

The Life of

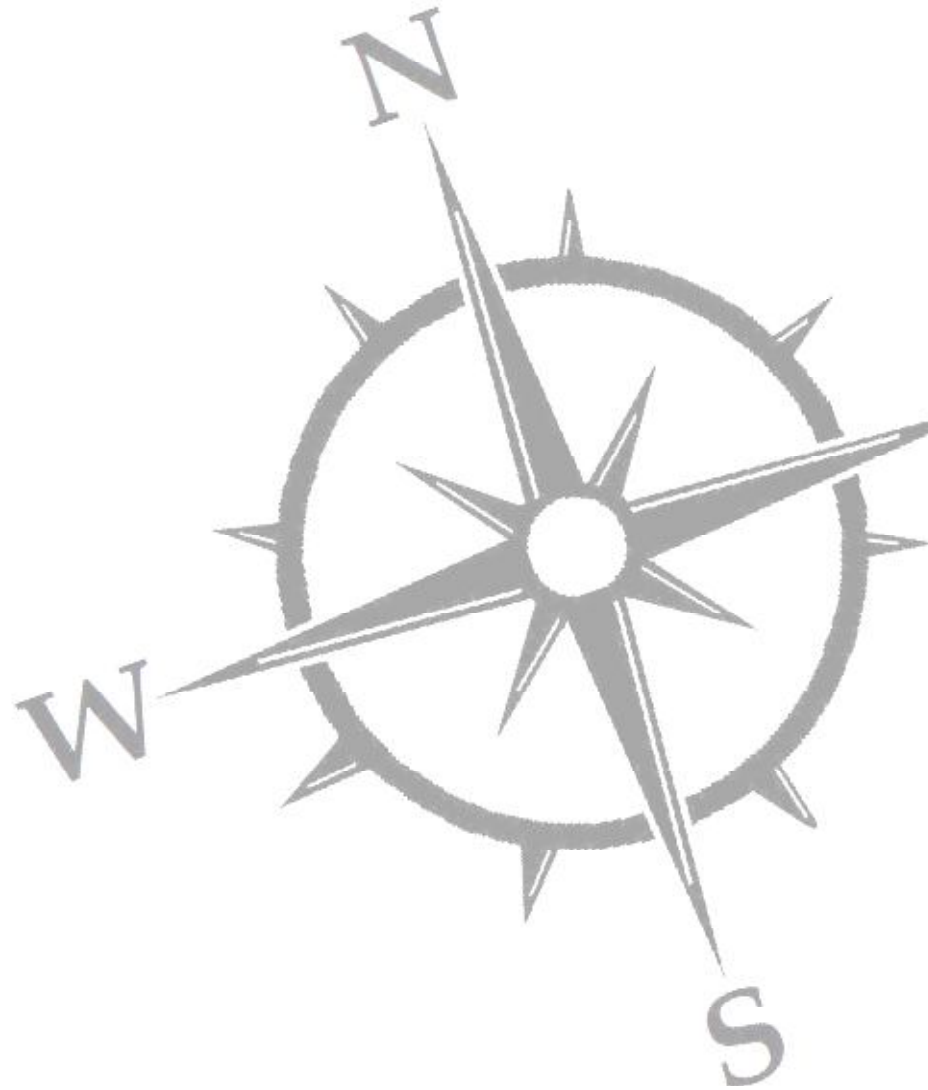
Gladys Aylward

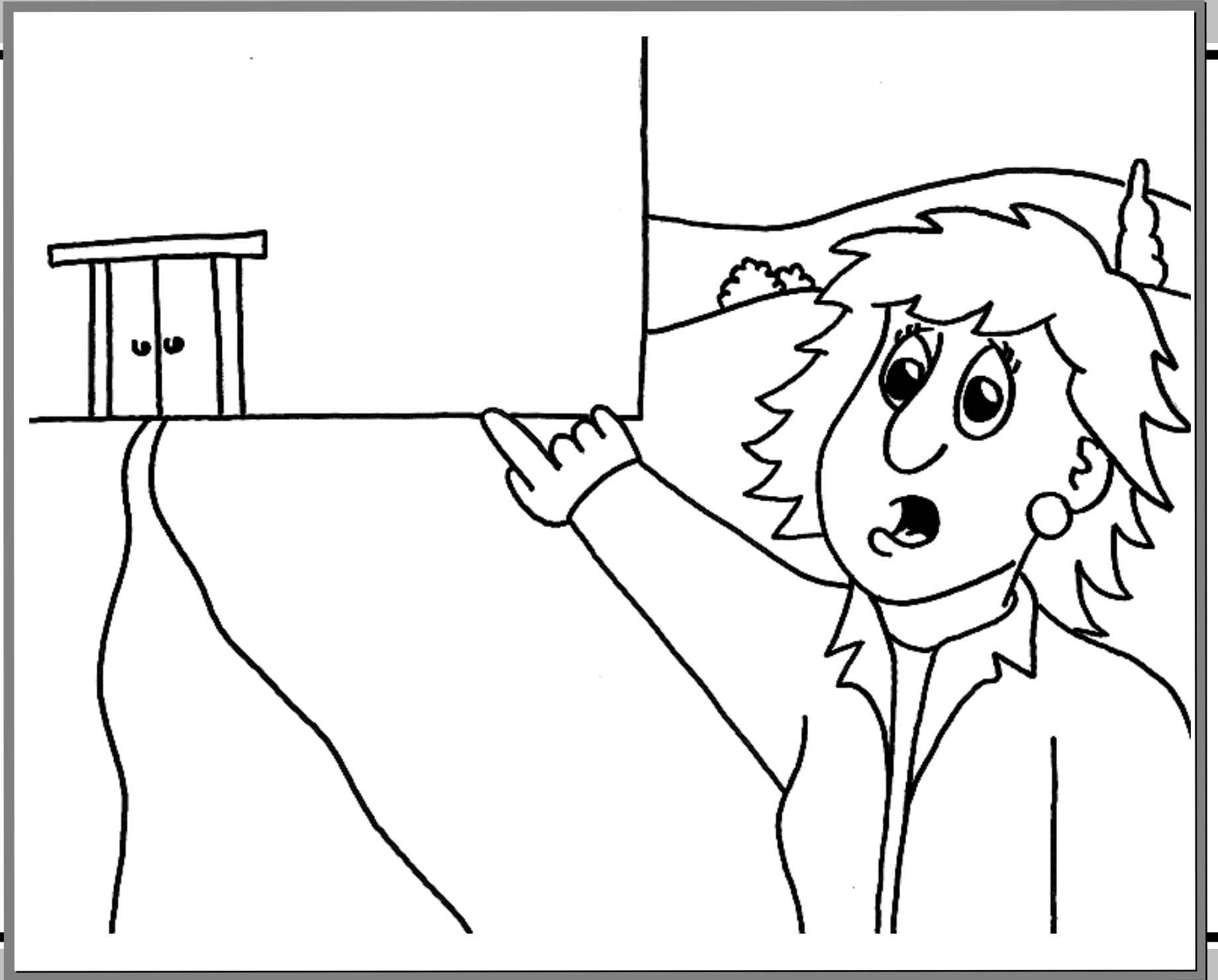
(1902-1970)

Lesson: 4.27 – Bravery Missionary Snapshot Series

This lesson encourages us not to be afraid of the world. The world will put pressure on us to conform to their way of living, but a Christian must have the courage to stand for what is right. God cares for those who do what is right. Gladys Aylward was about to face several very scary things. She would have to trust in the Lord to protect her and keep her safe.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” - Joshua 1:9







Introduction:

Have you ever seen a picture or video of a person in a metal cage that is dropped in the ocean near a whole group of sharks? These divers climb into a cage surrounded by ferocious animals that could tear them apart at any minute. However, the metal bars of the cage keep them safe. Our story today is about a missionary to China. This missionary risked her life and faced several very dangerous situations to go and tell these people about Jesus' love. There were many times that she could have been seriously hurt. Would God keep her safe and protect her? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about Gladys Aylward...

Missionary Story:

BANG! BANG! BANG! The noise of someone pounding on the front gate of the Inn of Sixth Happiness made me look up from sweeping off the porch. "Miss Gladys! You must come quickly!" the messenger shouted waving his arms. I set down the broom that I was holding and hurried off after the messenger. It wasn't long before I

was standing before the Mandarin just outside of a prison. I heard lots of shouting and screaming coming from inside the walls.

