

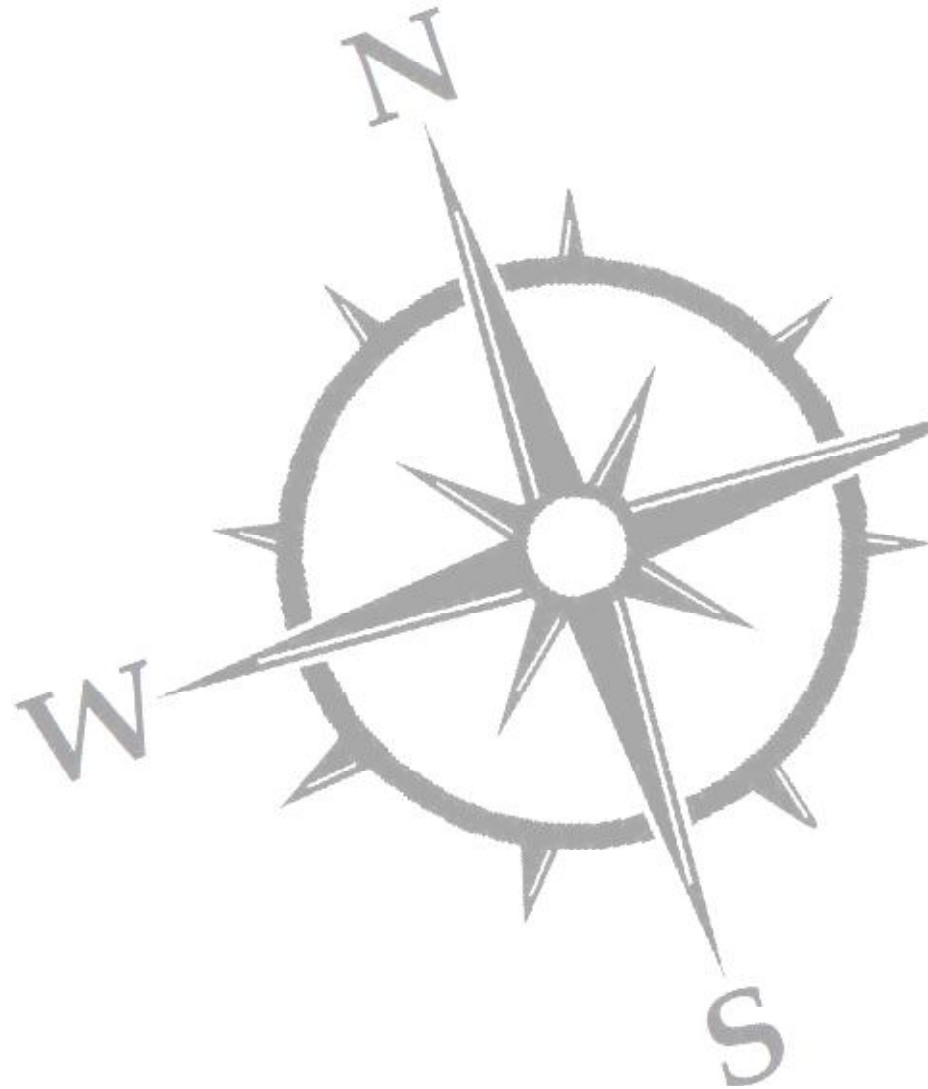
The Life of Samuel Zwemer

(1867-1952)

Lesson: 5.26 – Change Missionary Snapshot Series

This lesson reminds us that God can change the heart of even the worst sinner. God's wonderful gift of salvation will transform someone from God's enemy into God's child. God completely changes them. They are not just trying to live better or turning over a new leaf, they are completely new on the inside. Samuel Zwemer was about to watch God take those who hated God and the Bible and transform them into servants of the Lord.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." - 2 Corinthians 5:17







Introduction:

How many of you have ever seen a cocoon? A cocoon is an amazing thing. An ugly, fat caterpillar goes inside of it and a little while later, a beautiful butterfly comes out. A great change happens on the inside of that cocoon. Our story today is about a missionary to a place where people hated God and the things of the Bible. 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. Could the gospel change these people's hard hearts? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about Samuel Zwemer...

Missionary Story:

"We must get the water out!" the captain yelled. With one arm holding on tightly to the side of the large canoe, I used my other arm to quickly sweep armfuls of water over the side. Suddenly, a mountain of water came crashing down on top of us. "We must go ashore," the captain said, "or this storm will kill us all!" I continued trying to

sweep the water out of the boat with my arm. "Land does seem like the best place to be right now," I thought to myself. I looked around the canoe. Everything, including my luggage and all the Arabic Bibles I had brought with me, was soaked. Slowly the other sailors turned the canoe and began rowing towards the shore.

