

Scott's Thoughts

February 25, 2024



“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One

from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways.” (Habakkuk 3:1–6, ESV)

This past week marked the beginning of the third year of war in Ukraine. It has been a burden to the people of that nation. They only want to live their lives in peace. On February 21, I spoke with Vlad, a friend from Ukraine. Before I relate the content of the conversation, I need to tell you a little about him and his wife, Oksana. I met them twenty-five years ago, they had no children, and lived in a cramped two-bedroom apartment which they shared with me while I was in Ukraine. Vlad spoke only a few words in English, but Oksana had a degree in English and was my translator. They desperately wanted children but were never able to have any. They adopted Rita and Dema, a biological brother and sister, and their apartment instantly became too small. So, they bought some property with a large, unfinished, ten-year-old

house. It had no wiring, plumbing, or walls. There was also a one-room house on the property that was 250 square feet. They, their children, and pets lived in it for four years while they saved every dime to finish their dream house. As they were nearing its completion, they hired a local cabinet maker to build an oversize table in the kitchen because Oksana loves to cook, and they both enjoy hosting others for meals. While the man was installing the table, Vlad tried to talk to him about the Bible, but the man had zero interest.

Fast forward to today. Rita is in her second year of medical school in Kiev and Dema is in his first year at a university. Vlad and Oksana are refugees living and ministering in Warsaw, Poland because the war forced them to leave all they had except their clothes. From time to time, they get word on the condition of their home, but they go for long periods without knowing.

As I was speaking with Vlad, he related to me that in Warsaw, he ran into the man who built his table. The man remembered Vlad and they are now studying the Bible together. Vlad made a humbling statement. “I hate this war, but people now have a great interest in God and the Bible. Maybe, this is God’s plan, and His kingdom will increase because of it. That would make it all worth it.”

Vlad is living in a foreign country not knowing if all he has in this world is his wife and children yet, he is saying, “if it brings glory to God, I’m willing.” Are we?

“Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer’s; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.” (Habakkuk 3:18–19, ESV)

Thanks for listening and keep on shining. —Scott