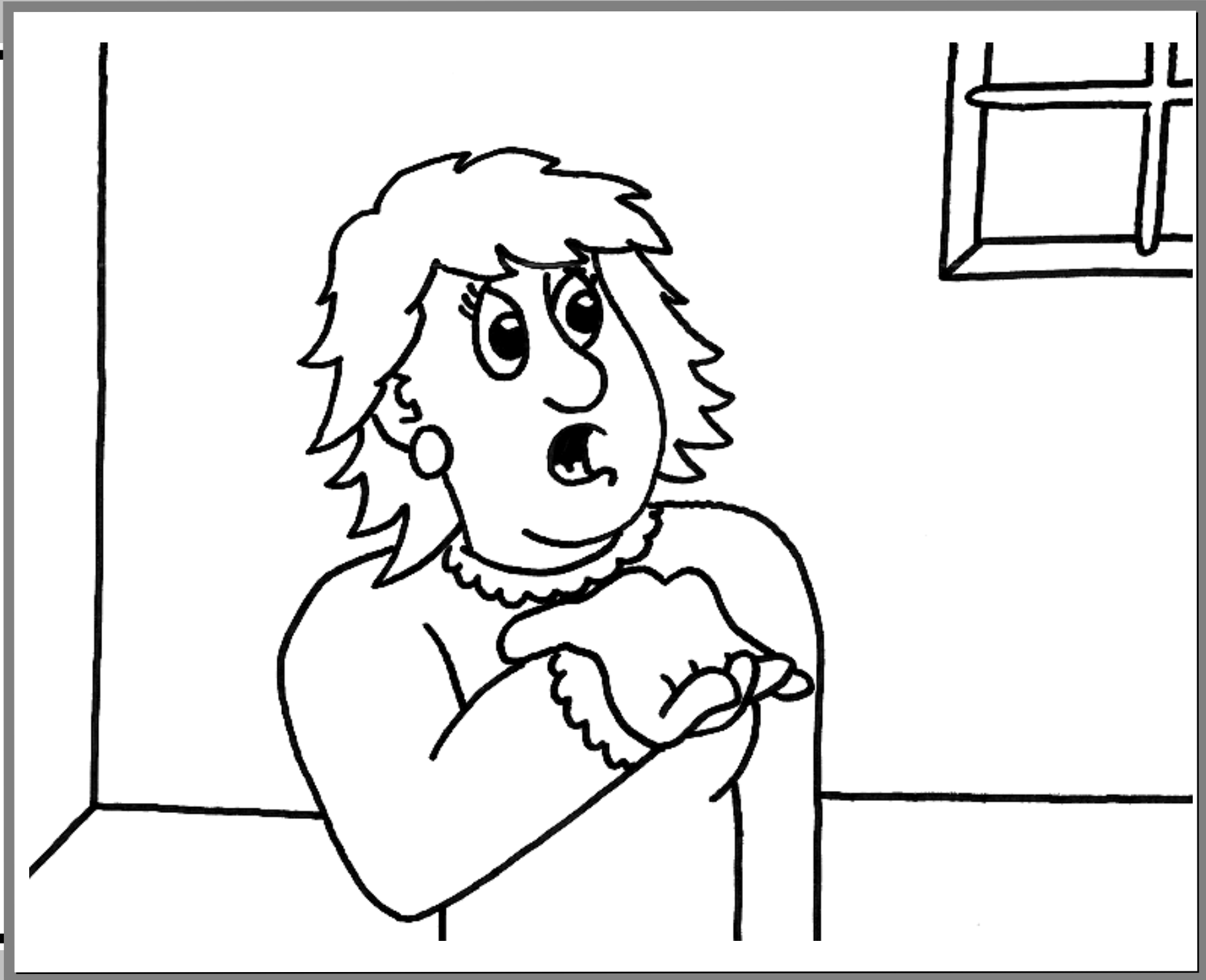
"Thank goodness you have come!" the Mandarin said wringing his hands, "you must go inside and stop the riot!" I was surprised. "You want me to go in there?" I asked. The Mandarin looked at me and said, "you tell our people that God lives inside of you. If what you say is true, surely your God will protect you when you go inside the prison." "Is he joking?" I thought as I stared at the Mandarin and his guards, but they were serious. "What am I going to do?" I thought looking over at the prison walls.

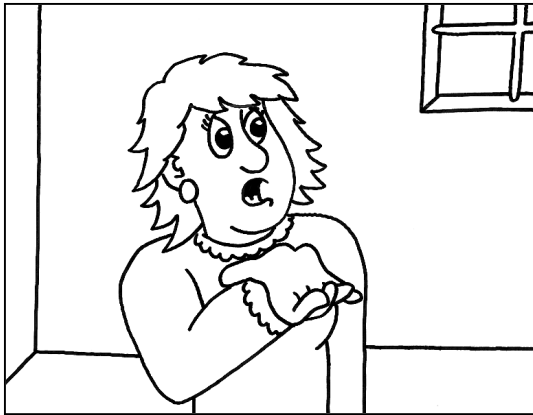
The mention of prisoners reminded me of my train trip to get to China several years before. I remembered handing my passport to one of the Russian guards at the train station in Chita. He pointed at a train and told me to get on that train. As the train gained speed, I realized that we were headed south, but not towards China. We were headed to another place in Russia called Vladivostok. As the train pulled into the station several hours later, I climbed off with no idea what I should do. I found the only hotel in town. I gave my passport to the guard at the desk. Exhausted, I went to my room and soon fell fast asleep.

