



THE LOST ONE

LESSON 178 → Luke 15:1-10

Alex was tired, but his concern led him to continue the search.

Alex was tired. He stood and stretched, his eyes gazing out across the rough hills surrounding him. The evening sun was just disappearing behind a rim of rock to the west, and there was a bitter bite to the wind that snatched at his cloak. It was time for them to head back to the sheepfold.

His eyes roamed over his flock. “Pasha,” he called to his sheep dog, “it is time now.” He looked around him once again, and all of a sudden a flash of alarm went through him! Where was Ariel?

“Ariel?” he called. “Come on Ariel, it’s time to go home now.” He waited a moment for the little lamb to show herself, but the restless swish of the wind and the movement of the sheep nearby were the only sounds that greeted his ears.

Could she be hiding? The thought flashed through his mind. She loved to play games . . . it would be just like her. Alex carefully surveyed the scrubby bushes nearby for a hint of her whereabouts, but there was no sign. He walked a few paces to the edge of the clearing where the sheep had been grazing and looked behind the outcropping of rock standing sentinel there.

But there was no sign of Ariel.

When did I see her last? Troubled thoughts raced through Alex’s mind. I remember noticing her running over by that patch of flowers just a bit ago, her sturdy little legs catching the gleam of the late afternoon sun.

“Pasha!” He turned quickly to his sheep dog. “You take the sheep back. I’ve got to find Ariel!” Pausing only long enough to see that the dog understood and was following his directions, he turned and started for the rocky slopes which surrounded the mountain meadow.



JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
— John 10:11

“Ariel!” he called every few steps. “Where are you, Ariel?” Darkness was settling fast, and he had to hold down the anxiety that was rising in him. If it got dark . . . well, he couldn’t think about that.

Alex picked his way down into a shallow ravine, then up the other side, carefully checking by each rock and bush. Perhaps she had just wandered a little out of hearing distance. She was too little to have gone very far. Could she have gotten caught in a thicket somehow? The bushes were thick and awkward to step around and Ariel was so much smaller than he. But surely he would hear her cries for help if this were the case.

On and on Alex went, climbing steadily upward now as the cloak of night settled about him. His breath came in deep gulps, the coldness of the mountain air tearing at his lungs. Once he slipped on a loose stone, and even his shepherd’s crook didn’t save him from landing awkwardly on one knee. But, oblivious to the pain, he climbed on.

At last he reached the crest of the outcropping. Before him, cutting across to the north like a giant wound, ran a deep ravine. Alex moved cautiously along the edge, looking anxiously into the darkness below.

Suddenly . . . what was that noise? Could that be Ariel? Above the whistle of the wind the sound came again. Alex knelt at the edge of the ravine.

There she was! A pale blur seemingly caught in a thicket on a ledge about twenty feet below him. She was still now. Don’t move, Ariel, Alex begged silently. He didn’t dare call out to her, for he might startle her. The sheer drop was so near, so near to the little lamb! Death was waiting on those rocks below.

Moving with utmost speed, Alex untied the rope he kept around his waist. Looping one end around a gnarled tree, he tested it to make sure it would hold. Then he threw the other end over the edge and quickly began to lower himself



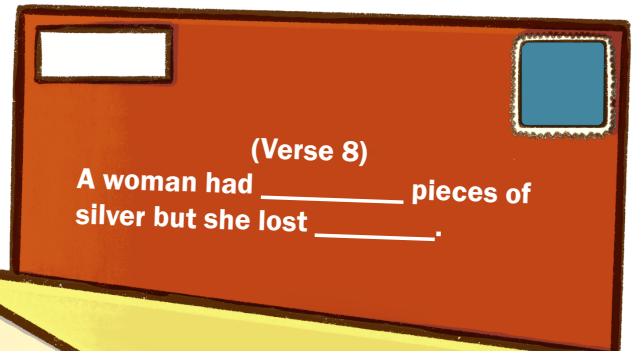
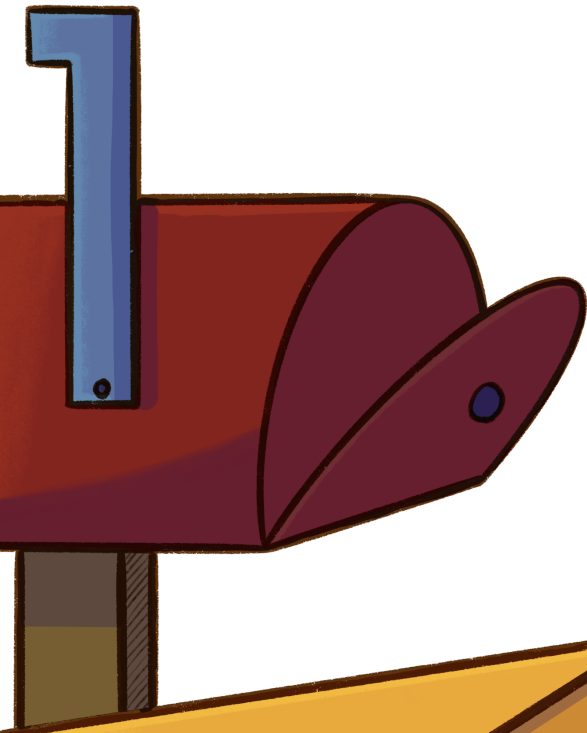
toward the still form caught below him. The rough rope tore at his hands but Alex did not feel the pain. He had to reach Ariel in time!

