ASSEMBLE church
Know God · Find Freedom · Discover Purpose · Make A Difference

Message

Title: Is Your Opinion Dividing The Church? Building Church
Speaker: Pastor Dom O'Connell
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"The church isn't a collection of people who like the same things — it's a people united by the same Saviour."

Introduction

This week, identify one disagreement you're holding onto and choose to pursue the mind of Christ over your own opinion.

Have you ever let a difference of opinion quietly put distance between you and someone in your church family?

What actually is the church? Not a building, not a service, not an organisation on a register. In the opening message of our Being Church series, Pastor Dom O'Connell takes us into 1 Corinthians 1 to rediscover what Paul meant when he wrote to the ekklesia — a gathered people who belong first and foremost to Jesus. Before Paul addresses a single problem in Corinth, he reminds them who they are and whose they are: sanctified in Christ, called to be holy, bought with a price. We are not our own.

From that foundation comes a challenge our culture finds almost unthinkable: perfect unity in mind and thought. Some things are simply 'ice cream flavours' — preferences we can happily disagree over. But when a genuinely dividing issue arises, we're called to lay down our opinions and pursue the mind of Christ together. Because Christ is not divided. If we settle in advance that division is not an option, something shifts — and a strong, united church becomes the very thing God uses to reach a whole town.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:1-3 — Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, to the assembly of God which is at Corinth; those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 — I always thank my God concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything you were enriched in him, in all speech and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will also confirm you until the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:10 — Now I beg you, brothers, through the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 1:11-13 — For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers, by those who are from Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," "I follow Cephas," and, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 2:15-16 — But he who is spiritual discerns all things, and he himself is judged by no one. "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?"
But we have Christ's mind.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 — Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

John 3:30 — He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 4:23-24 — But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

2 Corinthians 3:18 — But we all, with unveiled face seeing the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Isaiah 55:8-9 — “For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
and your ways are not my ways,” says Yahweh. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2 Peter 3:9 — The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Matthew 28:19-20 — Go
and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Don’t Miss This

- You belong to Christ before you belong to anything else: Paul doesn't open his letter with the problems — he opens by reminding a messy church who they are: sanctified, set apart, called. There's no room for 'I'm my own person' here. You were bought with a price. Belonging to the church starts with belonging to Jesus.
- Know the difference between ice cream flavours and dividing issues: Drums or no drums, ankle socks or crew socks, salted caramel or banana — the mind of Christ has no view on most of what we argue about. Preferences can happily coexist. But when something genuinely threatens to divide, we're called to stop defending our corner and seek one mind together.
- Unity costs you your opinion — and that takes humility: If two of us disagree on something that matters, unity means one of us lays something down. That's not weakness, it's maturity. We're not pursuing the mind of Dom or the mind of Alex — we're pursuing the mind of Christ. And Christ is not divided; He won't say one thing to you and another to me.

Let’s Chat

1. When you hear the word 'church', what's the first picture that comes to mind — and how does Paul's idea of ekklesia (a gathered people) challenge or reshape that?
2. Paul says we are 'not our own' but 'bought with a price'. Where does modern individualism still show up in how you approach church life?
3. Think of a recent disagreement. Honestly — was it an 'ice cream flavour' or a genuinely dividing issue? How can you tell the difference in the moment?

4. Pastor Dom said pursuing unity will cost us our opinions. What's one view or preference you'd find hardest to lay down, and why?
5. Dom and Sam decided in advance that divorce wasn't an option. What would it look like for this group to settle in advance that division is not an option for us?