



Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see. For by it the people of old received God's commendation. By faith we understand that the worlds were set in order at God's command, so that the visible has its origin in the invisible. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

Hope Awakens

Spend some time looking at the two pictures above. What do you see?

The first is a painting by Baptist Minister, Chris Duffet. One answer to that question is that you see the silhouettes of lifeless trees, made more obvious and visible by the sunlight. It is easy to see it as an image of decline and despair. The other is the picture of a delicate shoot breaking through the ground, it is tiny, vulnerable and insignificant.

Yet each of these is an image of hope. A sign of hope not through what we can see but what we know to be true even though we cannot see it. We know that contained within those skeletal tree trunks are all the cells and structures needed to bring new life, new foliage and potentially new fruit. This process of rebirth and renewal is made possible by the emerging sunlight which, with the advancing seasons, will become more frequent and intense.

Similarly, experience has taught us that this fragile shoot nonetheless has the potential to become another tree. One day, it too will stand tall and become part of the process of death and life that all but evergreen trees continually display.

The verse from Hebrews reminds us that faith is being convinced of what we do not see – just as in these two images we can see the life and potential, invisibly contained within each plant. We are also reminded that these cycles of nature were put in place by God. “The visible has its source in the invisible.”

As we look at the world around us, these images may well resonate with what we see. There is much that leaves us uncertain and disturbed – like those lifeless trees, things seem dark and foreboding. Like the tiny green shoot, things that matter to us seem fragile and under threat. Yet we are called to be a people of hope – a people who do not ignore the realities of our world but equally are not defined by them. Our hope is in God, a God who is at work in unseen ways, a God whose word and truth is unassailable, a God who holds all of eternity in His hands.

For all the realities of our world, as a Baptist Community we are seeing signs of hope, and it is for this reason we have chosen as our focus “Hope Awakens”. Where do you see those signs of hope in your own experience? How can you view this world differently by seeing the landscape through eyes of hope?