

## A Man Of Faith In The Midst Of Danger

Pastor Vadim grew up and has lived in the Donbas region of Ukraine his entire life. He lives 10 miles from the town of Pokrovsk, which is currently under siege in the war. We have worked with Vadim for many years. Long before this war, we traveled together and preached the gospel in prisons throughout the area. He is a man of faith who loves people and loves his country.

Each morning, usually after very little sleep the night before, Pastor Vadim drinks coffee at his kitchen table and reads His Bible, asking God to help him through another day without his wife and partner in ministry. She passed away from cancer last September.

Determined and disciplined, Vadim accepts his situation with grace and faith. He lost his father a few years ago, is regularly called on to do funerals for local soldiers from his town, and is now the primary caregiver for his blind, elderly mother. As we pray together, we truly wonder how he can keep serving so many people.

### **“My wife would want me to continue in my ministry”**

As the fighting intensifies nearer to his home, he is determined to stay in the Donbas, but knows that he may have to move to protect his mother. He doesn’t like to talk about it.

“My wife would want me to continue in my ministry. After serving my church for 28 years I can’t just leave them,” he said.

On a cold Sunday in February we walked outside to go to church. Vadim looked at his home and said, “Ina and I built this house brick by brick. It took us years, but we built it together. She loved to work in the garden.”

Later that morning the church doors opened to a small group who choose to remain. A few soldiers stopped in for the first time. Attendance has dwindled with many church members serving on the frontlines, others have died protecting their country, and many have evacuated.

One of the soldiers asked if we could share some supplies with a local orphanage. Another asked if we could meet with and help chaplains serving on the frontlines. Of course we said yes!



Pastor Vadim studies at the kitchen table each morning.



We prayed outside for protection and safety.



Team member Tom gives packages to Christian army chaplains serving soldiers on the frontlines.

## "I know the plans I have for you"

That Saturday night, Vadim asked me if I would preach the next morning. I said "yes," having no idea what I was going to speak on. But, the Lord gave me Jeremiah 29:11 where He said to the nation of Israel, *"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope."*

However, the context is in verse 10 where God says they will be captive in Babylon for 70 years. The promise in verse 11 was not for immediate deliverance from their captivity. Many of the Israelites who heard the message would not live to see its fulfillment. The point was, that we do not know God's plan for Ukraine. But we do know that God has a plan, and that we can trust Him.



Jeff speaking in Vadim's church.

I closed with a brief story about my own salvation. When I was 15 years old, a neighbor had a brother with cancer. They called for a pastor to visit him in the hospital. The brother got saved, and invited his family to come listen to the pastor. The whole family along with our neighbor got saved.

Shortly afterwards, she came down the street to share the Lord with my mother. The result was that our whole family got saved as well. Her brother passed away from cancer, but his passing led to many salvations. Nobody knew the plan, but God indeed had a plan. Thus, I encouraged people to trust in God above all else.



Unloading supplies after church during sirens.

As the service ended, I hugged a few people who remembered me from previous visits. A few grandmothers thanked us for being there with tears in their eyes. I apologized to Vadim that the whole point of the message was that I have no idea of what God's plan is.

"Jeff, he said beaming and laughing, "that was the message I needed to hear. Thanks to the Lord!"



He asked for prayer for his cancer.

### As air raid sirens blare, people ask for prayer

After the church service, an elderly man approached us outside. With air raid sirens blaring, he requested prayer for cancer. We prayed together on the sidewalk while military chaplains were busy unloading our van to bring supplies both to the orphanage and to the frontline.

Pastor Vadim did not plan on being on the frontline. It came to him. His home is a ministry hub with a constant flow of people coming for fellowship, advice and prayer. He is committed to living his faith in Jesus on the frontlines.



In the midst of danger, Vadim hears God's call to serve. Is it safe to be there? Certainly not. But it does seem to be God's plan. This is why we ask you to pray for pastor Vadim. And thank you for supporting MP. It is so important to so many people.