The Essentials: Hope

Session 2: Hebrews 11:1-16

Opening Collect

> *Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Read: Hebrews 11: 1-16

Opening Thought:

Our hearts were made to be satisfied in what only God can give.

Discussion:

1. The opening verse defines faith as "the assurance of things hoped for" (v. 1). What are some things you have hoped for? Do you have assurance about those things?
2. Name a few of the figures in vv. 4-12 (Abel, Enoch, Noah, etc.) and describe what you think they hoped for.
3. Read v. 3 and vv. 15-16 again out loud. The author suggests that God is pleased that these Old Testament figures hoped for more than the visible things of this world. Have you ever felt disappointment in receiving something you'd hoped for that didn't turn out to be satisfying? Share with your group if you are willing.
4. Read vv. 14-16. How might all of those other hopes be satisfied in the hope described in v. 16? What might it tell us about our true hope? What do you think we all really hope for?
5. What is our assurance of the promise given in v. 16?

Check in and Closing Prayer

Hebrews 11: 1-16

[1] Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. [2] For by it the people of old received their commendation. [3] By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

[4] By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. [5] By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. [6] And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. [7] By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

[8] By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. [9] By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. [10] For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. [11] By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. [12] Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

[13] These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. [14] For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. [15] If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. [16] But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.