

Voices: Pray for Ukraine, Russia and United States

March 1, 2022



Screen shot of Pastor Leonid Regheta as he challenged his hearers to pray for Ukraine, Russia and the United States Feb. 27, 2022.

I am a founding pastor of [River of Life—Dallas Church](#). We are a Russian-speaking church in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, ministering to immigrants and refugees from Eastern European and Eurasian countries.

Six years ago, I was hired as a founding director of the Project: Start refugee resource center, a wonderful ministry of Texas Baptists. We operated out of the Vickery Meadows neighborhood, also known as the Little United Nations of Dallas. That's where most of the refugees are resettled and land once they get to the United States.

We had different people come through our doors asking for help—Muslims,

Buddhists, Catholics, atheists, and those fleeing Burmese, Bhutanese and Nepalese persecutions back home. We had waves of Afghanis, Iraqis, Iranians, Syrians, Nigerians, Congolese and many others stop by our office asking for help.

We never have asked them their political affiliation or which president or country they have supported. We were there to show them the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We did what we could with the resources we had to help people with clothes, food, money for rent, school supplies for their kids or anything else they might have needed.

We didn't do it because of the politics. We did it because Jesus has asked us to. We did it because the Bible says: "You are the light of the world. ... Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:14, 16).

Similarly, today, when Ukraine is suffering and crying out for help, we want to be the light to the world. We want to pray. We want to help. We want to let our good deeds for those suffering in Ukraine shine out for all to see, so our heavenly Father is glorified.

Check your faith

If you are a Christian but your political convictions prevent you from offering a hand to someone in need, please read again the story of the [Good Samaritan](#).

If your religious beliefs prevent you from offering a prayer for those who are forced to give birth to their baby while hiding in a bomb shelter, check your faith again. Your faith might not truly reflect the heart of the Lord you serve.

We may speak different languages, we may come from different countries, we may like different political parties or choose a different leader to follow, but none of this matters in the eyes of the Lord. He won't judge us by which country we were born in, but rather how compassionate our faith was.

"If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?" (1 John 4:20)

This is not me, but the word of God speaking to each of us.

Praying for everyone involved

We announced a [special prayer vigil](#) for Ukraine. However, we need to pray for Russia, too. We need to pray for the United States, as well. Let me explain.

After barely sleeping the first three nights since the invasion began, following the news, reaching out to family and friends in Ukraine, getting phone calls and messages from crying family members here in the United States, praying with them and encouraging them to stay strong—predictably, I got a terrible headache and was completely exhausted.

Then, early in the morning Feb. 26, I received a personal email from my friend, a pastor and bishop in Russia. I started reading his letter. Barely a few sentences in, I started crying. I sat there with my cup of coffee, not being able to contain myself. I cried.

My friend wrote how sorry he is for what Russia is doing to Ukraine. He said how much he wants to see the war end, ASAP. He said how much he disapproves of what his government is doing. And he asked me to pray for them, too.

He wanted to make sure I know how much he and other pastors in his region support Ukrainian people.

I sat there and wept. I felt loved. I felt understood. I felt comforted.

Today, we need to pray for our brothers and sisters in Russia, as well. We need to pray for people there. Russian people do not want this war, either. Let's pray for them, as well.

Let's pray for the United States. I appreciate this country so much for the freedom it offered my parents when we came here as religious refugees in 1989. I appreciate the people of Texas for opening their hearts and souls to my family when I moved here with our four children 13 years ago.

But today, we need to pray for the U.S. government to make wise decisions. This is not about politics. The Bible tells us to pray for our government, our presidents and rulers. Let's pray for them, as well.

Confidence in the Lord

"The LORD frustrates the plans of the nations and thwarts all their schemes. But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken" (Psalm 33:10-11).

My prayer is that all ambitions of corrupted politicians are frustrated and thwarted. Let the Lord's plans stand firm forever. Let his intentions never be shaken.

Pastor Leonid Regheta, along with being the pastor of River of Life-Dallas Church, is the chair of [Hope International Ministries](#) board of directors, which is receiving donations to assist in humanitarian efforts in Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Romania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

The preceding article is adapted from Regheta's comments during a

[worship service](#) Feb. 27, 2022.