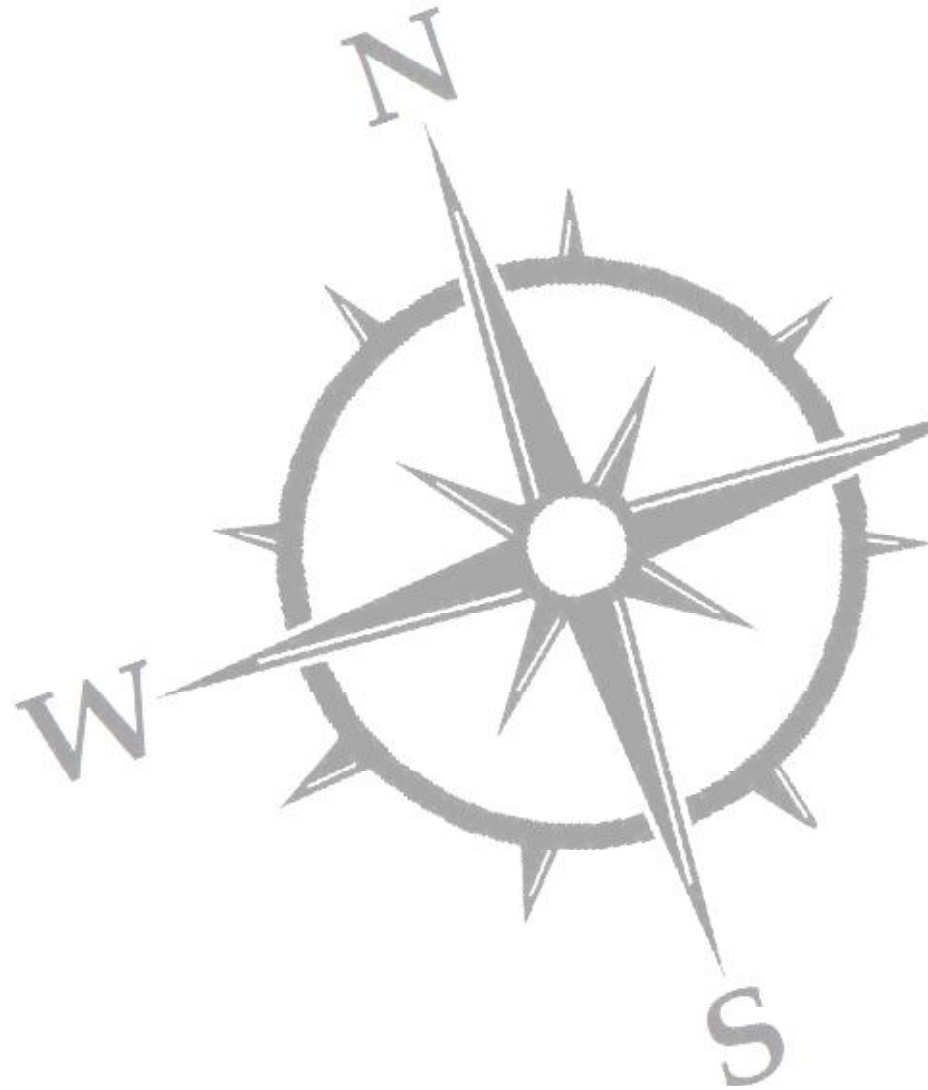
The Life of David Livingstone

(1813-1873)

Lesson: 5.4 – Available Missionary Spotlight Series

This story encourages us to be available for God's use. God wants us to be available for Him to use regardless of our abilities and courage or the lack thereof. God had some big things that He wanted to do in David Livingstone's life, but David had to make himself available for God to use him.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." - Romans 6:13







Who remembers where we left off last week?

(Read the last paragraph from last week's lesson to begin this lesson as a review).

