



Open Ears, Open Hearts – August 2021

Read Mark 7:31-37.

The man in this Gospel lesson has a life totally defined by his physical limitations. He is deaf. In the first century, deafness meant total isolation. There was no sign language, cochlear implants, and few knew how to read and write. Can you imagine what it would be like to never hear someone say, "I'm sorry," "Can I help you," or even "I love you"?

This man was isolated, but Christ intervenes in his life and brings a healing that is not simply a physical healing. It comes with an invitation into community.

In today's world, one of the greatest challenges is social isolation and the resulting loneliness that pervades today's world. Unlike the man in this story, this isolation is not because of a physical limitation that we cannot help. We willingly withdraw from community when we are hurt, or get offended, or when things get hard.

Christ longs to heal our hearts and bring us back into community. This is radical reconciliation that is only possible through allowing Christ to reign in our lives.

Questions:

- Describe times in your life when you felt cut off from others. How did this isolation make you feel?
- When you are within a healthy community, it can be easy to withdraw when you face times of hardship, or when someone hurts you. Why is it important to continue to persist within community?
- Who is in your community? Who do you have whom you can trust and with whom you can share the love of Christ?