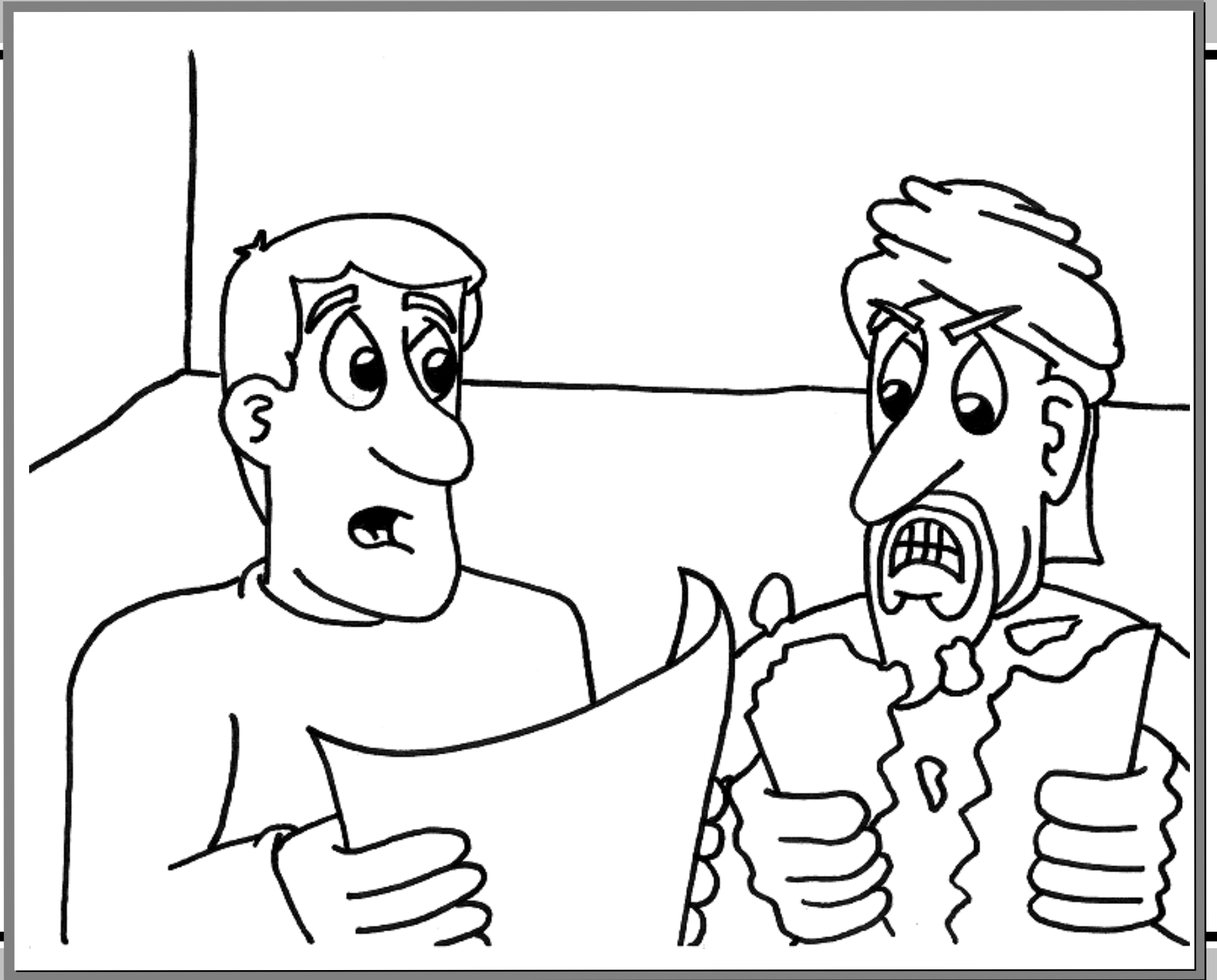
It seemed like forever before we felt the bottom of the canoe scraping against the sand. Everyone jumped out. I looked all around in every direction up and down the beach. Nothing! We were all alone. I looked back at the captain who seemed to be nervously looking back and forth like he expected to see someone. Suddenly, I saw something move out the corner of my eye. I looked up to see two large Bedouin men spring out of the bushes. Each one held a sharp spear up over his shoulder ready to throw it at any moment.