The next morning, I cracked open my door only to find a man dressed in a soldier's uniform leaning against the wall. "I have been waiting to show you our great city," he said in English. He said that he would be my interpreter, but as the day went on he seemed much more like my prison guard. The next morning, I opened my door

to once again find him standing against the wall right outside my room. "When do I get to go to China?" I asked. The man wrinkled his forehead and leaned in closer. "What makes you think you are ever leaving Russia?" he asked. "You are a machinist. You do not need to go to China to work on machines," he continued, "we have plenty of machines here in Russia." "I am a missionary, not a machinist," I said "I have never worked on a machine in my life." I decided to go for a walk to cool down, but the official was never more than a couple of steps behind me. I felt like I was in danger.

No one knew where I was, the guard had my passport, they had gone through my suitcases and stolen everything out of them, and I only had a one-pound note left hidden in my dress. I whispered a prayer for God to protect me. As I got back to the hotel and started up the stairs to my room, I passed a young woman. "Don't say anything and follow me," she whispered. At first, I thought I was hearing things, but I followed her down the hallway and we stopped in a poorly lit corner. "Who are you?" I asked. "That doesn't matter," the girl said, "you are in great danger. Where is your passport?" "The official has it," I whispered. "You must get it back at all costs. I have seen many foreigners just like you taken into the interior and never seen again," she said. A chill ran up my spine. "Get your passport," she continued, "at midnight you will hear a knock on the door of your room. Open the door and follow the man. Do not speak to him, just follow him." It all seemed like something out of a book, but it was truly happening.





being a machinist. They weren't planning on letting me leave Russia. Midnight came and went but there was no knock. I prayed once again for God's protection. After two long hours, I heard a very quiet knock. I opened the door and followed the man. We crept out into the night and soon found ourselves at the docks. The same young girl was standing there. "See that ship?" she asked, "it leaves for Japan tonight. Be sure that you are on it!" She pointed to a hut where the captain sat. The captain understood and agreed to take me to Japan. I followed him to his ship. Just before I climbed on board, I heard the sound of boots running up behind me. I turned and saw several Communist soldiers. I had to do something! I reached into my dress and pulled out the one-pound note I had hidden there and threw it up into the air. The soldiers' eyes watched it float through the air giving me just enough time to jump on board the ship as it pulled away from the dock.

"Yes, God had protected me back then," I thought, "I must trust Him to protect me now." I took a deep breath and pushed the door to the prison open. Inside a terrible sight met my eyes. Prisoners were chasing each other with knives and screaming. Several lay injured on the ground. I turned just in time to see a large prisoner running right at me with an ax raised over his head. I froze. But when the man was only a few feet away, he suddenly stopped and just glared at me. "Why are you fighting?" I finally asked. The man lowered his ax. Another prisoner explained that they were all hungry and had nothing to do day after day. I agreed to speak to the Mandarin for them. As I walked out of

the prison, the guards bowed to me. "These men need food and something to do to keep them busy," I told the Mandarin. As I walked back to the Inn of the Sixth Happiness that day, I thanked the Lord for His protecting hand once again.

Application:

