

# The Church is Divine

## Why Church? - Part 1

Randy Hageman

---

Part of Why Church?

August 20, 2023



**The church's origins go back to the formation of the people of God called Israel.**

*Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.*

—Genesis 15:5-6 (NLT)

**God's intent was to create a covenant people united to Him through faith.**

**Abraham wasn't a perfect man before God selected him,**

**and though God did many wonderful things through him, he still sinned and made mistakes, as Genesis shows.**

***Moses:** The LORD did not set his heart on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations!*

—Deuteronomy 7:7 (NLT)

***Moses:** Rather, it was simply that the LORD loves you, and he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the LORD rescued you with such a strong hand from your slavery and from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.*

—Deuteronomy 7:8 (NLT)

**It was God's choice of the Israelites and His love *for* them that separated them from all the other peoples in their world at that time.**

**Through the centuries there's no question that God worked many amazing miracles in and through the Israelites, but it would be wrong and unbiblical to say that God did this because they were the best of people.**

**As Jesus came upon the scene, he called out from the broader Jewish covenant community a group of twelve men to be his disciples.**

***ekklēsia* (Greek) = those called out = church**

*[Jesus] said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

—Matthew 16:15-18 (ESV)

**Jesus says *he* will build the church, meaning it's not simply a human institution but a divine community of faith.**

**The beginnings of the church were still far from perfect, for Peter still denied Jesus three times on the night in which he was betrayed.**

**Even though these first disciples knew Jesus and better understood his mission, even though they had this “information,” they were still powerless to do any better than their Old Testament predecessors.**

*Jesus: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

—Acts 1:8 (NLT)

*Jesus: And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.*

—John 14:16-17 (NLT)

*Jesus says the “Advocate,” the “Holy Spirit,” “will never leave” Jesus' disciples once He comes, unlike what had happened in the Old Testament, when the Spirit had come upon certain individuals for limited periods of time to accomplish particular tasks.*

**Jesus says that though the Spirit is *with* them now, soon He will “be in you”!**

*Jesus: ... it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I*

*will send him to you.*

*—John 16:7 (NLT)*

**With the coming of the Spirit, Jesus could be with every believer all the time, because He would live *in them*!**

*On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.*

*—Acts 2:1-4 (NLT)*

**With the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, God's full plan for the church was born.**

**Nothing throughout the Bible indicates that the church is going to be a perfect community of faith, because sin will continue to exist in our world until Jesus returns.**

"c" church or institutional church,  
made up of everyone who claims affiliation with the church

**VERSUS**

"C" Church which is made up of all true believers in all times and places,  
regardless of denomination, location, or anything else

**Many folks are turned off by the hypocrisy that genuinely exists in the church, but what is the alternative?**

***Jesus:** The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. The farmer's workers went to him and said, "Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?" "An enemy has done this!" the*

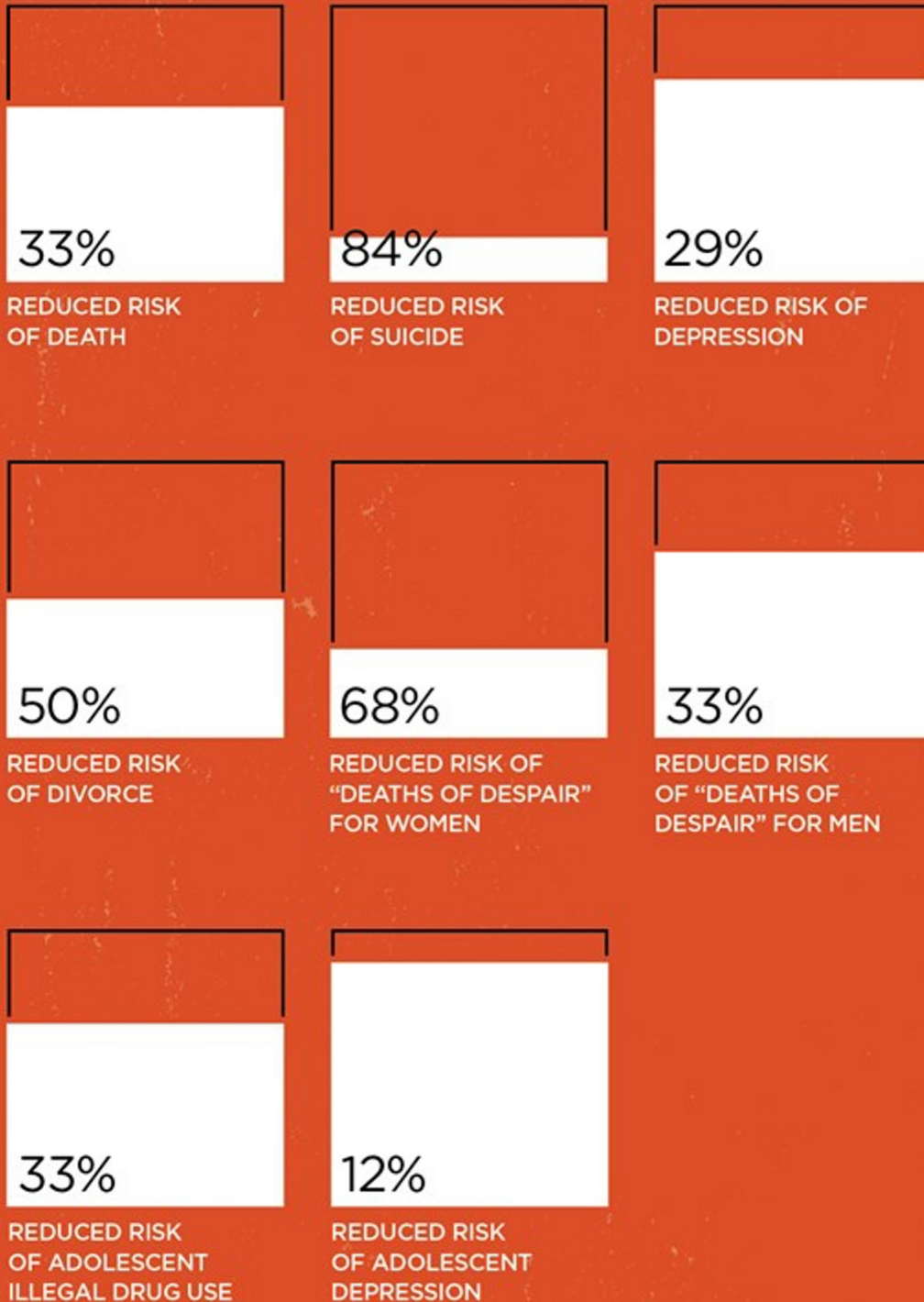
*farmer exclaimed. "Should we pull out the weeds?" they asked. "No," he replied, "you'll uproot the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn."*

*—Matthew 13:24-30 (NLT)*

**Jesus says he's going to allow those who don't truly believe, who sometimes really hurt the cause of the Church, to remain, because to weed them out would damage the Church, and God loves the Church too much to do that.**

**Even in the midst of all its flaws, the church is the place Jesus chose and created as the primary means to grow his people.**

## REDUCED HEALTH RISKS TO REGULAR ATTENDERS VS. NEVER-ATTENDERS



**The Church is where God teaches us how to love Him and love our neighbors, because if we're isolated from God or**

**our neighbors, we won't get better.**

**The fact that the “c” church as an institution is so flawed and has often been wracked with sin, and yet still exists and is growing, should tell us something - the Church is God's idea, created by Jesus, empowered by his Spirit, to draw all people to Himself and transform them increasingly into the image and likeness of Christ.**

---

**Next Week:** The Church is God's Family