

# **SENSING HOPE**

February 17, 2021 - March 17, 2021

Lutheran World Relief Series

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| February 21, 2021<br>Hearing Hope<br>Session 2 |
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| ■ Touching Hope: | February 17, 2021 | Preached February 21, 2021 | ■ |
| ■ Hearing Hope:  | February 24, 2021 | Preached February 28, 2021 | ■ |
| ■ Seeing Hope:   | March 3, 2021     | Preached March 7, 2021     | ■ |
| ■ Smelling Hope: | March 10, 2021    | Preached March 14, 2021    | ■ |
| ■ Tasting Hope:  | March 17, 2021    | Preached March 21, 2021    | ■ |

HEARING HOPE: Spreading hope after the Beirut explosion  
Mark 7:31-37 | Jesus heals a deaf and mute man

How your hope can be heard by neighbors in Beirut

On August 4, 2020, at 6:06 p.m. a deadly explosion altered lives in Beirut, Lebanon, when ammonium nitrate exploded, causing one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever. Two hundred people were killed, 300,000 were forced from their homes and many parts of the city were devastated. Émile Naaman, 87 years old, had lived in his house for 60 years. He spent his life working as a hairdresser and also played guitar in the band of a famous Arabic singer. When the blast hit, he was in the kitchen making tea. Fortunately, he was bending down slightly, and the heavy wooden door narrowly missed him as it flew off. He told Lutheran World Relief’s director of humanitarian assistance that his life was saved and protected that day. His home sustained significant damage, and he relies on food donations.

On one city street, banners occasionally flutter above the rubble, emblazoned with words of resilience: WE ARE STAYING, in English and Arabic. In the aftermath of the blast and an ongoing political and economic crisis, your love is providing quilts, food and critical home repairs for families like Emile’s.

## LISTEN

Watch this video that shows the destruction in Beirut and the impact of your love. **Pay attention to the music that you hear throughout the video.**

[CLICK HERE](#)

## DISCUSS

1. What did you hear in the music?
2. How did you feel when you heard it?
3. Have you ever heard an explosion?
4. What's the loudest sound you've heard?
5. What do you imagine it would be like to be cooking in your kitchen one minute, and the next to be thrown down from the blast's force?
6. What signs of hope did you notice in the video?

## BIBLE STUDY Mark 7:31-37

What does hope sound like? Is it the sound of laughter, children's voices, friends calling to say hello, birds singing or cries for justice? In this week's Bible reading from the Gospel of Mark, we encounter a man who couldn't hear.

Prior to this part of the story, news of Jesus' healings was spreading. People were hearing about Jesus and the hope he proclaimed. In this healing story it's important to note that Jesus doesn't encounter this man on his own, but rather the man is brought to him. For this man, both deaf and mute, his healing occurs because someone cared enough to bring him to Jesus.

### **Read Mark 7:31-37.**

Once the man is healed and his sight and hearing are restored, Jesus "ordered them to tell no one." Yet, we know the rest of the story. The people did keep telling of Jesus' deeds. The people did keep coming to Jesus. The people did keep telling the story of Jesus' hope and healing. The disciples who saw Jesus heal the deaf and mute man were "astounded beyond measure." How astounding would it be if our congregations were continually opened to the needs around them?

1. As Jesus heals the man, he looks up to heaven and sighs. Where do you hear the sigh of God's people?

2. What makes you sigh and look to Jesus for hope?
3. What challenges are you not seeing in your community?
4. Do a brief search in your local news source for challenges in your community that you may have overlooked. Where do you need your eyes to be opened to see God's presence and the needs of God's people?
5. Even in the midst of the challenges you have faced, for what have you been astounded beyond measure?

### PRAY

Astounding God, your hope is whispered to us daily. Help us to hear your words of love and grace. Teach us to use our voices to offer words of hope to others. When our lives are out of control, may we hear your words: Be opened. Guide us to listen to the cries of our neighbors, and show us how to walk together towards healing. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the One who is our hope.

LWR - Lutheran World Relief

At Lutheran World Relief, we envision a future where all people, in every corner of the world can live full, dignified lives.

Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, Lutheran World Relief tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being. We work with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality and we do not evangelize. We provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives. We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies. We break the cycle of poverty, so families and communities can thrive. Our goal is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem-solving that will last long after our projects end.