The church sat silently and waited for me to begin my sermon. How could this be happening? How could I have forgotten everything I was going to preach? I opened my mouth and tried to begin. "Friends....," I started saying, but then I paused again to think. Then I said, "I have completely forgotten what I was going to say." With that, I shut my Bible, hurried down the aisle, and ran out the back door of the church. I never looked back until I was safely back in my room on Rotten Row.

Of course, as I sat on my bed, my whole sermon came back into my mind. Surely I was done for. I had just failed my training course with Reverend Cecil, and now he would tell the London Missionary Society that I was not a good candidate, and they would then turn me away. Just as I

expected, the next morning the Reverend Cecil called me into his office. "A large part of being a missionary is writing and preaching sermons," he said. "You showed me last night that you cannot do that. I cannot recommend that you continue with the London Missionary Society."

"Well, that's it. I've failed." I told my friend Joseph Moore as we walked home. Joseph and I had both started with the London Missionary Society on the very same day and had struck up a friendship with each other. "Me too," Joseph said. Joseph told me that he had been told that his grades in Hebrew weren't high enough to continue. I explained my whole story about the sermon the night before. We both wondered what we were going to do now.

Two days later, the Reverend Cecil called both of us back into his office and told us that even though he had told the London Missionary Society to fail us, they had decided to give us one more chance. Thankfully, things went much better the second time around. Joseph and I passed our tests. Joseph went on to Chestnut College to continue training in theology so that he could go on and be a missionary to Tahiti. I was sent back to London to work with Dr. Bennett at Charing Cross Hospital. Up to this point, I had only practiced surgery on dead things. I soon learned that it was much harder to work on people who were alive because they moved and jerked whenever you tried to do anything.

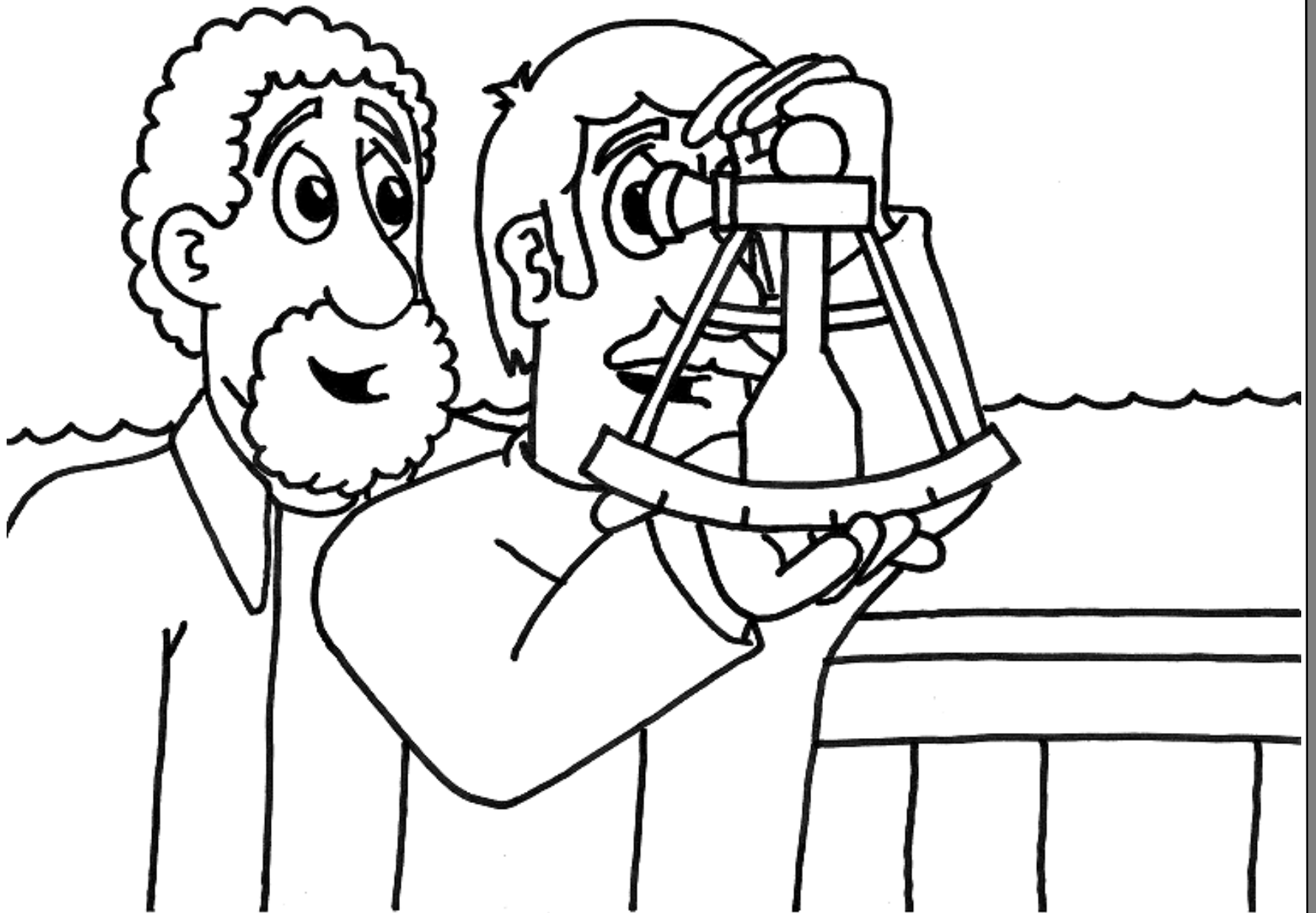
While in London, I also spent time with Professor Owen at the Huntarian Museum. I promised Professor Owen that

