

Overcoming Handicaps



The Brooklyn Bridge in New York City is an engineering marvel. Completed in 1883 and known for its granite towers and steel cables, the bridge took 14 years to construct. At least two dozen people died in the process of building the bridge, including its original designer.

That designer was an engineer named John Roebling. When he came up with the idea of building this massive suspension bridge over New York City's East River to connect the

boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn, everyone thought he was crazy. But John and his son, Washington Roebling, set out to prove it could be done.

After only a year of construction, John Roebling was killed in an unfortunate ferry accident. This left his son, young Washington, an inexperienced engineer, in charge of the bridge. But this is just one of the tragedies that befell the Roeblings.

Since part of the bridge was being built underwater, many workers began to suffer from decompression sickness due to the difference in pressure below the water and above it. Washington, himself, suffered from this condition to such an extent that he became paralyzed, deaf and mute. But this was not going to stop him from building his father's bridge.

Able to move just one finger, Washington devised a system by which he could tap on his wife's arm and communicate with her. He continued to direct the construction of the bridge from his bed, giving instructions to his wife, who then passed them along to the crew building the bridge. For the next 11 years, Washington continued to work in this way until 1883 when the Brooklyn Bridge was completed and opened for use.



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And what a success it was. Now, 136 years later, the Brooklyn Bridge still carries more than 150,000 people each day safely to their destinations.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus encountered a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, who cried out to Jesus for mercy. Jesus asked him what he wanted, and Bartimaeus replied, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”

“Go your way,” Jesus said. “Your faith has made you well.” Immediately, Bartimaeus received his sight and followed Jesus.

Fanny Crosby, the great gospel hymn writer, lost her sight as a child. Many feel that it was the story of blind Bartimaeus that inspired her to write the beloved hymn – *Pass me not, O Gentle Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.*

Whatever tragedy, disappointment or failure we may be dealing with, Christ will not pass us by if we are truly seeking Him. He sees our need, whatever it may be. May we see what Bartimaeus saw – that Jesus is the giver of every good thing in life. May we, too, follow Jesus all the days of our lives.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter