



## A TESTIMONY OF FAITH

# I Came to Prepare for Death — and Found Life

The remarkable testimony of Liudmyla Liakh, a woman whose story of despair, divine encounter, and miraculous healing reminds us that God's plans reach far beyond what we can imagine. Through the faithful ministry of the Light of the Gospel Church in Dobropillia, Ukraine, and the generous partnership of the HART Mission, a life was saved — body, soul, and spirit.

## A Diagnosis in the Midst of War

In 2024, Liudmyla Liakh received news that shattered her world: a diagnosis of lung cancer. For most people, such a diagnosis is devastating enough on its own — but for Liudmyla, it arrived wrapped in layers of impossibility. The war raging across Ukraine had hollowed out her hometown of Dobropillia. Hospitals had been damaged or abandoned. Doctors — the very people she would have turned to — had fled the danger zone for safer cities, leaving behind those who had nowhere else to go.

The weight of it all was suffocating. There was despair, yes. There was fear. But perhaps most crushing of all was the hopelessness — the sense that every door was closed, every path blocked, every resource exhausted. She had no money for treatment. She had no access to professional medical care. Apart from her son, she had no family to lean on, no one to carry the burden with her. The walls were closing in from every direction.

In that dark and desperate place, Liudmyla arrived at a conclusion that would break any heart: **the only way forward was to prepare for death.** Not to fight. Not to hope. Simply to make peace with the end that felt inevitable. It is hard to imagine the loneliness of that moment — sitting with a terminal diagnosis, surrounded by the wreckage of war, and believing that no one could help or even cared about her.

☐ *"Despair, fear, hopelessness, and not only a lack of money, but also a lack of professional doctors and hospitals. The war had destroyed everything."*

# A Neighbor's Invitation Changes Everything

God, however, had not forgotten Liudmyla. In the quiet, ordinary way that He so often works, He sent a neighbor. Not a doctor, not a government official, not a relief worker — just a neighbor who saw her suffering and extended a simple, tender invitation: come to church. Come and let us pray for you.

For Liudmyla, this was unfamiliar territory. She had never walked through the doors of a Protestant church. She had never sat among people who worshipped with joy and openness. Her expectation was modest — she hoped a priest might offer last rites, help her say goodbye gracefully, prepare her soul for the end. She went to church to die well.

What she found instead would change everything. The congregation of the Light of the Gospel Church welcomed her with a warmth she had not anticipated — happy faces, joyful hearts, the kind of belonging that is rare and precious.

But the most stunning surprise came when she was introduced to the church's pastor: Ihor Bondar. **A familiar face.** He was a former classmate, unseen for more than twenty years, now standing before her — not as a stranger, but as a shepherd sent by God.

## ***Providence in the Details***

*It was not coincidence that the neighbor knocked. It was not coincidence that the pastor was a childhood friend. Every thread of this story was woven by a God who sees, who plans, and who never abandons His children — even when they cannot see Him working.*

## ***A Neighbor's Compassion***

*The first thread of grace — a simple invitation to prayer.*

## ***A Familiar Face***

*A classmate of 20+ years, now a pastor — waiting at the door.*

## ***A New Purpose***

*Not to prepare for death — but to meet the living Christ.*

## Not Death — But Jesus

Liudmyla had come to the Light of the Gospel Church with one goal: **to find someone who could help her prepare to die.** The pastor she found — her old classmate Ihor Bondar — had something very different to offer. With pastoral warmth and quiet certainty, he told her: ***I will help you meet Jesus — not death.*** Those words must have landed like light in a windowless room.

She stayed. She listened. A sermon unfolded before her about a Jesus who is good, who is almighty, who is not distant or indifferent to human suffering. As the call to repentance was extended, something broke open inside her. **She did not hesitate. She did not calculate or weigh her options. She ran** — the Scripture language of the prodigal, the desperate, the utterly undone — toward the preacher, toward grace, toward God.

