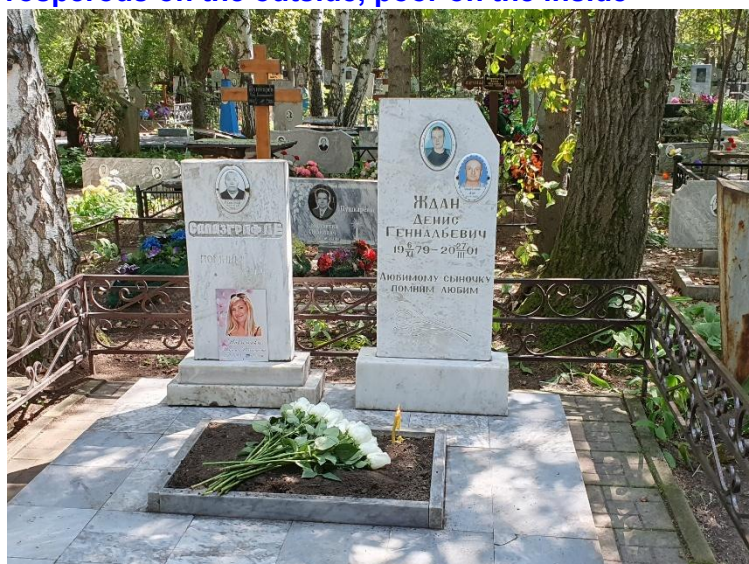




Dear friends, dear readers,

I would like to share with you two events from my last trip. One of them especially made me reflect and reminded me once again of how important our shared mission is.

Prosperous on the outside, poor on the inside



In Omsk, I was asked to give the sermon at a funeral service. The deceased was a member of the Orthodox Church and, together with her husband, occasionally attended our congregation on holidays. She was only 61 years old, had a university degree, and lived with her family in financially secure circumstances. Her husband runs a successful business together with a business partner. From the outside, everything seemed in order: prosperity, security, and a good life. But the reality was different. The woman had been struggling with alcohol problems for quite some time and repeatedly spoke of how she lacked joy in life. She felt she lacked a sense of purpose and a deeper meaning. After a fall in her apartment, she apparently did not realize how serious her injuries were. She bled to death, and her son found her dead the next day.

This tragedy makes it clear that outward success and inner fulfilment are not the same thing. A life can appear orderly on the outside, while a person suffers inwardly from loneliness, hopelessness, and emptiness. At the cemetery, an Orthodox priest led the service, and afterward I was asked to give a sermon. During this funeral, I was once again reminded of how important the mission of Jesus' church is. How do we reach people who seem to have everything outwardly, but whose hearts are searching for hope and meaning? How can we share with them the good news of Jesus Christ, who gives new

life? This made me think of Jesus' words: "What good is it for a person to gain the whole world, yet forfeit

their soul?" (Mark 8:36) Standing before a grave, these words take on special significance. What good are prosperity, professional success, and financial security if the soul finds no peace?

The church father Augustine expressed this truth well: "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in you, O God."

Every person carries within them a deep longing that cannot be satisfied by the things of this world. Neither possessions nor success nor security can fill the emptiness of the heart. Ultimately, people need fellowship with their Creator.

Please pray for the bereaved husband. Pray that he will not seek help in alcohol, but that God will meet him in his pain, give him strength and new hope, and open his heart to the Gospel.

Camping Retreat Despite the Heat and Thunderstorms



Forty-three people gathered for this year's camping retreat on the banks of the Om River in Siberia. The days were marked by fellowship, spiritual sharing, and many special experiences.

The very first day presented us with challenges. With temperatures reaching 36°C (96.8°F) and high humidity, the heat alone sapped a lot of our energy. Shaded spots were scarce. We were all the more grateful that the mosquitoes, which are usually everywhere, were surprisingly few.



The following night, a violent thunderstorm swept over the camp. Thunder, lightning, and strong winds made us keenly aware of how small we are in the face of nature's forces. Then the words of the Soviet biologist Michurin become clear: "We cannot wait for nature's mercy; it is our task to take it from her". It is only a small consolation and a gross overestimation of human capabilities. Our two tents were put to the test: they proved not to be completely rainproof. One of them was even designed more for winter conditions than for heavy rain.

For some participants, this made for a very short night. They battled the storm from inside

their tents. On such a stormy night, either your patience and hope grow, or you despair at your helplessness. Nevertheless, they maintained an astonishingly positive attitude. Perhaps the theme of our retreat—"Jacob: A Fighter in the Faith"—also helped. The challenges were overcome with patience, mutual support, and a good dose of humor. Despite all the adversity, we didn't let it take away our joy. Our time together was marked by warm fellowship, shared meals, games, and many meaningful conversations about faith. Since we couldn't find a cook this time, I took it upon myself to organize meals for all the participants. This initially drew some surprised looks, since cooking hadn't exactly been one of my passions up to that point. My wife was also understandably a bit concerned. But she and other brothers and sisters gave me good advice and support. In the end, everyone was well-fed and no one got sick. That was certainly also God's mercy.

In our Bible studies, we delved deeply into the life of Jacob. It became clear that even people of faith make mistakes, take wrong turns, and sin. At the same time, we saw how faithfully God accompanied and guided Jacob despite all the challenges. Jacob's family was by no means perfect either. Their family history was marked by conflicts, poor decisions, and tensions. Yet God

remained faithful to His plan. This is a great source of encouragement for us: even when we fail, God remains faithful and continues to lead His children. We were especially delighted that many participants were attending such a retreat for the first time. We pray that God's Word will continue to work in their hearts, that they will grow in faith, and that they will come to know the love and grace of Jesus Christ ever more deeply.

Heartfelt Thanks

Thank you very much for your faithful support, your prayers, and your solidarity with my ministry in the ELKUSFO. Together, we get to experience how God meets people and changes hearts. That alone makes it worth the journey. Thank you for continuing to support this work and making it possible through your financial donations. In this way, you help ensure that the good news of Jesus Christ reaches people in the ELKUSFO region.

Sincerely yours,

Alexander Scheiermann

Thanks:

- For the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.
- For the camping retreat and for all the protection and blessings.
- For the continued growth of the churches.
- For the safe completion of our travel ministries

Prayer Requests:

- Comfort and strength for the family of the woman who passed away in Omsk.
- That the newcomers who attended the camp for the first time will continue to follow Jesus.
- For new staff members to be called into service.

If somebody would like to give funds he may send to: In USA: Spiritual Orphans Network, 8210 Louisiana Blvd., NE - Suite B, Albuquerque, NM 87113, USA, Mobile: +1-505-321-2820, Website: SONetwork.org with the mark: For the ministry of the church in Siberia.

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