



## The Fomichovs in Desna, Ukraine

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report, 2022

#### *War.*



My children and I were preparing to celebrate the birthday of my wife Sasha on her birthday on February 24. We had decorated the house with balloons, bought flowers, and planned to surprise her in the morning before she went to work. But we were awakened by a phone call. My wife handed me the phone and said that an unknown woman was asking for me.

When I said Hello, I heard screams: “Igor, the war has started in our country. Everything is exploding. They’re shooting at

us.” I could not understand who was screaming at me through the phone. I hardly recognized the hysterical cry of my sister; all I could tell her was not to be afraid and to pray.

We jumped up and started phoning everyone. Many people from our church did not pick up the phone because they were fast asleep. Sasha was called into work. I stayed with the children. When I stepped out into the street, there was such a crowd of people. Everyone was driving somewhere. There was fear in my eyes. It is difficult for me to describe those first days. The state that we experienced... I ate and held back tears in my eyes because I realized my weakness and responsibility for my family and church. My brothers and I were looking for a place to evacuate our wives and children, because we understood that this had to be done urgently. Desna is a very dangerous place. We prayed, and God answered: 20 kilometers from Desna there was a kindergarten, where we were allowed to settle our families. We ourselves remained in Desna.

For 11 days in a row, we heard explosions and battles near Desna. The Russian army launched air strikes and other things on us. We all prayed and asked God to help us to evacuate our families. Desna was cut off from all sides. There were battles. We did not have an opportunity to withdraw our families. Everyone expected me, as a pastor, to make a decision, but I saw it was very dangerous for us to try to leave.

On the tenth day I went to the store and saw that the food was almost gone. There were only chocolates in the store, and I bought a lot of chocolate. When I brought chocolate to the sisters and children in the shelter, they were happy and thanked me so much. I was

silent, thinking this is all I could buy, no more groceries can be bought. Then I decided that it was necessary to take out the women and children.

We, at our own peril and risk, loaded twenty people into four trucks; they were all women and children. We drove and heard battles in progress. We saw rockets flying. It was really scary, so we prayed and God gave us the opportunity to reach western Ukraine after driving for three. God saved us.

We had many experiences and different thoughts about what to do next, how to live on. God convinced me that I should serve the people in Desna. There are many people who were unable to leave. There were many pensioners and elderly people who needed food and medicine. Shops and pharmacies did not work, because no one could transport goods. I prayed and asked the Lord what to do. And the Lord convinced me that I should trust Him and take help to people. I didn't want to; I understood all the danger. Well, God put it on my heart. I explained it to my family and they supported me. We prayed and I took help. There were many blessings, as God preserved and used me.



Thank you for your support and for your prayers. Ukrainians will always remember. We are grateful to BIEM and to all our friends for your participation and support in our grief.

Pray for us:

- 1) For God to protect our church
- 2) As I preach the gospel and serve people in this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Igor Fomichov