

# The Life of David Livingstone

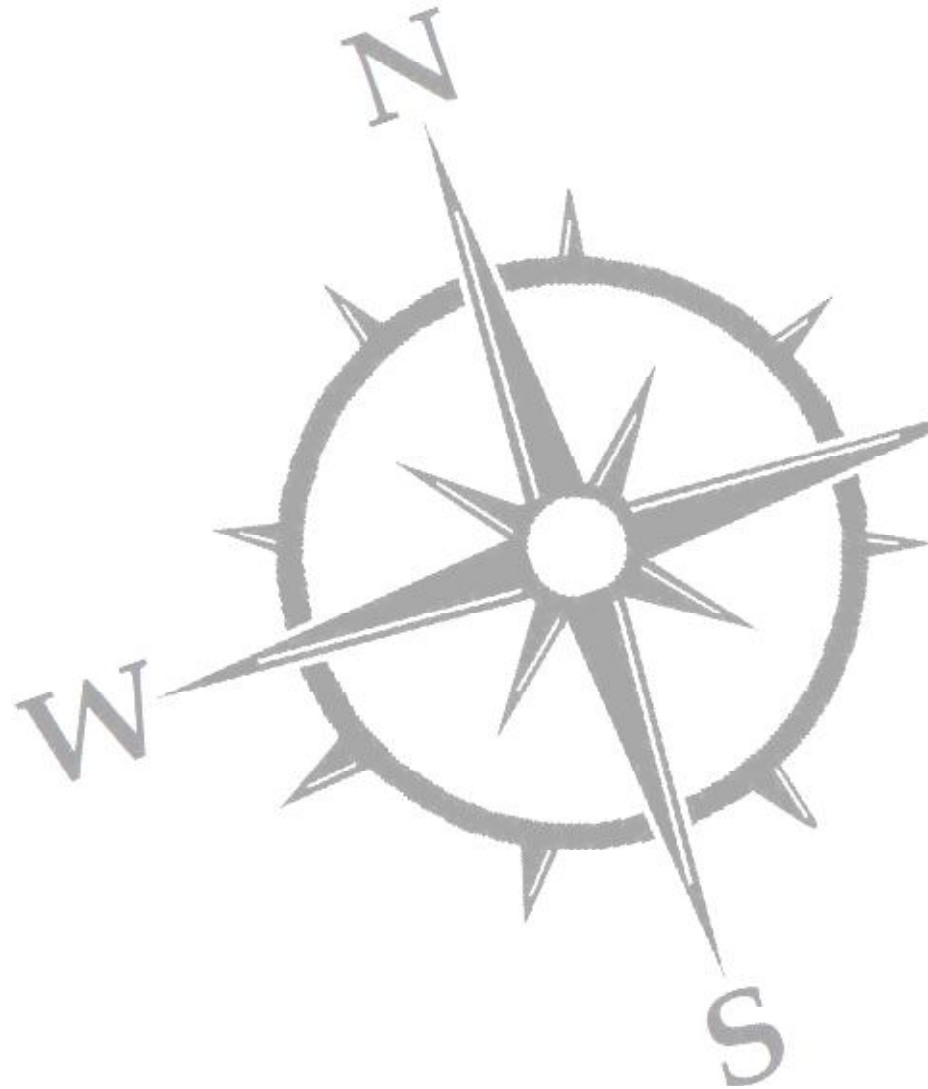
(1813–1873)

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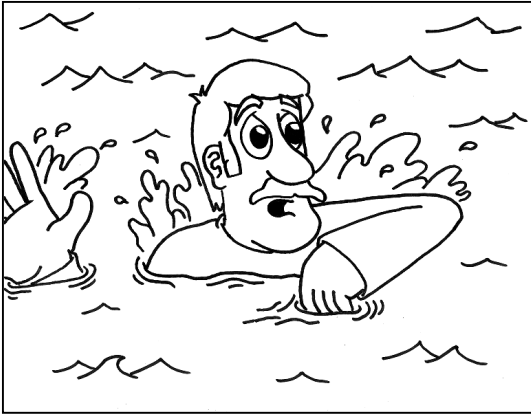
## Lesson: 5.3 – Lost Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us of how important the soul of each sinner is to God. God loves the world and desires for everyone to be saved. The angels rejoice over every person who is saved. God had some big plans for David Livingstone, but David also needed to learn some things first. The first thing God wanted David to see was that he was lost and needed to be found.