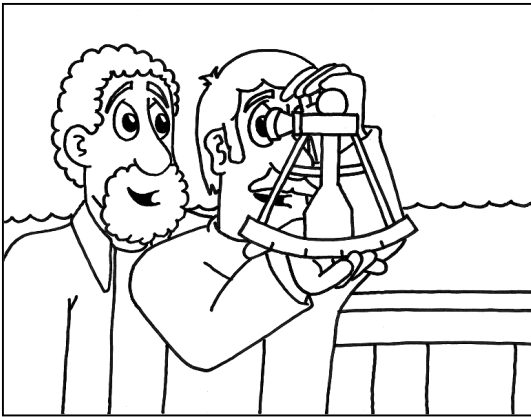
wherever I went in my travels if I ever found interesting animals or plants, I would send them back to him for his museum. While in London, I went and listened one evening to a man named Robert Moffat who had returned from Africa as a missionary on furlough. His sermon made me very excited to get to China and begin my work there.

One problem had come up though. China and England were now at war. British soldiers had sold a large amount of the drug opium to people in China. The Chinese Emperor was very angry that British soldiers would do that and demanded that they stop. The soldiers did not stop, and a war broke out. The London Missionary Society told me that China was not safe for missionaries at this point and that I needed to pick somewhere else to go.

It wasn't long before I found myself eating dinner with Robert Moffat. As we talked, I asked Robert about something. I had heard that the people of Africa lived along the coasts, but that no one lived in the middle of it. Robert told me that this was not correct. "As a matter of fact," he said, "Some mornings I get up and look to the north. There I can see smoke from a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been!" Those words stuck with me. I wouldn't wait for the war to be over in China. There were thousands of people in Africa who needed to hear about the gospel now.

I told the London Missionary Society my plans. They didn't want to send an inexperienced missionary like me to a rough place like Africa. Africa had even been called by some people "the missionary's





preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.” As my father walked me to the boat that would take me back to London, I realized that he wasn’t as healthy as he had been when he walked me to college. I remember wondering if I would ever see him in this life again.

Two weeks later, I was standing on board the *George*. This was the ship that would take me to Port Elizabeth which is the most southern part of Africa. From there, I would travel six hundred miles north to work in the mission station at Kuruman. The year was 1841. William Ross and his wife would be joining me on the ship. They were also going to Kuruman as missionaries.