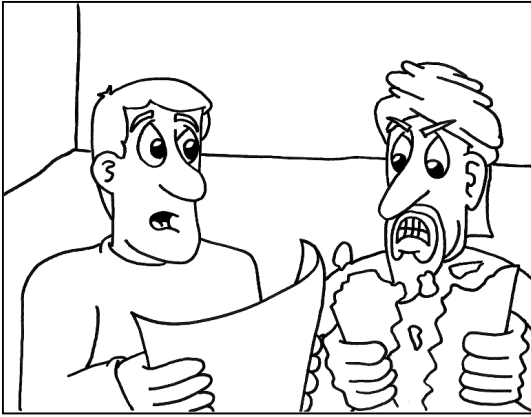
I expected the captain to step forward and say something, but he and the rest of the sailors seemed like they were frozen in their places. I held my breath and my heartbeat wildly inside me as the men came closer. They looked at the faces of each person. Since I was the only person who was not Arabic, their eyes both focused on me. Their eyes had a look like they planned to kill someone. I looked behind me. The storm was still swirling, waves were crashing against the shore. There was no escaping that way. I turned back around just in time to see one of the spearheads almost touching my nose. "Give us your coffee!" one of the men demanded. "This land is our land and you have no right to be here," they continued,

"now give us your coffee!" No one said a word. Finally, I spoke up. "We won't give you our coffee, but you can have some of our food," I said. "No," he snapped back, "we want your coffee." Then the other man spoke up. "If you won't give us coffee," he said, "give us your money instead." Before I could answer something moved in the bushes to the side. Before we knew it, we were surrounded by hundreds of other Bedouins all shouting and pushing. They began pulling at our clothes and grabbing our bags. I had to do something before they stole everything we had. "You had better think twice about attacking us," I said, "the captain has a gun." Several Bedouins ran to our canoe and grabbed it. "We will not let you go," they said. Things were getting out of control.

Suddenly, I spotted a man who looked to be their chief. I ran over to him, took out my pocket knife, and cut off one of the strings of beads that hung around his neck. "This is your gift to me," I said, "now let me give a gift to you." I grabbed some medicine from my boat, but before I could hand it to the chief, a loud voice began to pray. "O God of the Universe," the voice said, "who made every grain of sand on which we stand..." I turned to see my Arabic friend Kamil praying in the same way that the Muslims prayed, but he wasn't praying to the Muslim's god. I looked around. It was as if someone had put a spell on everyone standing there. Even the wind and storm seemed to quiet down to listen to what Kamil was saying.

No one moved. For about 30 minutes Kamil prayed. During his "prayer," Kamil





place on Earth, and give me the courage to tell the people there about Jesus.”

God had heard my prayer and had indeed led me to be a missionary in a very difficult place...Arabia. The people here were Muslim and they had a hatred for Christianity. Muslims rarely accepted Christ and tried to stop me whenever I preached.

Sometime later, a mission society offered to pay for me to move to the capital city of Cairo and print Arabic tracts for the entire Islamic world. I remembered printing hundreds of Gospel tracts in the Arabic language and being arrested several times for giving them out to people on the streets. About a year after arriving, a professor at Cairo University asked me to come to speak to his class. He did not tell me what I should talk about, so I decided to bring some of my Gospel tracts with me.

“I have some good news that I want to share with you today,” I said as I began to pass out a Gospel tract to the professor and each of the students in the class. “Silence,” came a sudden scream from the side of the room. I turned to see the professor angrily tearing up the tract into little pieces and stomping it into the ground. Then he began to run around the room grabbing the tracts out of all of the student’s hands and tearing them to bits. Finally, he reached the back of the room and tore up the rest of the tracts. “Be gone...all of you get out!” he shouted as he ran from the room. The students quickly gathered their things and left. Once alone, I packed up my things and left as well.

Later that night, there was a knock at my door. Expecting it was the police, I

walked over and slowly opened it. The person at the door stuck a paper of some sort into my hands. It was very dark outside and the paper felt like it had been crumpled up. I held it up to the light and realized that it was a copy of the tract I had passed out to the students that day. Hundreds of tiny pieces had been carefully stuck back together. “I went back in the classroom and collected the torn pieces after everyone left,” the young man said. “Your message must be true for the professor to try so hard to destroy it,” he said, “I must know more about this Jesus you spoke of.” “Come inside,” I said, “Let me tell you all about the wonderful love of Jesus who can save you from all of your sins.”

