

# Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2024.04.14

Website: oakgrovecofc.org

Facebook: facebook.com/oakgrovecofc

## Sermon recordings

Click or type the short URL, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Sermons.

**Speaker-AM:** Rob Moreland

**Title:** Responsibility

**Recording:**

[oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/responsibility](http://oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/responsibility)

**Speaker-PM:** Patrick Hite

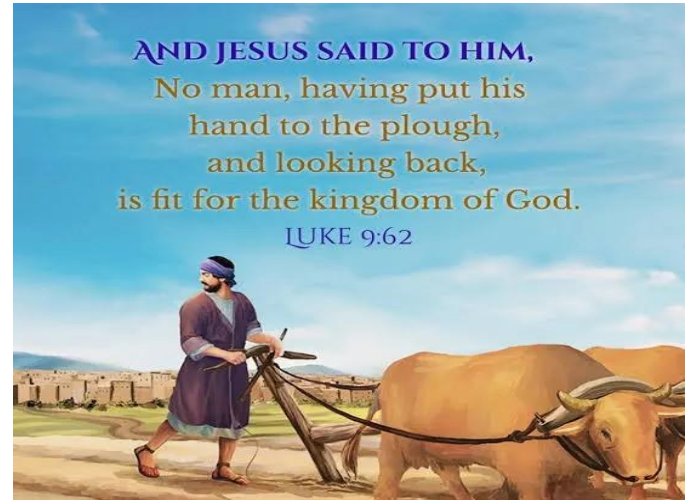
**Title:** Plowing Straight

**Recording:**

[oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/plowing-straight](http://oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/plowing-straight)

**Every man  
shall bear  
his own  
burden**

Galatians 6:5



## Upcoming events in the area

### **Saint James Church of Christ**

The Body of Christ

April 14-17 with Jonathan Brown

### **Republic Church of Christ**

Applications in Hebrews

Sun, April 21 Sam Bunyard

Mon, April 22 Grady Huggins

Tue, April 23 Alan Jones

Wed, April 24 Isaac Helterbrand

### **Oak Grove Church of Christ**

Family

June 23-28 with Warren King

**Religion, 04/14/2024 by Terry Wane Benton**


I keep hearing people talk about “religion” as a bad thing. I hear some say things like, “I believe in God but not religion,” or “I accept Jesus but reject all religion.” It’s as if they have a concept of “religion” that is all negative, but Jesus is all positive. There seems to be a disconnect between what exactly people mean and what they think they mean by the term “religion.”

James said that there is such thing as “pure religion” (James 1:27), and he, by the Spirit, exhorted us to practice “pure religion.” You cannot serve Jesus and reject practicing “pure religion.” They go together! They are not two separate things. I know that modern use of the term has invented a concept of “religion” being all bad, but that is a modern faulty concept. “Pure religion” is not bad. It is expected that you would love and serve God. Only the impure religion should be rejected. It is an impure religion that God rejects, but not the “pure religion.”

I had one guy argue that God rejects all religion. When I pointed out that God demands “pure religion” and gave him the verse, he became adamant that the translators were all wrong. Why? Because he swallowed the newly invented concept that all “religion” is bad. That concept was not around when the translators gave us the words “pure religion” in English. English usage predates the modern concept. The word in Greek is “threskia” and has been translated as “religion” for hundreds of years in English. The translators thought it was a valid word for the Greek word “threskia.” So, who gets to come along later and change the word “religion” and make it all evil? Modern usage does not get to redefine the word that for hundreds of years was just “binding back” to God as a lifestyle. You can bind back in a pure way, or you can go about binding back in an impure way. The etymology of the word is:

In English, the meaning "particular system of faith in the worship of a divine being or beings" dates from c. 1300; the sense of "recognition of and allegiance in the manner of life (perceived as justly due) to a higher, unseen power or powers" dates from the 1530s.

If we have faith in God and believe we should worship and serve Him and bind our hearts back to Him, then that is, by definition, what religion is. You practice this either purely or impurely, but you cannot escape the fact that it is your religion. Jesus gave us a particular system, a pure doctrine to follow in the New Testament, a pure example in Himself to pattern our lives after. We either do this as “pure religion,” or we do impure religion, but your faith in God is your religion, no matter what. “Pure religion” is good. Claiming to have no religion is bad. Practicing impure religion is bad. Don’t let people confuse you. You must practice pure religion if you claim any relationship with God!



## Hard Words, 04/13/2024 by Doy Moyer

Somewhere along the line, our culture has been convinced that insulting people is the way to win others to their way of thinking. Harsh words that disparage intelligence coupled with character-destroying insinuations have become embedded in our arguments and disagreements. This is the way of the world, a path lacking grace and mercy that can only lead to further division and hatred.

In leading up to the point that we need to take on the mind of Christ, the apostle Paul argued, “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (Philippians 2:1-2, NASB95). Notice the terms: encouragement, consolation, love, fellowship, affection, compassion, joy, and united. The Spirit produces these. How could this be accomplished? The answer is given: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

The mind or attitude of Jesus is what we aim for (Philippians 2:5), which was demonstrated by His self-emptying act of dying for us. And as John would say, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John 3:16).

As children of God, we are to speak with grace (Colossians 4:6), love (Ephesians 4:15), and kindness devoid of bitterness (Ephesians 4:31-32).

In return, we don't revile or insult when such is hurled at us (I Peter 2:21-23). Jesus is our example of this.

I know there were times Jesus spoke more harshly, calling out hypocrites for what they were (Matthew 23). Yet Jesus knew hearts in ways we do not. He can judge what we are not capable of judging. Be very careful when trying to justify hard language, especially that which is graceless and insulting. We can be direct and straightforward and still be respectful.

We can do better, can we not? I can, and I intend to. If we have arguments to make, make them without rancor and insult. Whether talking with unbelievers or fellow saints, we gain nothing by harsh rhetoric that requires us to know the hearts of those with whom we have our discussions. Let the truth be spoken so it can do what the Lord intends for it to do, and let us avoid speaking in a manner that gets in the way of that truth.