

Read Nejebar and Noor's story and Faraidoon and Farzad.

Nejebar and Noor lived in Afghanistan with their five children. Noor worked as a teacher, which put him in danger when the Taliban threatened to kill anyone who worked for the government. This threat was carried out on one of their family members, whose eyes were gouged out before he was killed. Faced with threats, bombs and war at home, they chose to try and find something better. Noor said: 'It was like suicide for us. But we took the decision that it is better to die here than to die there from war.' Having managed the difficult and dangerous journey to Greece, they are now living in a tent in a refugee camp. They expected to be there for 10 days, but have been there for six months and there's no end in sight. They have no protection against wind and rain. There's no school for their children and they have no idea what will happen to them now.

Sudai, their youngest child, is five but looks much younger. He hasn't been growing as he should. His abdomen is swollen. They don't know what is wrong with him. The only doctor in the refugee camp is Greek and because of the language barrier, they haven't been able to explain that Sudai is much older than he looks.

Despite having so little, Nejebar and Noor have taken in two brothers from Afghanistan, Faraidoon and Farzad, who are travelling alone. Faraidoon and Farzad don't know where their parents are, or even if they're alive, but they have found refuge with this family as they wait for news of their own. Nejebar says, 'We still have some hope that one day we will get out of here and we have hope for our children's future. 'Our wish is to get out from this situation and to be able to go further. We only want a peaceful life. We want our children to have an education, to go to school. The most important thing is for our children.'

Read Theodore's story.

Theodor Davidovic is 91 and has supported and volunteered for Christian Aid Week for decades, because Christian Aid supporters helped him when he was a refugee. Theodor had to flee his home in Serbia during the political chaos following the Second World War. He spent two and a half years living in refugee camps in Germany and Italy.

Theodor says: 'It was Christian Aid who sent us care packages. It was Christian Aid who fed us, and I will never forget it. That is why I volunteer for Christian Aid. The people then who were contributing through Christian Aid Week helped me to survive. I feel I owe my life to the cause. To Christian Aid, I promise that I will do my best, as long as I live, and I am still doing it'.

What do you think of those stories? Have you ever felt as frightened, as abandoned, as lonely as any of these people? I think Stephen did, remember our reading from Acts?

All the people mentioned in these stories from around the world today and in the story from Acts, are our brothers and sisters. But sometimes there's just too much going on in the world that is bad that we stop caring – it all just becomes too much – we suffer from compassion fatigue, we stop caring and think that the little bit we can do will be lost in the huge avalanche of need.

Jesus didn't tire of giving hope. **What promises did Jesus make to his disciples and still makes to us today (reading sheet).**

Out of whatever we have, we must continue to offer hope, however small to anyone in need. Thinking of what Nejebar and Noor, a family in a refugee camp taking in another pair of refugees... think of what they did and what Theodore continues to do, **what could your help look like?**

We can welcome strangers into church, into school. We can offer hospitality to those who are lonely. We can smile and stop to talk to the homeless, give a bit of time and friendship. We can give money to charities (like Christian Aid). We can work for change in unfair systems locally and call for governments to get involved nationally and internationally – election coming up, do your bit!

Some verses from today's Psalm (Living Bible)

Psalm 31

Lord, I trust in you alone. Don't let my enemies defeat me.

Rescue me because you are the God who always does what is right.

Answer quickly when I cry to you; bend low and hear my whispered plea.
Be for me a great Rock of safety from my foes.

Yes, you are my Rock and my fortress; honour your name by leading me
out of this peril. Pull me from the trap my enemies have set for me for
you alone are strong enough.

But I am trusting you, O Lord. I said, "You alone are my God; my times
are in your hands. Rescue me from those who hunt me down
relentlessly. Let your favour shine again upon your servant; save me
just because you are so kind!

Time after time, refugees speak of the agony of living in limbo, stuck and
stopped at a border, unable to move, unable to work or have access to
education for their children, not knowing when, if ever, they will know
what their future holds or where it lies. After losing everything, and often
everyone, they move to more uncertainty and anxiety – their time is in
the hands of others. But we can say together, "you are my Rock and my
fortress." Our God is strong to save and **we** are his hands and his feet
and we are his voice on the earth so we must do whatever we can.

We know we are loved and have a place prepared for us – we know we
are wanted and welcome so how can we, in our little corner, let others
know they are also loved and welcome?

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/christian-aid-week/resources>