*“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” – Luke 19:10*







stepped out from behind a nearby bush. I explained our situation, and he told me that they had a settlement set up just across the river. We decided to try to sneak across the river in the middle of the night to avoid waking the tribe. About halfway across the river, we heard shouting back on the shore. The tribe was awake! The chief ordered his men to fire at us. I prayed that no one would be hurt. Finally, we reached the other side of the river. Once we were safely behind the trees, my thoughts turned back to my family.

Here I was in the middle of Africa...farther from Blantyre than most people there probably ever dreamed of going. You see, I grew up in a little town called Blantyre in Scotland. I was born in 1813. My father was a tea peddler. He bought large sacks of tea and put them into smaller bags to sell around Blantyre. As he walked around each day, he would pass out tracts along the way and talk with people. It seemed like a wonderful job to me. My brothers and sisters and I were cooped up for fourteen hours a day, six days a week working in the cotton mill. I was a piercer. My job was to crawl around under the big noisy looms and tie together any threads that might come loose. If I didn't, there would be a big long run in the fabric and I would be in trouble.

My father had taught me to read when I was six years old. To help pass the time at the factory each day, I would set up a book against a hay bale under the loom. Whenever I had a moment, I would read a sentence and then think about what I had read as I worked. The other boys made a game out of throwing old cotton reels at my

book. They would cheer if they were able to knock my book off the hay.

A new law was passed in Scotland that said that factories needed to offer schooling to the children who worked in them. The law did not say what time the classes needed to be offered though. Our factory offered classes late each night after work was over. Most of the kids were way too tired and did not go to the classes. I loved learning so much that I went and forced myself to stay awake.

On Sundays, my parents always made sure that we were in church. I knew many verses from the Bible. When I was nine years old, I won a Bible of my own for saying all 176 verses of Psalm 119 to my teacher and only messing up five times. I knew a lot about the Bible and even about how to become a Christian, but I had a problem. You see, many people during that time thought that there was no way that a person could love God and study science at the same time. My father thought this and had told me that I couldn't read science books. He said that Christians should be happy with what God had made and not be worried about how or why He made them.

I knew that I needed to become a Christian, and yet so many exciting things were being discovered in science all around me. It wasn't until about eight years later that I read a book called *Philosophy of a Future State*. In this book, the author who was a strong Christian said that studying biology and the other sciences would help bring a Christian closer to God. I was surprised. He was saying that you could study science

“Shoot them, shoot them!” The cry rang out through the darkness. I ducked as low as I could in the water as bullets and arrows whizzed by all around us. It was the middle of the night, and the trees along the banks of the Quango River made it very dark and difficult to see.

My men and I had come to the banks of the Quango River only the day before. The chief in this area demanded that I give him a gun, an ox, or a man. I could give none of these things up. The remaining guns that we had were needed for defense and hunting. We had very few oxen left to pull our heavy wagon, and I knew if I gave him one of my men, the chief would force that person to become a slave in the tribe. I had quietly prayed for the Lord to help me.

I then told the chief that I needed to talk it over with my men. The chief laughed, and he yelled after me that I would never be able to cross the river without his help and that if I tried to turn back, they would follow us and attack us.

As I talked with my men, a man in a Portuguese soldier's uniform suddenly





school. Anderson College was the cheapest college, and it would cost twelve pounds for one semester. I made five shillings a week, and there were twenty shillings in a pound. So that meant that it would take me one month to earn one pound. On top of that, I would need money for a place to stay while at college, and money for books and food. I worked out more numbers and found that if I saved every penny for three years, I would have enough money to go to school for one semester.