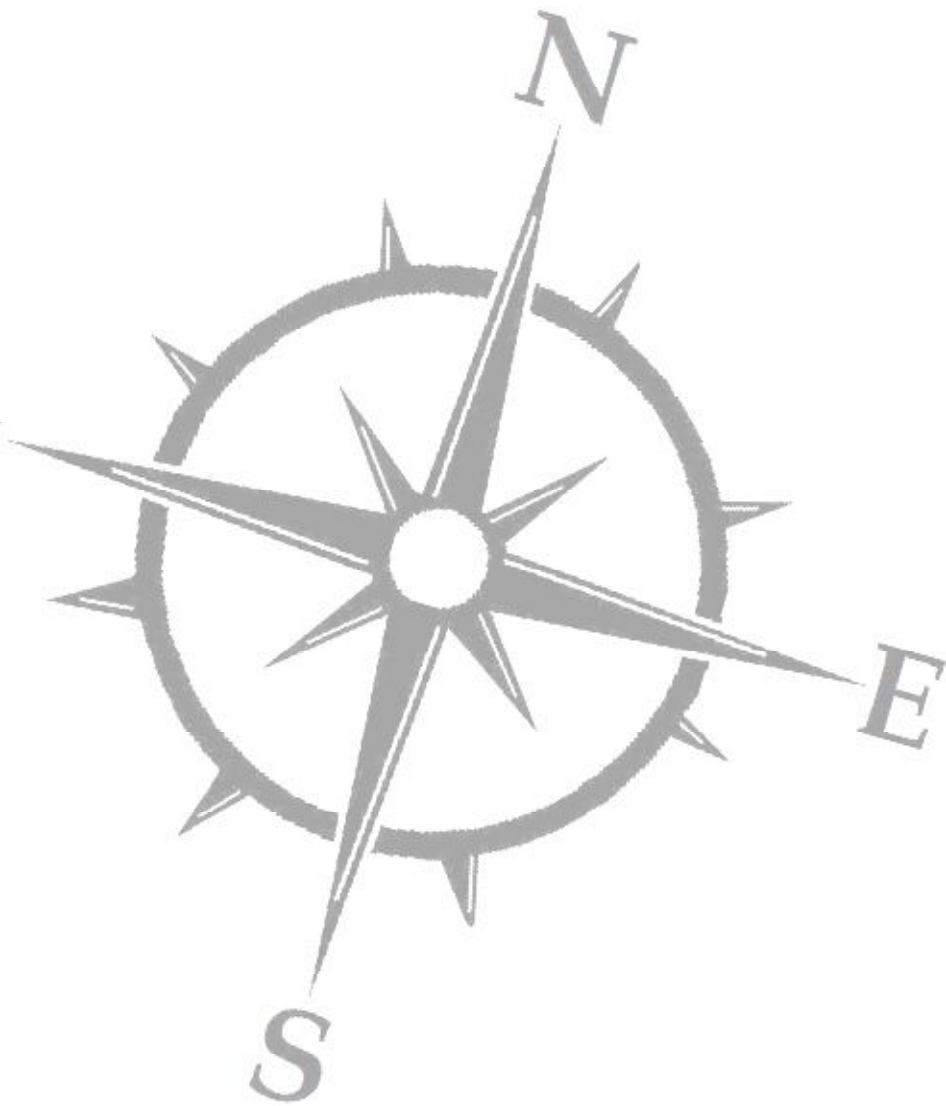
You know, boys and girls, Joshua 1:9 tells us not to be afraid because God goes with us everywhere that He sends us. No one is more powerful than God. God is watching out for us every step of the way. It was not long after the events in this story that China was attacked by Japan. Gladys Aylward would again have to trust the Lord to protect her as she led over 100 orphan children on a dangerous journey through the mountains.

Gladys Aylward worked in China for over forty years. She was told she was too old and too frail to be a missionary in China. Yet over those forty years, she took care of hundreds of orphans, traveled hundreds of miles throughout China, and faced many very scary situations without ever shying away from them. In 1966, a movie was made about her life called the *Inn of Sixth Happiness*. Some said she'd never make it in China, but she persevered and watched God do amazing things in her life because of it.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to **lesson 4.26 on page 90** in your *India Expedition - Leader's Guide*.)*

I walked back down the stairs where the official sat with his feet on the desk. "You have my passport," I said, "I need it back." "It is still being examined," he said, "I will bring it to your room later tonight." I went back up to my room and sat on the edge of my bed for several hours. "What if I couldn't get my passport back? Or what if the guard and the man arrived at my room at the same time?" I thought. I finally prayed once again and asked for God's protection. Several hours later, there was a loud knock at the door. When I opened it, the guard stepped inside holding up my passport. I quickly snatched it out of his hand. "Why did you just do that?" he said angrily as he shut the door. "You can't touch me," I said, "God will protect me!" The guard began to curse in English and Russian and then raised his fist to punch me. But then, almost as if some invisible hand was holding his arm, he lowered his fist, turned around, and left.

I bolted the door behind him and sat down on my bed. My hands were shaking. I examined my passport. The Communists had changed my job from being a missionary to



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:

Benge, J., & Benge, G. (1998). *Gladys Aylward: the adventure of a lifetime*. Seattle, WA: YWAM Pub.

Howat, I. (2004). *Ten girls who changed the world*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications.

Jackson, D., & Jackson, N. (1996). *Hero tales: Volume 1*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.

Martin, M. A., & Burkholder, E. (1993). *Missionary stories with the Millers*. Minerva, OH: Green Pastures Press.

N.A. (n.d.) *Gladys Aylward's Long Road to China*. Retrieved from <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/church-history-for-kids/gladys-aylwards-long-road-to-china-11634863.html>

Swinford, B. (2009). *Missionary stories: from around the world*. Fearn: CF4K.

Tucker, R. (n.d.) *Gladys Aylward*. Retrieved from <http://womenmissionaries.blogspot.com/p/gladys-aylward.html>

