

## Doctrinal Differences(*Letter to Randy Baer*)

Dear Randy,

I'm writing you after discussing your situation in a governmental meeting yesterday. It is especially hard to relate the outcome to you, since our phone conversation last week was an "okay" for you to move here. But all I can say is that when the Lord speaks we must be prepared to receive that word. We are thankful that He did speak, and we want to be faithful to Him to represent Him accurately without compromise, even though what I am about to say, hurts. But as Pr 27:6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." I desire to be a true friend to you, even though it is difficult, even painful.

To put it as straightforwardly as I can, Randy, we do not believe that you received the Holy Spirit, which was received by the early believers at Pentecost. For this Spirit called men and women to abandon and forsake everything — their goals, ambitions, and life long dreams — in order to follow the Savior. This Spirit in everyone who truly is immersed into the life of God's Son, through baptism, teaches us to walk as He walked, to love as He loves, to give up everything as He gave up all. Those totally given over to this Spirit through repentance, recognize the need for the authority in their lives that comes straight from the God who created them and is administered through men gifted and anointed to raise up the church. Those born of that Spirit are people who have seen the absolute futility of their life, their total lack of purpose, their complete need of washing from the filth of the world controlled by Satan, which raised them to be sons of disobedience. On the day of Pentecost it was very clear, for these brothers were pierced to the heart by the words of Peter, because he was calling them to account for their hardness of heart, their lack of love, their greed and blindness. The good news was that the Lord forgave them if they would repent, to seek a new life that they were incapable of living apart from the mercy of God. They were called to abandon the foundation upon which they had based their lives, their religion which soothed their consciences as the world system that they were integrally a part of crucified the one sent to them. They were called to abandon the kingdom of darkness for the Kingdom of God, in which all things would become new. This is what "being born again" is for, to see the Kingdom of God (Jn 3).

We know that you do not see this Kingdom, Randy, for if you had received the Holy Spirit when we baptized you (which is normal), then this Spirit would have given you eyes to see. Apparently the waters of baptism only made you wet, for you quickly established a reputation in the church as being arrogant, unreasonable, and despising of authority. "Despising authority" means that you resist any word that runs counter to your own reasonings and purposes because of intellectual vanity and pride, never having come to a new birth in which all things are made new. Newly born disciples know nothing, except that they are hungry for their first milk. They are docile and teachable, all former vestiges of their old life (especially religious training and thinking) are in essence at the bottom of the lake where they are baptized. Let me make this clear — when you came up out of the water it was to live a new life motivated by the self sacrificing love of the Father, made possible by the new birth in the one Spirit given to all who call out with pure intentions, desperately desiring salvation, believing with all their hearts that since Messiah died once and for all, that there was nothing left to live for but Him alone. This one Spirit makes all such believers one, in essence, in spirit, in practice. You do not share *this* Spirit with us, for if you did, how is it that you could depart from us to go to St. Petersburg, where another gospel is preached? What motivated you to leave us in the first place? It certainly was not a fervent and clean desire to do the Father's will, but another spirit entirely, a spirit that could entice your flesh to an easier life, although a life of community according to your own doctrinal preferences. Perhaps you saw that your strong opinions were not prevailing and you wanted to go somewhere where you could retain your own flavor as Moab did (Jer 48:11) — I don't know for sure; but we all remember your departure as being because you had doctrinal differences and disliked authority, most of which was directed at Elbert. "Doctrinal differences" do not transfer over from the condemned life in Adam's seed to the new life in Messiah. They just don't. Little babies in the Lord don't have anything to argue about; they only cry out for nourishment and help. You have never evidenced *this* new life to the church. Randy, where is your fruit? Where is the valid testimony of a life

poured out in the church? (I'm not referring to Suncoast as the church.) I'm not writing this as an enemy, but I want to labor this point as a friend. 1 Jn 3:14 — "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." Did you leave us because love was commanding your heart? Were your continuous arguments with your shepherds motivated by a desire to be pleasing to the One whom you say has saved you? Where is the church that testifies that you are a new creature in Christ, in unity with His body, under His authority? Randy, we cannot testify to this, for you have a different Jesus than the One whom we preach. Your life in the past has shown this to us. A tree is known by its fruit.

Even while visiting us, you remarked to one of the brothers in a very typical way and spirit, "Well, are you saying that you are the only ones?" My answer is, "Exactly." The spirit in the church in Island Pond is the Holy Spirit, and wherever the Holy Spirit dwells, then they will be like us in that exact same Spirit. "They" will be "us." Christ is not divided. I raise this issue and your statement to that brother to show you that you are divided from us by an uncrossable chasm, as uncrossable as the one between Lazarus and the rich man, except that hopefully you can still repent in this life. We can't baptize you again, can we? Why did you not enter in to the life that we have all entered into here in the church? We love you, but you do not love us. Your desire to live in community because it is the right way for Christians to live, is an empty husk, a barren desire. Have you the same life as us? No. Have you been born of the same Spirit by which we have been born? No. Are you, then, at least justified by faith? I can only speak personally that I can make no judgment since I have no way of knowing; as I understand it, the church cannot evaluate this in an individual, unless, of course, the Lord declares it clearly through His prophets, bringing peace. But I can say that since you do not yet have the Holy Spirit, your eternal destiny is certainly in question.

Randy, it would be fruitless for you to move here in your present spiritual condition. It would be unfair to you to allow you to think that you could come here on a probation period to see if you could be restored, when you have yet to repent for your sins. We are not mad at you in the least, and when you were invited to visit and when you did come, we were glad, very glad to see you, although apprehensive about your relationship to us. We love Nancy; she is a very wonderful person, and we love Josiah. But for you to come into the church again without a radical departure from everything you are and have been up till now, would be disastrous to you and to them. You would only leave at some time in the future because that spirit of rebellion is undealt with in you.

I know that you have been making plans to cut ties down there to come here, and this message will bring hardship upon you at least in this respect. We have not been stringing you along, nor was I dishonest with you when I last spoke to you and said, "Come," for I had hope for you. I still have hope for you, but I see the Lord speaking and clarifying our position with you. If we have wronged you or given you valid grounds for offense, please forgive us. It's not our intention to harm you nor your family.

We are open to hear from you. If you feel that the Lord truly is opening up your eyes to what I've been saying, and you want to speak to us, then contact us.

David Jones