This would have probably made most people want to give up, but it gave me hope... now I knew that it could be done. I told my parents my plans, and they both said that they didn't think I could do it. They thought perhaps a girl would come along and I would get married and stay in Blantyre for the rest of my life.

Three years later, I had enough money to be able to go to college. I was now 23 years old. I packed my few belongings in a sack, and my father and I walked the eight miles to Glasgow where Anderson College was. We walked all through town checking in at all the boarding houses that a friend of mine had told us about. All of them were way too expensive for what I could afford. Finally, a woman said if I could only pay two shillings per week, then there was only one place for me to go...Rotten Row. I could tell what kind of a place it would be just by the name of it. We followed her directions, and I found myself standing in front of a wooden building that appeared to be falling apart. I could hear many babies crying and parents yelling at their children.

and be a Christian as well! I prayed and asked God to save me from my sins. I knew that I too wanted to study science, but I wondered how I would tell my father about it.

A few Sundays later, I sat nervously next to my father in church. Our pastor stood up and read a letter from Dr. Gutzlaff. Dr. Gutzlaff said that China desperately needed missionaries and that those missionaries needed to be trained as medical doctors. Dr. Gutzlaff was suggesting that a Christian should study medicine and science. On the way home, I nervously asked my father what he thought about the letter. He said that he found it fascinating and was sorry for how hard he had been on me about learning about science. He even said that I could borrow books about science if I wanted, although he didn't know that they would do me a lot of good.

I began reading more about science and praying. I believed that God wanted me to go to school to become a medical missionary. Late one night, I sat by the fire totaling how much it would cost to go to

The woman inside said that she did have a room that I could rent. There was mold on the walls, and it wasn't even big enough for my father and me to both stand inside of it at the same time, but at least there was a roof over my head and a place for me to keep my books.

With that, my dad said, "Well, God bless you, lad." He shook my hand and told me to come home whenever I could to visit. As I watched him walk away I felt completely alone. For just a minute, I wanted to run after him, but I had worked too long and too hard to be where I was to give up now.

The next morning, I was up bright and early not only because of how uncomfortable my bed was but also because of how excited I was to begin my first day of college. I had enrolled in my classes by mail and already read most of my textbooks, but I was excited to meet the professors. It did not take long to fall right into the flow of things at college. The college was buzzing with all the latest scientific discoveries. Some of the older students had built a galvanic battery and were testing many experiments with electricity.

I paid careful attention to anything that was mentioned about treating disease and sickness. I also got to try out a newly discovered device called a stethoscope which allowed doctors for the first time to hear the sounds that the lungs and the heart made inside the chest.

I returned home a couple of times during that semester to tell my family all about what I was doing. My sisters Agnes





and Janet saw what I had done and decided that they wanted to become school teachers. My brother Charles decided to work hard to become a pastor.

The first five months of college flew by, and my semester was over. I went back home to work in the mill, but when the time came to go back to school, I did not have enough money. Thankfully, my older brother John had become a lace merchant, and he gave me enough money to return to school. The next few years also passed by quickly. I spent time learning to repair lab equipment and anything else people would teach me. I didn't know what I would need to know how to do on the mission field, so I thought that I should learn as much as I could.