On her knees, unashamed of the people around her, tears streaming, Liudmyla begged God to forgive her. She was not performing. She was not going through the motions of a religious ritual. She was a woman who had come to the end of herself and found, to her great astonishment, that Someone had been waiting for her there all along. That Sunday morning in a small Protestant church in a war-torn Ukrainian town, Liudmyla Liakh was born again.

***"I came to church so that a priest could help me prepare for death, but instead I met a pastor who said he would help me meet Jesus — not death." — Liudmyla Liakh***

## Growing in Faith, Carrying a Secret

### **Sunday by Sunday**

Liudmyla began attending church every Sunday without fail. The community, the worship, and the Word became the anchors of her week — a rhythm of grace in the middle of a country at war.

### **Hungry for More**

Sundays were not enough. She joined a home Bible study group, hungry to go deeper into the Scriptures that had given her new life. Her faith was not passive — it was urgent, alive, and growing.

### **A Carried Burden**

Through all of this, Liudmyla told no one about her illness. She carried the weight of her diagnosis quietly, even as the cancer continued to progress — trusting that God, who had already done so much, had not stopped working.

There is something deeply moving about the image of a terminally ill woman pouring herself into community and Scripture while quietly bearing a secret that could have consumed her. Her faith was not a bargaining chip — it was real, costly, and unconditional. She had given her life to Jesus regardless of what happened to her body. And yet, God was not finished with her body either.

## The Pastor Who Noticed

As weeks passed and the disease continued its quiet progress, Pastor Ihor Bondar noticed. The pastoral eye — trained by care and prayer — saw what Liudmyla had tried to hide. He asked her gently: why are you not receiving treatment? The question broke open the secret she had been carrying alone.

When she told him the full truth — the diagnosis, the lack of money, the absence of qualified doctors in their war-affected region — he did not offer empty sympathy. He did not shrug at the enormity of the obstacle. **He told her about kind donors from Canada & US, partners in ministry through the HART Mission, and said he would reach out to them on her behalf.** And then they did the most important thing of all: they prayed together. They placed Liudmyla's situation — her life, her illness, her future — into the hands of God.

What happened next unfolded with a speed that can only be described as providential. Within just a few days of that prayer, funds from the HART Mission were secured. Liudmyla was on her way to the city of Dnipro, to a hospital staffed with professional doctors, for examination and treatment. The door that had seemed permanently sealed had swung open — not through political connections, not through personal wealth, but through the prayers of a church and the generosity of believers far away in Canada.

- **Within days of prayer, HART Mission funds were secured and Liudmyla was traveling to Dnipro for professional medical care — a journey made possible entirely by the partnership between a local church and faithful international donors.**

# The Partnership That Saved a Life

## Liudmyla

A woman of new faith, carrying a terminal diagnosis alone, trusting God with her life in the middle of a war zone.



## Light of the Gospel Church

A local congregation in Dobropillia that welcomed a stranger, introduced her to Jesus, and refused to let her face illness alone.



## Pastor Ihor Bondar

A shepherd who noticed, who asked the hard question, who prayed with faith, and who connected one woman's desperate need to a network of grace.

## HART Mission (Canada/USA)

Generous donors whose faithful giving crossed an ocean and arrived — within days of prayer — to fund life-saving medical treatment for a sister in Christ they had never met.

This is what the Body of Christ looks like in action. Not a single hero, not a single organization working in isolation — but a chain of obedience, compassion, and generosity stretching from a neighbor's doorstep in Dobropillia to the hands of donors in Canada/USA, with a church and a pastor binding it all together.

Every link in this chain mattered. If the neighbor had not knocked, if the church had not welcomed, if the pastor had not noticed, if the HART Mission donors had not given — the chain breaks. Liudmyla's story reminds us that our faithfulness, however small it may feel, is never wasted in God's economy.

