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

Message

Title: How God Builds His Church
Speaker: Pastor Dom O'Connell
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"We're not spectators and we're not saviours — we're servants who plant and water, while God gives the growth."

Introduction

This week, plant one seed and water one life: have a real conversation about Jesus with someone far from Him, and intentionally encourage someone walking the journey with you.

Have you ever wondered whether church is something you watch, something you carry — or something God is inviting you to build with Him?

Anyone can walk through the doors of Assemble Church — but what exactly are they walking into? In this message from 1 Corinthians 3, Pastor Dom O'Connell unpacks how God builds His church and where we fit into that work. Jesus said, "I will build my church," and He does. But that truth has sometimes been used to let us off the hook entirely. Paul paints a very different picture: Apollos and Paul were "only servants" — waiters carrying a plate that bears someone else's name — assigned a task by the Lord Himself.

There are two ditches we can fall into: the spectator, who assumes God does it all so we can sit back and enjoy the ride, and the saviour, who believes nothing happens unless they make it happen — a fast road to burnout. The truth sits between the two. We plant (evangelism) and we water (discipleship), but only God makes things grow. He doesn't need us; He wants us, inviting us as co-workers into the greatest rescue mission in history. Pastor Dom also challenges us to examine the foundation beneath our own lives, because a church can only truly be built on

Christ when the people in it are. One day every builder's work will be tested by fire — and the reward that survives isn't buildings or reputations. The reward is people.

Scripture

Matthew 16:18 — I also tell you that you are Peter,
and on this rock

I will build my assembly, and the gates of Hades
will not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 3:5-17 — Who then is Apollos, and who is Paul, but servants through whom you believed; and each as the Lord gave to him? I planted. Apollos watered. But God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are the same, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s farming, God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another builds on it. But let each man be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay any other foundation than that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or stubble; each man’s work will be revealed. For the Day will declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself will test what sort of work each man’s work is. If any man’s work remains which he built on it, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, but as through fire. Don’t you know that you are a temple of God, and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is holy, which you are.

1 Corinthians 2:2 — For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 — For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Isn’t it even you, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? For you are our glory and our joy.

Acts 6:1-7 — Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, a complaint arose from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily service. The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not appropriate for us to forsake the word of God and serve tables. Therefore select from among you, brothers, seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.” These words pleased the whole multitude. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch; whom

they set before the apostles. When they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. The word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly. A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Ephesians 4:11-12 — He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ;

John 6:44 — No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up in the last day.

Luke 16:10 — He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. He who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

Zechariah 4:10 — Indeed, who despises the day of small things? For these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. These are Yahweh's eyes, which run back and forth through the whole earth."

Acts 9:1-19 — But Saul, still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he traveled, he got close to Damascus, and suddenly a light from the sky shone around him. He fell on the earth, and heard a voice saying to him,
"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He said, "Who are you, Lord?"
The Lord said,
"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But
rise up, and enter into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the sound, but seeing no one. Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one. They led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. He was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision,
"Ananias!"
He said, "Behold, it's me, Lord." The Lord said to him,
"Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judah
for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus. For behold, he is praying, and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight."
But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he did to your saints at Jerusalem. Here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." But the Lord said to him,
"Go your way, for he is my chosen vessel to bear my name before the nations and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake."
Ananias departed, and entered into the house. Laying his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me, that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately something like scales fell from

his eyes, and he received his sight. He arose and was baptized. He took food and was strengthened. Saul stayed several days with the disciples who were at Damascus.

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.

Don't Miss This

- Avoid both ditches: the spectator and the saviour: One says, "God builds the church, so I can sit back and enjoy it." The other says, "Nothing happens unless I do it." The first disempowers you; the second burns you out — and burns out everyone around you. The truth sits in the middle: we are servants with a task, working alongside the One who gives the growth.
- You have been assigned a task: Paul says the Lord "has assigned to each his task." Church isn't a pleasant way to fill a Sunday morning — it's a mission you've been invited into. In the kingdom there's no hierarchy, only function. So ask two honest questions: What is God calling me to do, and what has He already put in my hands to do it with?
- Check what's underneath your life: Whatever you build your life on has to carry the good times and the impossible times — and only Christ holds that weight. A church can print "built on Christ" on a website, but it's only true if the people are genuinely building on Him in the quiet places of their own lives. One day every builder's work is tested by fire, and the reward that survives is people.

Let's Chat

1. Be honest — which ditch do you naturally lean into, the spectator or the saviour? What does that look like in your life at the moment?
2. Pastor Dom said God doesn't need us, He wants us. How does being invited in as a co-worker (rather than being needed) change the way you view serving?
3. What do you think the Lord has assigned you to do in this season, and what has He given you to do it with?
4. What is genuinely the foundation under your life right now? Where has it been tested lately — and did it hold?
5. Who is building into you, and who are you building into? What's one practical step you can take this week to plant a seed or water someone's faith?