



Selah:
hope

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*May the God of hope fill you with all joy
and peace in believing, so that by the power
of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Romans 15:13

Introduction

Hope is a word we often throw around unsparingly. We hold great hope for a holiday abroad, or that our favourite football team will win the championship. It's no surprise that the power of hope has been diluted to simply mean the belief that something we want can be had, to quote the dictionary.

We believe that hope means so much more than this. At LifeLine Church, we had the wonderful opportunity to bring together a group of gifted artists who pondered this very thing: what does hope mean? In this first artbook of a series called *Selah*, you will see the outcome of these reflections.

The idea of hope being a living thing, full of promise, is explored in the pieces ***Emergent*** and ***'Lifecycle'***. Along with this idea, ***The Journey, The Harvest, and The Blessing*** illustrate hope as making the impossible possible.

Our artists have discovered hope as something unseen; none more so than in ***I See Hope*** and the untitled piece towards the end of the book.

In ***River***, hope flows from God, through us, to others.

The poem ***'You Don't Leave Me Alone'*** retells the story of hope, which is found in the One who never gives up on us.

Almost in direct opposition to the dictionary definition, ***Hopeful Surrender*** explains hope as something we do in surrender. Not in pursuit of our wants and desires, but placing them in His hands instead.

As you enjoy these pieces of art, we invite you to take time to pause and reflect on what hope means to you. How has your life been changed by the Giver of Hope?

If this hope is something you do not yet know, we believe that as you look through these pages you can meet the One who has given us hope, who will never give up on you, and who invites you to know Him more.



River

Tanya Farrugia

Psalm 42:7–8; John 7:38

There is hope when we feel discouraged. The deep in us calls to the deep in God—we can connect with Him! He knows us intimately. We stir our hearts to hope by praising God. Then out of that hope and connection flows a river of life from God through us to others.

I See Hope

David Farrugia

Psalm 121

My aim was to embody the spirit of hope through this portrait on canvas. The dark colours in the hair and clothing symbolising the darkness around us, fear and worry, anxiety and stress.

But I painted the picture with gold and silver paint running through it. This symbolises the spirit of goodness and light, peace and calm that Jesus brings to the world, and that we all have access to.

The woman is looking to the future, with a glint in her eye. She is picking up on the hope that she sees around her, despite the darkness. She is seeing beyond the darkness and into the light.

She is seeing God's hand at work despite the troubles. Seeing the love that people have in their hearts, put into action to make a difference. Seeing joy where there is despair. Seeing Hope that is close at hand.



You Don't Leave Me Alone

Jacob Baiden

Ephesians 5:8

I got all this baggage,
And it's weighing me down,
Somebody come and help me,
Cos I don't wanna drown,
I'm falling under,
Caught up in the thunder,
I scream and I'll shout,
I cannot see a way out.

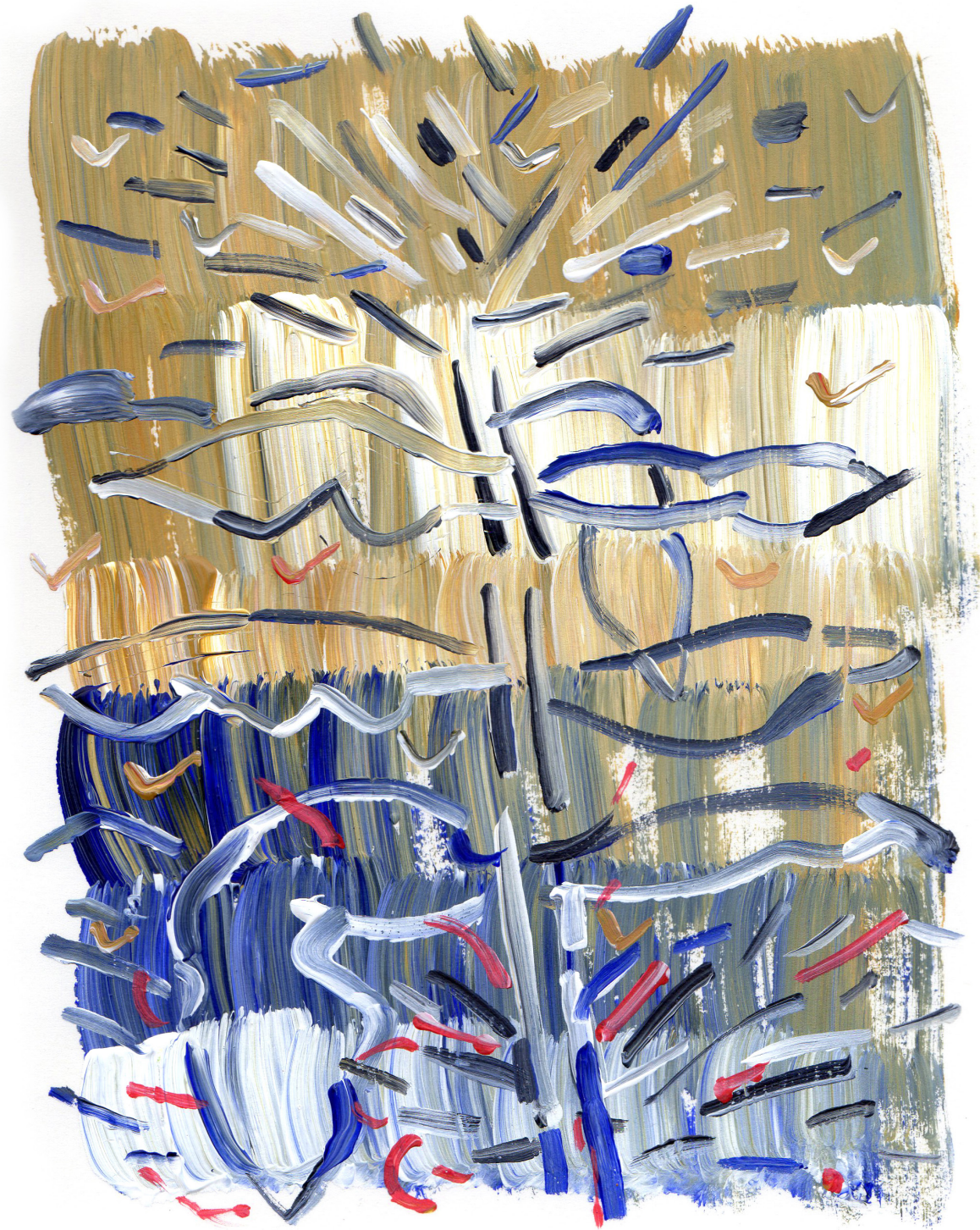
I'm in the middle broken,
So surrounded choking,
All this dirt I float in,
Soaked in I can't be freed,
Bright light shining,
Through dark clouds comes winding,
Coming closer blinding,
Finding its way to me.