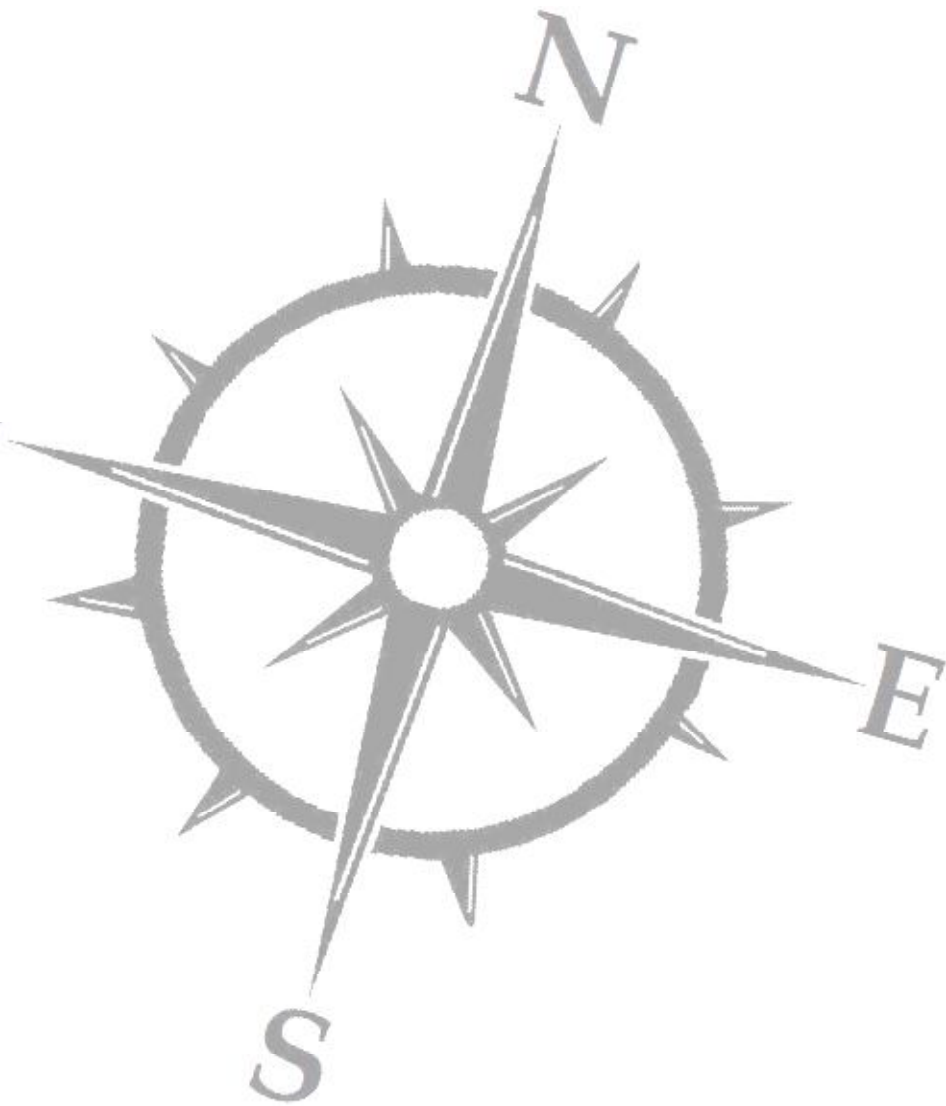
Finally, college was over. The year was 1838. I was offered a well-paying job teaching at the college, but I knew that God wanted me to be a missionary. I applied, and I was accepted by the London Missionary Society. I traveled to London to begin my training with the missionary society. I was assigned by the missionary society to work with Reverend Cecil for three months.

During this time, I was to work on preaching, Hebrew, and Greek. Things seemed to go great at first until one night when the Reverend Cecil asked me at the last minute to fill in for a pastor in the area who was sick. I had just enough time to walk to the church where I was needed. Thankfully, I had memorized a sermon just in case this sort of thing ever happened.

As the singing time came to a close, I knew it was time for my sermon. I stood up at the pulpit and looked out over the audience. There in the front row sat Reverend Cecil staring up at me! A million thoughts went through my head. I needed to try to speak without my Scottish accent and pause between main points. Failing this kind of preaching opportunity would certainly mean that I would be turned away by the London Missionary Society. I opened my mouth to speak, but suddenly I could not remember a single word of my sermon. I couldn't even remember what verses I was supposed to preach about. I opened my Bible, but still, nothing came to mind. I nervously looked out at the Reverend Cecil and then at the rest of the audience. What was I going to do?

**What do you think will happen? Will David remember his sermon, or will he be failed by Reverend Cecil? To find out come back next time.**

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 5.3 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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