In moments he felt the ledge beneath his feet. Turning from the rock face in front of him, he spoke quietly. “Ariel, I’ve come to take you home. There is nothing to be afraid of now, my little one.”

Then, ever so tenderly, the tired shepherd gently freed his little lost lamb and gathered her into his arms.

SEEKING THE LOST

This activity is about lost things. Below are several messages about the parables Jesus told, but part of each message was lost in the mail. Read the Bible text for this lesson and try to find the lost parts, then write them where they belong.



(Verse 8)

A woman had _____ pieces of silver but she lost _____.



(Verse 4)

A shepherd left _____ sheep behind to go and search for the lost one.



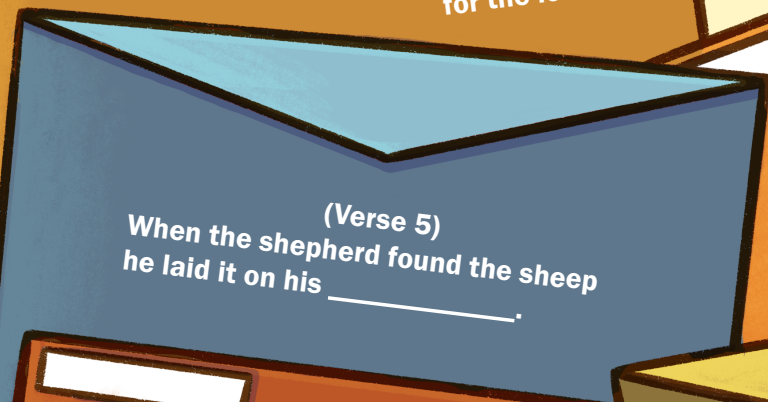
(Verse 8)

The woman lit a _____ and _____ the house till she found it.



(Verse 9)

The woman called her _____ and neighbors to rejoice with her.



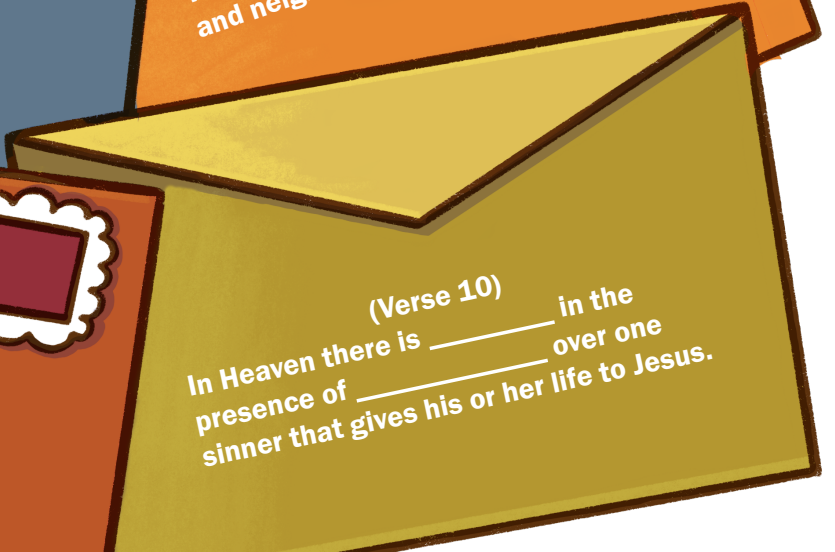
(Verse 5)

When the shepherd found the sheep he laid it on his _____.



(Verse 6)

The shepherd wanted his friends and neighbors to _____ with him.



(Verse 10)

In Heaven there is _____ in the presence of _____ over one sinner that gives his or her life to Jesus.