I loved life at sea, and I spent a lot of time learning how Captain Donaldson navigated using the stars. After some practice, I was able to do it nearly as well as the captain did it. Little did I know it, but this skill would help me out later on in Africa. William and his wife did not enjoy the sea at all. They spent most of their time sick below deck. This left most of the Sunday services on board the ship for me to run. Most of the sailors were rude and didn’t pay much attention to my sermons. One day, our ship ran into a terrible storm. The storm broke the main mast and carried off most of the sails. Because of this, we were left just to float wherever the current took us. Suddenly, more of the crew started coming to the Sunday services and paying better attention. Captain Donaldson carefully plotted our new spot each day. We were headed right for Brazil in South America! We soon landed in Brazil,

and Captain Donaldson told us it would take a week to make repairs.

Though Brazil wasn’t Africa, it was still a mission field, and I unpacked a few Bibles and tracks and went out to talk with the people. I asked William to come along, but he said he was too weak from seasickness to help out. Besides, he said that he had signed up to be a missionary in Africa, not in Brazil.

Soon the *George* had new sails and was ready to head across the Atlantic to Africa. We stopped in Cape Town where further repairs were done to the mast of the ship. These repairs would take almost a month. I had finally set foot in Africa and was eager to help out the mission station there. I couldn’t get the smoke of those thousand villages off of my mind.

While there, William Ross shared with me that he would rather stay and work more on the coast rather than going inland to Kuruman later on. I told him that I couldn’t understand why he would want to stay on the coast when there was so much to be done inland. I wondered how I would ever get along with missionaries like the Rosses. All they had done to this point was to complain about how terrible things were and how they missed England. I had overlooked it because they were sick on the ship, but even now that we had been off of the ship for a few weeks, their complaining had still not stopped. I began to call men like William “veranda missionaries,” because they never seemed to want to leave their veranda or front porch and get down and do some real missionary work.

graveyard.” Still, I would not give up, and they finally agreed that I could go. I finished my training, passed the remainder of my tests, and was ordained as a missionary. I went home to visit my parents one last time before I left for Africa.

My family was very proud that I was now “Dr. Livingstone.” I was proud of what they had all accomplished while I was away as well. My oldest brother John’s lace business was doing very well. My youngest brother Charles had traveled to the United States and was studying to be a pastor in Ohio. My sisters Janet and Agnes were both teachers at local schools. With hard work, my family had been able to leave the life of work in the cotton mills.

I promised that I would write them from Africa, but explained that it may take a very long time for my letters to reach them. I spent the night with my family, and the next morning I awoke to the familiar smell of one of my father’s new tea blends. My father asked that I read the Bible. The last verse of the reading stuck with me all through that day. Psalm 121:8 – “The LORD shall





Soon we were back aboard the *George*. Not long after that, we arrived in Port Elizabeth. It took a few weeks to find a wagon and some oxen and the rest of the supplies that we would need to travel the six hundred miles north to Kuruman. Robert Moffat had said that it would take about two months to travel there. We started with our three African guides who pointed out things along the way and told us what they were called in the Bantu language. Africa was everything I thought and hoped that it would be. Each day, I saw a new plant or animal. Each night, I attempted to write down what I was seeing in my journal, and I even collected samples of some things for Professor Owen. I enjoyed seeing the tall grasses, the scorpions, the snakes, and the other things that we passed by. One night, I even enjoyed watching a group of ants working to carry away the rest of my meal that I had not eaten back to their colony.