## The Disease Stopped. A Life Continued.

**A Medical Miracle Wrapped in Grace.** Thanks to timely help and proper treatment at the Dnipro hospital, Liudmyla's lung cancer stopped progressing. She continues to live.

There is a detail in Liudmyla's testimony that deserves to sit quietly in the heart for a moment: she told no one about her illness for weeks. She did not come to church as a transaction — give us your prayers and we will give you healing. She came broken, encountered Christ, surrendered her life, and kept showing up. The healing, when it came, came as gift upon gift — first the healing of her soul, then the miraculous provision for her body. God did not forget either one.



## Baptized — Preparing for a Meeting with Jesus

Liudmyla made the decision to give her life fully and publicly to Jesus Christ. She was baptized. In the waters of baptism, she declared to God, to the church, and to the watching world that she belonged — not to despair, not to disease, not to death — but to the living Son of God who had pursued her through a neighbor's knock, a classmate's greeting, and a sermon she never expected to hear.

The transformation in her language alone tells the whole story. She came to Dobropillia's church preparing for death. She leaves its waters preparing for a meeting with Jesus. Same destination, infinitely different road. The first was a road of dread, resignation, and aloneness. The second is a road of joy, belonging, and the sure and certain hope of resurrection. Liudmyla is not afraid of what comes next. She is expectant. She is ready — not because life is over, but because it has finally, truly begun.

Her gratitude overflows in every direction. She thanks God — the Father who planned her rescue before she knew she needed it.

**She thanks the Light of the Gospel Church** — the community that opened its doors to a stranger who came to die and welcomed her into life. **She thanks Pastor Ihor Bondar** — the childhood friend turned shepherd who saw her, asked the hard question, and prayed with faith. **And she thanks HART** — the distant donors in Canada/USA whose generosity she will likely never stop marveling at, whose names she may never know, but whose giving she carries in her very lungs with every breath she takes.

**"I am happy that now I am preparing not for death, but for a meeting with Jesus." — Liudmyla Liakh**

# When you give & pray - you become part of "a chain of grace."

Liudmyla's story is not an anomaly. Across the war-affected regions of Ukraine, there are men and women just like her — holding impossible diagnoses, carrying unbearable loneliness, living in places stripped of the resources that the rest of us take for granted. **HART, in partnership with local churches like the Light of the Gospel Church in Dobropillia, is the chain of grace that reaches them.**

# 1

## Life Transformed

One woman. One diagnosis. One neighbor's knock. One chain of faithful giving — and everything changed.

# 20+

## Years Apart

The gap between a classmate and a pastor — closed by God's perfect timing.

# Days

## To Answer Prayer

From prayer to funded medical treatment — God moved within days of a pastor's intercession.

**Every gift to HART is a neighbor's knock.** Every act of generosity is a door swinging open in a place where all the doors seem closed. You may never meet Liudmyla. You may never know the names of the people your giving reaches. But in eternity, we believe you will.

**Give today** — not just to a cause, but **to a chain of grace** that stretches from your hands to the heart of someone who needs to know that God has not forgotten them.

### Give to HART

Your donation funds medical care, church partnerships, and life-changing outreach in war-affected Ukraine.



### Pray for Ukraine

Lift up the churches, pastors, and believers serving on the front lines of both physical and spiritual need.



### Share This Story

Let Liudmyla's testimony travel. Every person who hears it is invited into the chain of grace God is building.

**"I thank God, I thank the Light of the Gospel Church, I thank Pastor Ihor, and I thank the HART Mission."** With love, your sister in Christ, **Liudmyla Liakh**

May Liudmyla's story stir your faith. May it remind you that the chain of grace you are part of — through your giving, your prayers, your willingness to pass on the good news — reaches further than you know. May it call you, as the neighbor's knock called Liudmyla, to simply show up. And may we all, one day, stand together before the Jesus that Liudmyla is now joyfully preparing to meet.