

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.

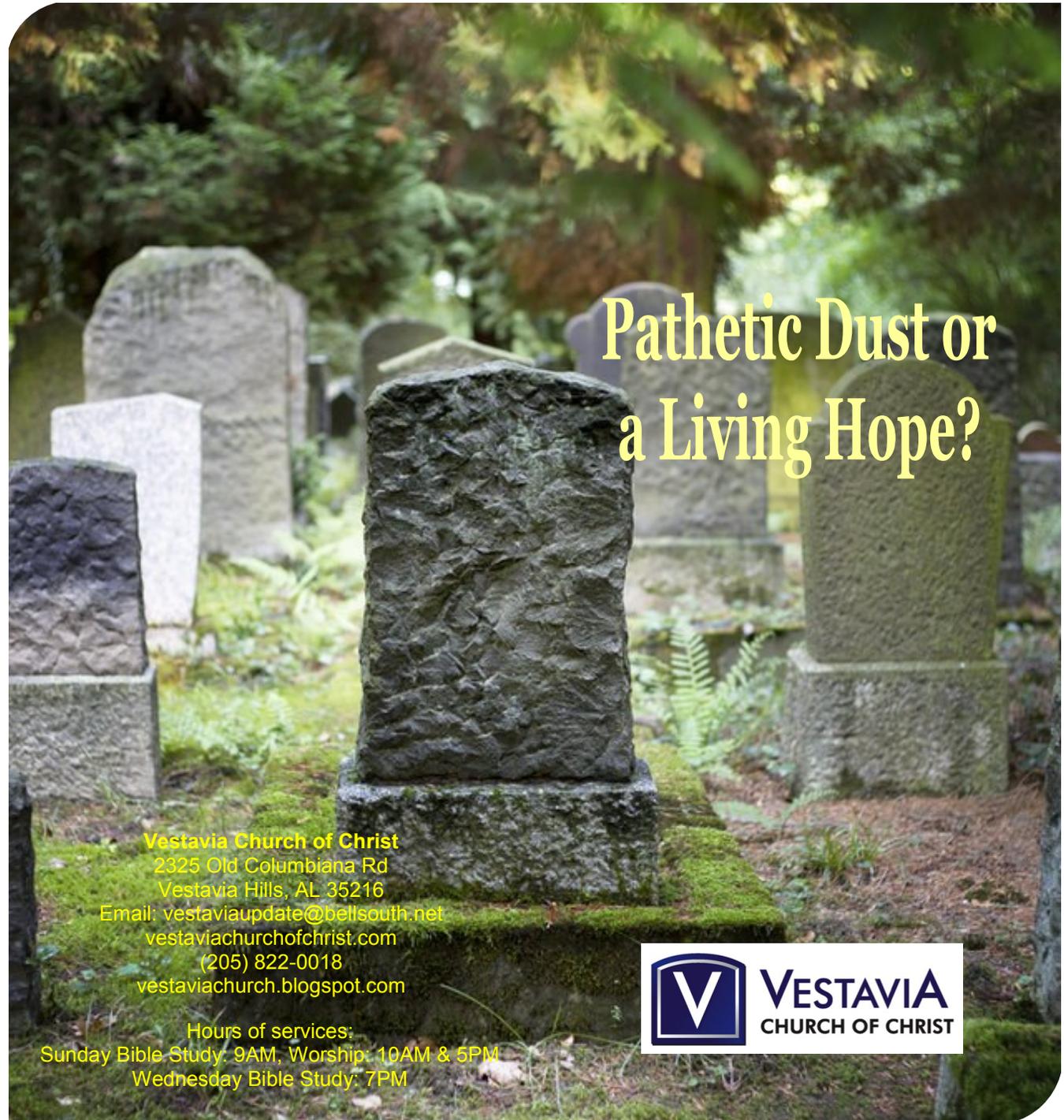
Bible classes that are practical, informative and stimulating for all ages.

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



Pathetic Dust or a Living Hope?

Vestavia Church of Christ
2325 Old Columbiana Rd
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216
Email: vestaviaupdate@bellsouth.net
vestaviachurchofchrist.com
(205) 822-0018
vestaviachurch.blogspot.com

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



Pathetic Dust or a Living Hope?

By Doy Moyer

R.I.P.
We will miss him.
He was a good man.
Pray for his family.
Thanks for the memories.
I really, really liked him. A lot.

How often do we hear words like these? No matter the religion or the beliefs to which one held, these words are common in the aftermath of one's passing. Then, sooner or later, "their memory is forgotten" (Eccl. 9:5).

Is that where it all ends?

I would often ask classes, "How many of you know who your grandparents are?" Most would raise their hands. "How about your great grandparents?" A few would raise their hands. "How about your great-great grandparents?" Rarely would a hand go up. Unless we are really into genealogy (as my mother is), most of us will likely not even know the names of our great grandparents and beyond. As much as I love my grandchildren, I know they will have children, who will have children, who will likely never know my name (but for the novelty of an odd name).

What a cheery thought, right? That depends on your perspective.

Atheist Robert Ingersoll opined at his brother's graveside that "every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jeweled with a joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death." As he put it, one passes to "silence and pathetic dust."

Atheist Bertrand Russell, in *Why I Am Not a Christian*, wrote, "That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all labour of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins..." This "firm foundation of unyielding despair" is where we must build our lives, according to Russell.

So that's it? Nothing? No hope? No real meaning? We just die and we'll never know we lived at all? We're just destined to extinction? Years from now, our names may or may not appear in some genealogical list. Perhaps if we wrote a book or two, or did some noteworthy thing in this world, some may hear our names. But by then, that's just noise — the sound of words with no personal connection any more. Are we done?

Or is there more?

Indeed, there is more: "but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

Christians have no reason to take such a dim view of life. There is no "unyielding despair" for the child of God who knows that there is a "living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," an "inheritance" that is

"imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3).

We live for hope. We die in hope. The power of hope keeps us moving, working, growing, and loving. We can "exult in hope," for even after going through trials, thereby growing in perseverance and character, we know that "hope does not disappoint" (Rom. 5:5).

Because of such hope, Paul could say, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). He could speak of being "clothed with our dwelling from heaven," desiring that the "mortal will be swallowed up by life," and affirm that God prepared us for this very purpose (2 Cor. 5:1-5).

Because of the resurrection of Christ and the hope it provides, we may also know that our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). This is why our faith in the resurrected Lord is vital. Without it, we are back to nothing, a faith that is in vain (vv. 12-19). Since faith stands under hope (Heb. 11:1), we cannot gut our faith without also ripping out our hope.

The choice is always ours. We can choose to believe that we will pass into "silence and pathetic dust," or we can accept that Jesus was raised on our behalf and that our mortal will put on immortality. We can choose life or death (cf. Deut. 30). We can choose hope or despair.

The Lord died and was raised to give us that hope. Don't let that great love from Him be in vain toward us. There is one "hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4); embrace it.