Application:

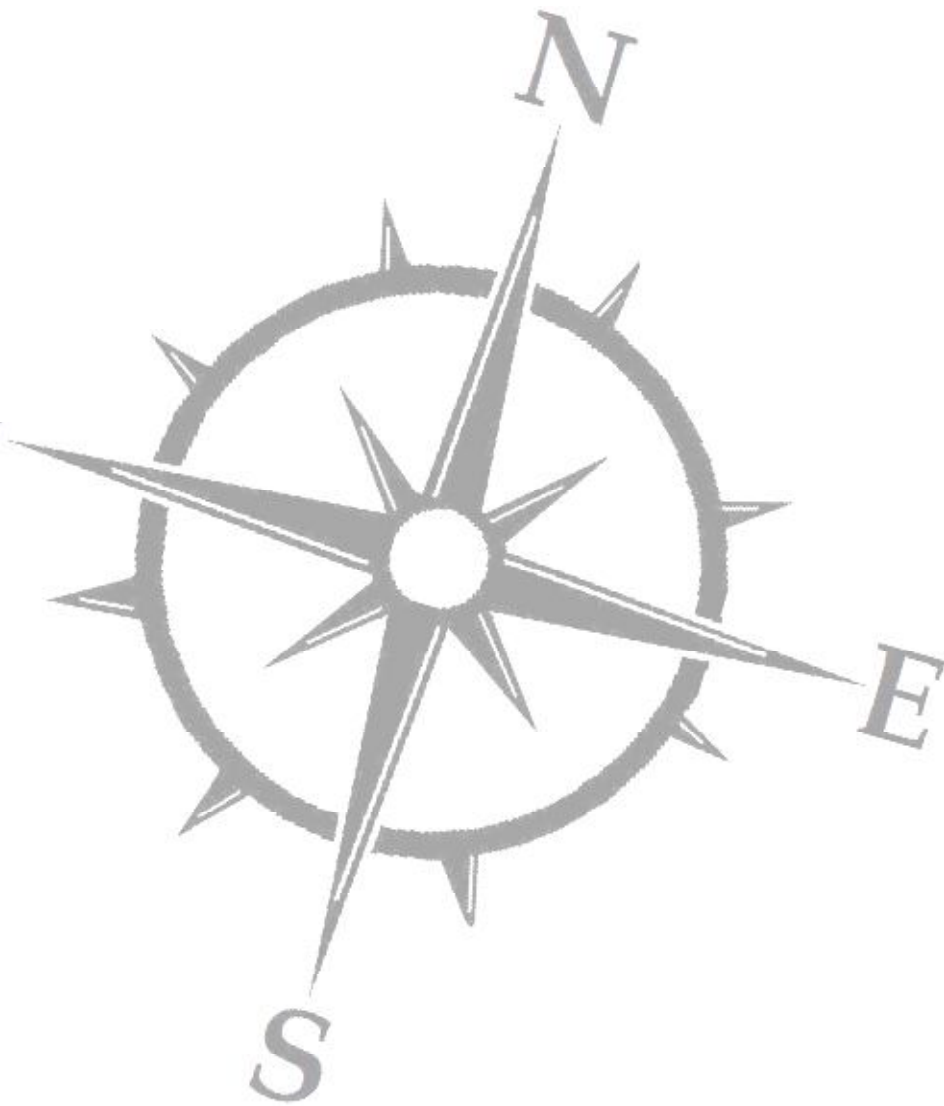
You know, boys and girls, Ezekiel 36:26-27 tells us that God can save even the worst of sinners. He can change our dirty hearts and make them clean and new through His salvation. Some people are afraid to tell others about the Lord. Samuel was not afraid to go to one of the most hostile places in the world to tell the people there about Jesus.

Samuel Zwemer set up 4 missions stations in Arabia. He is best remembered for getting Christians excited to evangelize Muslims. He wrote almost 60 books and wrote and printed millions of tracts for Muslims. His work has led to over 14,000 young people going to the mission field.

(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 5.26 on page 90 in your Africa Expedition - Leader's Guide.)

told all about creation, Moses, Jesus coming to the Earth, and the Holy Spirit’s power. As he prayed, the people stood silently listening. Kamil closed his prayer by saying, “in the name of our dear Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.” “Amen,” all the Bedouins said at once. Everyone stood silent. “Something strange has happened inside of me,” one Bedouin finally said. “I no longer feel like robbing or speaking meanly to anyone. A great change has happened!”

As we pushed off in our canoe, I looked back at all the Bedouins on the beach. They stood waving and smiling. This was very different from the way they were when we arrived. My mind flashed back to Michigan, where I had gone to college. Robert Wilder stood at the front of the classroom with a large metronome. A metronome has a pointer stick that clicks from side to side and helps a musician keep time. “Every time the metronome clicks,” Robert said, “three people die in our world without Christ.” After the chapel service was over, I went back to my room, knelt by my bed, and prayed. “Lord put me in the hardest



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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