

## **“Why Only Now?”**

Betty and I met the Kozlovs when we lived in Marseille in the early 50s. This elderly husband and wife lived in Aix-en-Provence, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of Marseille.

One pleasant summer day, we visited this delightful couple. First, they showed us the inside of their modest house. As we wandered from room to room I noticed the Russian Orthodox icons everywhere.

After that, they took us out to the backyard where they served us cool drinks at a picnic table under a welcome shade tree. We got better acquainted. Mr. Kozlov reminded me of “Mr. Clean” – and bald as a bowling ball. His wife was a good-natured “healthy” woman, meaning – in the Russian culture – she was a little on the heavy side. Before they fled from Russia to France, Mr. Kozlov was a captain in the Czarist White Army.

“We see that you are very godly,” I ventured to take a conversational step in a spiritual direction.

“Yes, we fear God and strive to please him,” Captain Kozlov responded unassumingly.

“Then you have assurance of salvation regarding the next life.”

“No. We don’t. We don’t feel worthy.”

“Well, why don’t we see what the Bible says about that? Would you like to do that?”

“Oh, yes, very much so!”

I reached for a Russian New Testament in my briefcase and began to read aloud some of the assurance of salvation verses. The Kozlovs listened intently. It was obvious they were eagerly drinking in the Water of Life.

At one point, the captain gently but dejectedly interrupted my reading. “Why only now?”

“Why only now what?” I asked.

“Why only now are you telling us this wonderful news? Why only now, when we are old and at the end of life’s road? Why didn’t we know this when we were your age, when our lives were still before us?”

I was speechless – emotionally and spiritually distraught.

But then I did manage to say, “I am so very sorry no one shared God’s good news with you until now. Now that you have heard it, would you like to receive it, receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your person Savior?”

They responded by getting up and kneeling at that shaded picnic table. They poured out their hearts to the Lord. They told him how hurt they were that they didn’t have the privilege of hearing the Gospel until late in life. But they also thanked him that even though late, it was not too late. ◇◇◇