

Persecuting the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading — Acts 9:1-9

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Acts 9:4 —

Full of hatred toward the church, Saul asked the Jewish leaders for permission to arrest believers in Jesus who lived outside of the city of Jerusalem. His intent was to quickly extinguish this new faith.

But as Saul was traveling to Damascus, Christ confronted him. A powerful light shone around him in broad daylight so that he fell to the ground. Saul heard Jesus say to him, "Why do you persecute me?" Because the church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18), anyone who harms its members harms the Lord himself.

This truth seems obvious to us as believers when we're faced with persecution from unbelievers. But what about persecution that comes from within the church? Local congregations can be "persecuted" by some of their own members. Long-time leaders and powerful members sometimes claim an ownership over their congregation that excludes newcomers. Little can be done in those churches without the approval of those powerful members. Such behavior can actually result in persecution against the body of Christ.

Why are many local congregations dying? Perhaps they are being strangled by an individual or group that aims to be in control. Are you an influential church member who strangles ideas that do not fit your taste? If so, confess this to the Lord and ask for forgiveness.

Prayer

Lord, help me never to be a persecutor of your body. May I be a peacemaker and a faithful servant rather than a persecutor. In your name I pray, O Prince of Peace. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Acts](#)

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