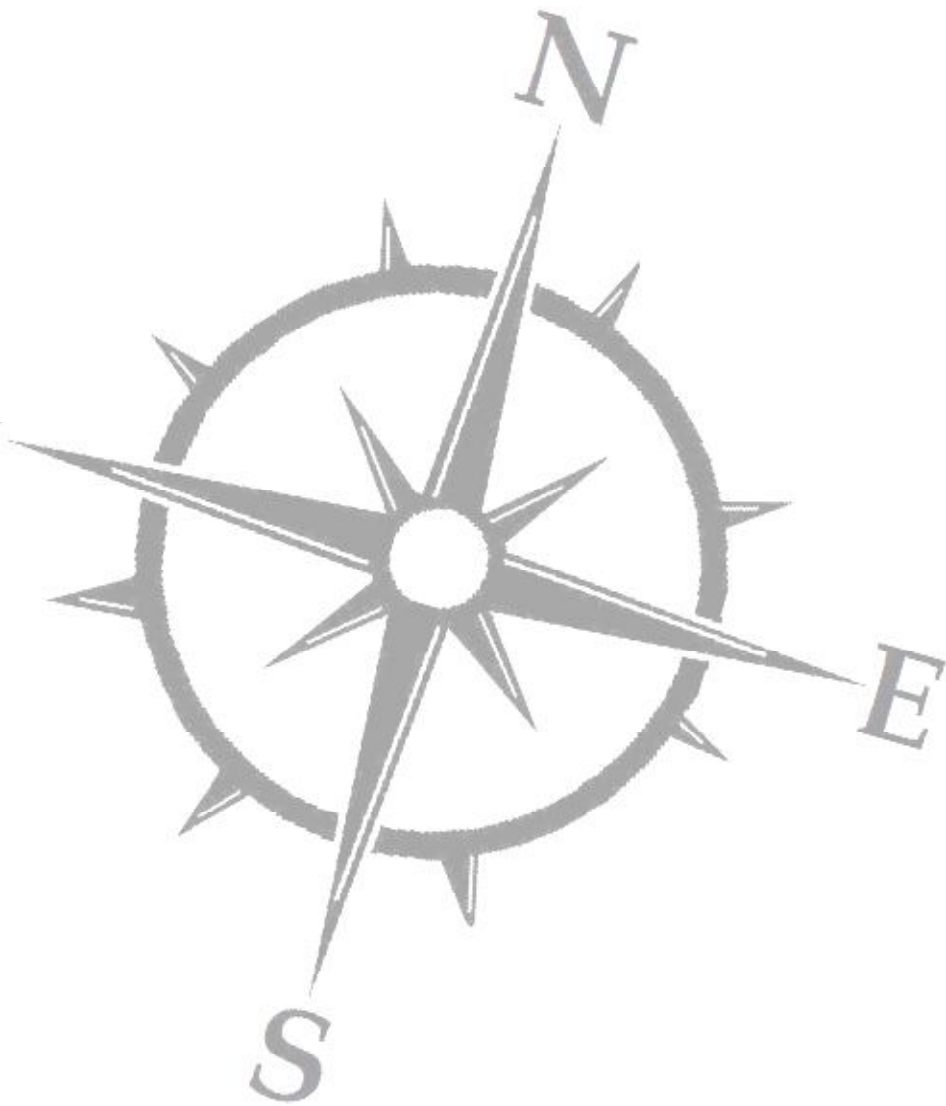
After two months, I finally caught sight of Kuruman. This was where I would begin working. As we pulled in, we learned that the Moffats had not come back

from their furlough in England yet, but there were other missionaries there to greet us. Roger Edwards and his wife and Robert Hamilton all helped us to unload our wagon. I was given a room to myself in the compound, and I brought my things there and met everyone again on the porch of one of the houses. From there Roger said, "Let me show you guys around the mission compound." We passed by a workshop with several tools, and I remembered some of the things I had learned at college about working with wood and wondered if I would be able to help in building things here. We saw other houses too and the irrigation system that brought water from a spring into our mission compound.

As we came around the corner of a building, something caught my eye. I stopped walking and just stared ahead. "What are you looking at?" Roger asked.

What sort of thing do you think that David saw? To find out come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 5.4 on **page 136** in your *Africa 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 our information:

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