



## **DETERMINATION AND PERSISTENCE**

Galatians 6:9

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Luke 1:37

"For no word from God will ever fail."

In 1883, a creative engineer named John Roebling was inspired by an idea to build a spectacular bridge connecting New York with Long Island. But, bridge building experts throughout the world thought that this was an impossible feat and told Roebling to forget the idea. Roebling, however, could not ignore the vision he had in his mind of this bridge. He thought about it all the time and he knew deep in his heart that it could be done. He just had to share the dream with someone else. After much discussion and persuasion, he managed to convince his son Washington, an up and coming engineer, that the bridge in fact could be built.

Working together for the first time, the father and son developed concepts of how it could be accomplished and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement and inspiration, and with a wild challenge before them, they hired their crew and began to build their dream bridge. The project started well, but when it was only a few months underway a tragic accident on the site took the life of John Roebling and left his son Washington unable to talk or walk.

Everyone had a negative comment to make and felt that the project should be scrapped since the Roeblings were the only ones who knew how the bridge could be built. However, Washington was far from discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge. Suddenly an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving this, he slowly developed a code of communication with his wife. Eventually he touched his wife's arm with that finger, indicating to her that he wanted her to call the engineers again. Then he used the same method of tapping her arm to tell the engineers what to do. It seemed foolish, but the project was under way again.

For 13 years Washington tapped out his instructions with his finger on his wife's arm, until the bridge was finally completed. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as a tribute to the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not to be defeated by circumstances. It is also a tribute to the engineers and their teamwork, and to their faith in a man who was considered mad by half the world. It stands too as a tangible monument to the love and devotion of his wife who for 13 long years patiently decoded the messages of her husband and told the engineers what to do.

Often when we face obstacles in our day-to-day life they seem overwhelming and all consuming, and yet, when we stop and look at the world around us, often the reality is our hurdles are small in comparison to what many others have to face. But no matter whether they be small or big there are always possibilities when we hold on and keep pushing forward. Amazing things can be realized when we use a sense of determination and persistence. St. Paul reminds us of that same message in the words of *Galatians 6:9* "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Growing weary is a popular reaction as we look at the culmination of what is happening around us. It's easy to get caught up in the realities and the summations of what is taking place, or about to happen. If ever we needed a sense of determination and persistence, it is now.

I was reminded of that this past week as I too began to let the walls of worry and concern close in. The potential reality of loss hit hard as I began to hear of people within my circle of familiarity testing positive or awaiting outcomes from confirmed exposure. Talk about stepping it up a notch. All of a sudden there were familiar faces attached to this virus which caused me to think and feel in a way, up until now, I had not. No longer were my prayers general or for the masses – now they included specific faces and names.

I have to be honest...this new reality threw me, as sadness and fear began to settle in. All of a sudden, emotion rather than faith took over – leaving me in an uncomfortable place. You see, I'm the one who continuously talks about determination and persistence – seeing the glass half full – I'm the one who says you keep focused on God and faith and trust that He will do the rest. I'm the one who has sitting, big and bold, on her desk a plaque that reads, "Faith doesn't make things easy, it makes them possible."

This morning, by phone light, in the early hours before the daylight hit and the morning noise surrounded me, I took time to once again read the story of our Lord's passion (something I would encourage all to do today). It was without doubt an emotional reading, but a healthy one, as once again I was vividly reminded of what the power of faith and the love of our Heavenly Father looks like; a lesson that my heart needed to be wrapped in.

And so today, I want to encourage you to take the time to think about all that our Lord endured and everything that he withstood to make the "possible" a reality. Because of Jesus' sacrifice – His death – we have the opportunity to intimately know the power of our Heavenly Father at work in our lives; the gifts of unconditional love, forgiveness, and what it is to be a part of the body of Christ. That is the power that we cling to as believers and followers. That is where our persistence and determination reside; where our ability to push through strengthens.

Heavenly Father,

We remember today, the pain and suffering of the cross, and all that Jesus was willing to endure, so we could be set free. He paid the price, such a great sacrifice, to offer us the gift of eternal life.

Help us never to take for granted this huge gift of love on our behalf. Help us to be reminded of the cost of it all. Forgive us for being too busy, or distracted by other things, for not fully recognizing what you freely given, what you have done for us.

Thank you, Lord that by your wounds we are healed. Thank you that because of your huge sacrifice we can live free. Thank you that sin and death have been conquered, and that your Power is everlasting.

Thank you that we can say with great hope, "It is finished..." For we know what's still to come. And death has lost its sting. We praise you for you are making all things new.

Amen