Cos even when I'm too far gone,
When there's no way to carry on,
You don't leave me,
You won't leave me,
You don't leave me alone,
No,
Even though I'm down and dirty,
Even though I'm so unworthy,
You don't leave me,
You won't leave me,
You don't leave me alone,
No.

But then I'm back to the bad,
Swallowed up in the sad
I know that I am,
But don't feel that I can,
I am so certain,
I'm undeserving,
Why would he want a dirty person,
I'm so unworthy.

But then I realise,
It's not based on my life,
But because of his light,
That I can be freed,
That bright light binding,
That surrounds me shining,
I'll leave no dirt left hiding,
I give you all of me

Cos even when I'm too far gone,
When there's no way to carry on,
You don't leave me,
You won't leave me,
You don't leave me alone,
No,
Even though I'm down and dirty,
Even though I'm so unworthy,
You don't leave me,
You won't leave me,
You don't leave me alone,
No.



Emergent

Jeremy Simmons

“...the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.”

Isaiah 35:1–2

For about the past year I’ve been painting and repainting an image of an unknown plant by a roadside in Iraq. The more I painted the more simple and distilled the image became. Soon the forms were effortless, almost instinctive. The process itself became a meditation on resilience and hope.

I don’t know much about gardening, but during lockdown we planted some corn. As the corn plants grew they began to resemble my painting - I realised that I’d been painting a corn plant all along. I love how many of us have started growing things during the pandemic. God is like this; He brings life and abundance from places of apparent restriction.

Lifecycle

I hid her carefully
A brown earthy promise
Almost invisible
small as a mite.
I hid her carefully
Under the soil
So that she would germinate
Multiply, materialise.

And what happened in the hidden place
In the warmth under the surface,
Is that she fired out
A green shoot, gifted and keen.
And now she trains herself upwards
Towards light and air
That will nurture
Her secret promise.

Each cell is expectant,
Storing things not yet seen
But that she knows must come
The provision inside her thick husk,

Then her seed leaves,
Then her true leaves,
Then her soft tendrils
That grasp hold of any prop
She can grow up
And through and around
Her fresh green
Covering dead sticks
With life and purpose.

Then finally, in the fullness of summer
She reveals her pearls –
Hope to be scattered,
Whispered on the wind.
And as she knows herself completed
To dissolve
Back into the earth.

Her pods swell
And she wilts.
I who have waited
Collect her seed:
Treasure to plant
For a new season.

Lifecycle

Words by Lotty Tizzard, Art & Lettering by Rodie Garland

Romans 8:22–25

[illegible]



The Journey, The Harvest, and The Blessing

Sophie Allen

The Book of Ruth

The story of Ruth was my inspiration for this piece. A woman named Naomi lost her husband and both her sons. It seemed as though all hope was lost. When she starts her journey back to the land of her ancestors, it's a bit like returning to God, a recommitment to Him. Ruth, her daughter in law, embraces her beliefs and together they see God's provision through a plentiful harvest of a crop they didn't sow. They receive the blessing of a marriage for Ruth and a child to carry on the family line.

This speaks to me of God's faithfulness and His constant presence with us no matter what we are going through. We should never lose hope when God is on our side. Let's expect to be surprised by His goodness and His desire to bless us by making possible what looks impossible to us.

Hopeful Surrender

Heidi Singleton

Isaiah 61:3

I held the tatters of my life and wept for the pain, for the loss, the despair. I felt this warmth and turned towards it, colour, beauty, hope, surrender...

No longer in tatters awash with colour, my rags now beautiful, dancing, freedom, loved. He calls me now to take my beautiful robe, my garment of praise. To clothe those in despair with His beauty.



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