Hebrews - Jesus the Final Word:
Christy Penley
Hebrews 11 – 12:3
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Reflection & Discussion

In Hebrews 11, the author brings us to a central challenge: faith
Read and discuss Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)
11 *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

*How would you describe your own understanding of what faith means?
*Talk about the words describing 'faith' in this verse. How do these words increase the concept of faith? Is there anything challenging about understanding faith for you?

Faith begins with reasons to trust God
For over 30 verses, the author gives example after example of Biblical persons living, "By faith…"

*What examples of faith stand out to you from the Bible?
*What reasons from your own life give you faith to trust God?
*What similarities and differences are notable about having faith in Biblical times and our faith today?

Following Jesus doesn't bring an easy life
Read and discuss Hebrews 11:32-40 (Message)
32-38 *I could go on and on, but I've run out of time. There are so many more—Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets. . . . Through acts of faith, they toppled kingdoms, made justice work, took the promises for themselves. They were protected from lions, fires, and sword thrusts, turned disadvantage to advantage, won battles, routed alien armies. Women received their loved ones back from the dead. There were those who, under torture, refused to give in and go free, preferring something better: resurrection. Others braved abuse and whips, and, yes, chains and dungeons. We have stories of those who were stoned, sawed in two, murdered in cold blood; stories of vagrants wandering the earth in animal skins, homeless, friendless, powerless—the world didn't deserve them!—making their way as best they could on the cruel edges of the world.*
39-40 *Not one of these people, even though their lives of faith were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised. God had a better plan for us: that their faith and our faith would come together to make one completed whole, their lives of faith not complete apart from ours.*

*What can you take from these verses about the life of faith? How is this passage challenging and/or encouraging?
*What interactions do faith and hope have in the midst of our lives?

Faith eventually invites us to respond in action
Read and discuss Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)
12 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,* ***2*** *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*How has faith moved you to action in the past?
*What helps you to fix your eyes on Jesus?
*Where is God inviting you to put on flip flops right now?
*What is the Spirit saying to you about putting your faith in action?

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