



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 2: Shared

Suggested Week of Use: March 13, 2022

Core Passage: 1 Thess. 2:1-12

News Story Summary

On February 24, Russia invaded Ukraine. Russian President Putin justified the invasion in part as a defense of the Moscow-based Orthodox church even though the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church denounced the attack. Yarsolav Pyzh, president of the Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary located in Lviv, explained that Russian rule would lead to a transition to going underground, rather than abandon the faith. “The church will go underground,” he said. “You have to understand that historically we had that experience before under the Soviet Union. So the church did not forget what does it mean to be persecuted, and I think that we will rearrange, reorganize, and still do what we always do, still preach the gospel.” He also believes that since the seminary is in the western part of Ukraine that this may give them an opportunity to train more students in the future.

For more about this story, search “Russian invasion to send Baptist underground”.

Focus Attention

To replace the Begin idea under Focus Attention, share a summary of the comments made by Yarsolav Pyzh about what might happen to Ukraine Baptists. Invite volunteers to share their response. Ask: *How does persecution for one’s faith in Jesus lead to a stronger faith in Him?* Complete the step using the Transition suggestion.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Review idea under Summarize and Challenge, ask the group to reflect on the statement of Yarsolav Pyzh. Led the group to identify connections between facing religious persecution and the desire to training more church leaders to Paul, Silas, and Timothy’s persecution and their desire to spread the gospel (i.e., compassion, boldness, etc.).