

The Day Jesus Recruited His Enemy

I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting

ACTS 9:5

Written by Bill Perkins

Of all the people Jesus could have appeared to last,
He chose the one least likely to believe.

It was to His greatest enemy.

Saul wasn't searching for Jesus.

He was hunting His followers.

Breathing threats.

Carrying letters of arrest.

Convinced he was defending God

by crushing the movement born at Pentecost.

A Pharisee of Pharisees.

Trained under Gamaliel.

Disciplined. Precise. Relentless.

A mind sharpened by Scripture.

A zeal burning hot,

even when it was fueled by wrong beliefs.

A man so brilliant

he could take the teachings of Jesus

and, under the Spirit's power,

shape them into the theology

that would anchor the Church.

Jesus appeared as a light brighter than the sun—

the glory of the risen Lord overwhelmed Saul on the road.

And with that glory came a voice that dropped him to the ground:

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

Those words stopped him.

Saul had never touched Jesus.

He had only gone after His followers.

Yet Jesus spoke as if their wounds were His wounds.
Because the Church is His body.
Their suffering is His suffering.
To strike them is to strike Him.

In one moment,
Saul saw the glory of Christ
and the unity of Christ with His people.

After that encounter, Saul didn't become a different man—
he became a redeemed man.
He still had the same mind,
the same training,
the same brilliance.

But now his fire burned with the right fuel—
not tradition,
not rage,
not self righteous certainty,
but the truth of the risen Christ.

And when I read Paul's letters,
I see the fingerprints of Jesus everywhere.
Paul didn't invent a new theology.
He unfolded the one Jesus gave.

Jesus said, "Believe in the One lifted up."
Paul developed that into justification by faith. (Rom5:1)

Jesus spoke of abiding in Him.
Paul deepened that into our union with Christ—
buried with Him, raised with Him (Rom. (6:3-4).
hidden with Him in God (Col. 3:3).

He carried forward what Jesus began.
He connected the dots no one else could see.

You may not know this about Jesus,
He knew Paul would
and that's why He appeared to him.