



The Thomases to Ukraine

*...Preaching, Planting, and Perfecting
in the Slavic-Speaking World!*

August 18, 2026

Dear Praying Friends,

The depravity and mercilessness of man seem to know no bounds, and the war in Ukraine has revealed this with sobering clarity. Yet alongside it, the faithful mercies of our loving God shine even brighter. What a blessing it has been to be back in Ukraine and to witness His mercies at work. Last week we completed the second week of Compassion for Ukraine's children's camp. **Over the two weeks, 280 children attended, and more than 75 made decisions for Christ.** Praise God for the faithfulness of our SBI students and staff who continue to serve with courage and joy and for your prayers and gifts that made these two weeks possible.

Yesterday at Living Hope Baptist Church of Kyiv, we saw more beautiful evidence of God's mercy. A young man named Ali has attended every service for nine months. His father is Iranian, and Ali was raised Muslim. As he searched for truth and began to study the Word of God, the Lord revealed Himself to him. Ali wrestled deeply. First, did he truly want victory over his sin, knowing he and his friends enjoyed their sinful practices? Second, what would his father think if he left Islam and became a Christian? **After a recent service, and much consideration, Ali concluded, "I need Jesus."** He told Pastor Dima, prayed with him to receive Christ, and then earlier this month was baptized.

But God's mercies did not stop there. Ali's mother, Tamila, has been Ukrainian Orthodox all her life and has attended Living Hope for almost three years. Her struggle was with religious tradition. Could she turn away from the practices she had known since childhood—and from the heritage her family had followed for centuries? On Sunday after the service, I spoke with Ali and Tamila. Ali was filled with joy and assurance. Tamila shared that she was still considering Christ. I asked her, "If you stepped into eternity today, where would your soul go without Christ?" I told her, "Ali will be in heaven with Jesus, but you will be in hell without Christ." **I then asked Pastor Dima's father, Sergei, to speak with her. Within minutes, she bowed her head and asked Christ to save her—turning from tradition to Christ. Hallelujah!**

The wisdom and mercies of God are greater by far, as He uses even the harsh cruelties of war to soften hearts and guide many to the light and hope found only in Christ. Thank you for your partnership in prayer that makes this update possible.

Your friends and fellow servants,

Derek and Julie

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