

# Who We Are

## Christians

Not some brand of Christians.

Not Christians plus something else.

We've no denominational affiliation, no governing association. We wear only the name of Jesus Christ, glorify Him alone in our name, acknowledge Him alone as our governing head.

*Colossians 3:17 ; Galatians 6:14 ; 1 Peter 4:14-16*

# What We Believe

## The Bible

Not part of the Bible—all of it.

And the Bible alone.

We've no creed, no catechism. We preach, we teach, we read, we recommend, we seek to know and live just the words God gave—all of them.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 ; 2 John 9 ; Revelation 22:18-19*

# What We Offer

## Spirituality

**Preaching** that convicts, exhorts, instructs and encourages.

**Bible classes** that are practical, informative and stimulating for all ages.

**An atmosphere** for building better character and nurturing better homes.

**Worship** that is spirited, reverent, God-centered.

**A spiritual family** committed to God, to each other, to evangelism, to a heavenly hope.

*2 Timothy 4:2 ; 1 Peter 4:11 ; Romans 12:9-13*

# Faith is...

### Vestavia Church of Christ

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### Hours of services:

Sunday Bible Study: 9AM, Worship: 10AM & 5PM  
Wednesday Bible Study: 7PM



“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrew 11:1

The term used for *assurance* is also translated as *substance* or *confidence*, indicating that which provides the foundation for trust. The term for *conviction* is sometimes translated as *evidence*, indicating the proof or reality of something.

Such is the nature of faith. Faith stands under our hope, gives us the assurance and confidence that our hope is worthwhile. Faith is also our evidence of the reality of that which we cannot see. Paul said, “hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5), even though “hope that is seen is not hope” (Rom 8:24). Faith assures us that our faith is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

In truth, we don't yet see that for which we hope (ultimately, heaven), but our faith assures us that the hope is real. In the context of this treatise to the Hebrews, this idea makes perfect sense. They were beginning to waver, wondering if it was worthwhile to stay in Christ. They were tempted to go back to their old ways, perhaps thinking that those ways were better somehow because the old ways weren't so much accompanied by persecution. The writer has been making the case all along that they needed to remain faithful, for what we have in Christ is far superior to anything they could go back to or could ever have again. Their hope in Christ was waning because their faith was uncertain. That direct connection between faith and hope is vital to understanding our relationship to Christ. If our hope isn't what it ought to be, we need to check our faith.

How can we be sure that what we hope for will come to fruition? Again, this is where faith steps in. Many might object that faith itself is without proof. Faith is often seen by the unbelieving world as blind, gullible, and irrational. How can faith be the assurance of anything, if faith itself is under suspicion? While this issue is not directly the topic of Hebrews, it is something that bothers people from time to time, and that in itself can shake a person's hope.

Such views of faith are missing the point about the nature of faith. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that faith is some unreasonably blind and gullible concept, believing things in spite of or contrary to evidence. To borrow a phrase, may it never be! Faith is a measured step we take based upon the evidence provided by God Himself. This evidence comes in many forms, including creation (Psalm 19) and the historical testimony to Jesus Christ, the resurrection evidence being the most significant (John 20:29-31; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). When Abraham followed God, he did it by faith even when he didn't know exactly where he was going; nevertheless he still had good reason to trust that God knew what He was doing.

The Hebrews had plenty of reason to put their faith in God. Even though they had not yet witnessed the final outcome of their faith, they could trust that their allegiance to Jesus would not go unrewarded. For them, the Hebrew Scriptures should have been plenty of proof that God is faithful and would carry out His promises. Then, if those same Scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, then how could they abandon Christ to go back to something inferior? The evidence was available to them; they just needed to follow that path.

The 11th chapter of Hebrews is filled with examples of what faith can do. The patriarchs “died in faith,” not having seen the fulfillment of all the promises. Even so, they were convicted that God is and that God rewards those who diligently seek Him (vs. 6). These men “confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth,” making it clear that they were “seeking a country of their own.” This country they were seeking was a heavenly one, with a heavenly city prepared for them by God (vv. 13-16). If they could have such faith before the coming of Jesus, why would it be such a stretch for us to have such faith after the coming of Jesus? We have the evidence of Jesus Himself! Dare we exercise less faith than they, who could only hope for the fulfillment of that seed promise in Christ?

Let's not fall into the trap of thinking that all our hope is tied up in this earth. We, too, are seeking a country not of this world. With our faith securely in place, our hope becomes that much more real. For the patriarchs, God was not ashamed to be called their God. Will He be ashamed of us? Or will we, as with those of old, find approval through our faith (vs. 39)?

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lost heart.” Hebrews 12:3