

by: Deborah Cavanaugh

Each Passage Teaches Us

We don't like to be tested—to be called to experience another passage. Mostly, I think this comes from our fears—fears of failure, fears of the unknown and the known, fears of the future and even fears of our own selves. Our fears can get so big we lose sight of God who tells us "Fear not." God promises that if we seek, first of all, His kingdom and His righteousness, that He will take care of the rest.

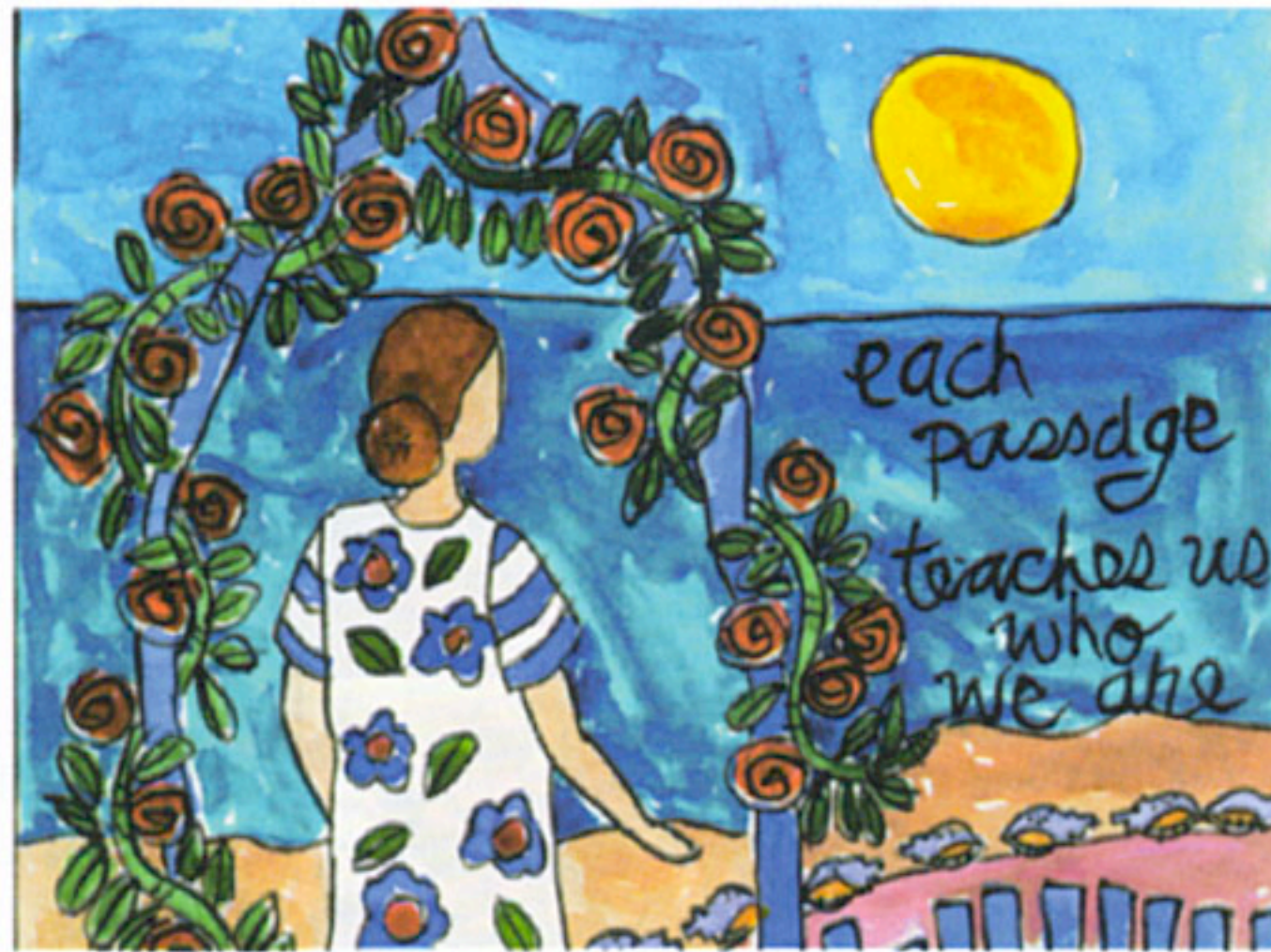
The truth is that there is no other way to learn but to be tested—to be allowed to falter, strengthen and rise. How will we ever understand our weaknesses until they are made plain through our challenges? How will we ever know how strong we are unless a feat of strength is required that goes way beyond any comfort zone?

How will we understand the depth of our faith until there is nowhere else to turn? How will we experience the magnitude of God's grace without falling backwards, eyes shut in faith, into his waiting arms?

God allowed Adam and Job to be tested. He allowed Peter and Paul to be tested. He even saw his Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, tested by everyone from the Pharisees to the Romans to the dark one. When God allows us to be tested, we are certainly in good company. When God allows us to be tested, it is never

without purpose.

Without difficult trials and passages, we wouldn't discover the depth of our faith, the strength of our God, the mercy of Christ, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit or the true joy that lives inside of us. Through the passages that the Lord allows us to experience—passages we can embrace or refuse because God gives us choice in all things—we can practice the simple faith of a child trusting that, with God at



our side, all will be well. We are reminded in James 1 to "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

God's eyes are on the faithful. Even if this is the worst day of your life, it is the day that the Lord has made. And if all things work together for good for those that love the Lord, then so shall this. God has told us to fear not, because He is with us. I want to faithfully turn to God, no matter the difficulty of the

passage, lifting my voice in praise for this opportunity to draw closer to Him.

If we believe that He knew us before we were in the womb, and that He knows every heart and mind, then we have to believe that whatever it is that is happening now, is not outside His knowledge and purpose. Let us remember what Jesus taught over and over to those who sought His help and healing—"It shall be done to you according to your faith."

Our passages narrow the way and keep us on the road. They guide us and teach us. Their challenge shows us wherein lies our truest faith and saving grace. Our passages honor us with the opportunity to become more in every way.

Our passages make the way for us to draw closer to our God and learn in a very real way what, in Zachariah 13, God promises He will do for those He brings through the fire.

"Refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.

They will call on My name,
And I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are My people,'
And they will say, 'The LORD is my God'."

Deborah Cavanaugh is an artist and writer living in Wilmington, NC. More can be learned about her and her art at www.deborahcavanaugh.com