

“Talitha, Koum! Little girl, I say to you arise!”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, a terrible flood engulfed a small community in Florida. (I suspect about half the people in this room or within the sound of my voice may have heard this story. I beg them to forgive my repeating it, as it fits very well with the point I intend to make in reference to today’s Gospel.) *So-o, I continue. This terrible flood stranded a woman in her house. As she stood at her kitchen window, a boat appeared.*

“Climb aboard and save yourself,” the driver said.

“No thanks. I trust in the Lord. He’ll save me,” the woman said.

The driver shook his head and drove off.

The next day, the flood rose to the second floor of the house. As the woman stood at a second-floor window, watching the water rise, another boat appeared.

“Climb aboard and save yourself,” the driver said.

“No thanks. I trust in the Lord. He’ll save me,” the woman said.

The driver shook his head and drove off.

The next day, the water reached the roof of the house. As the woman sat on the roof, next to the chimney, watching the water rise, a helicopter appeared. The pilot called down on a loudspeaker:

“I’ll lower you an upright basket. Step in, close the gate, and save yourself.”

“No thanks. I trust in the Lord. He’ll save me,” the woman said.

The pilot shook his head and flew off.

The very next day, the flood engulfed the house; the woman was swept away in the torrents, and drowned to death.

When she got to the Pearly Gates, she said to St. Peter:

**“Before I go inside there, I want to register a complaint.
I trusted God would save me from the flood, but he let me down.”**

St. Peter gave the woman a puzzled look and said,

**“Madam, I don’t know what more the Lord could have done for you.
He sent you 2 boats & a helicopter!”**

*That woman should have read the Gospel I just read to you from St. Mark more carefully. It shows two people also in need of help. Both people trusted God, as she did. **BUT**-& there’s that proverbial **BUT** in life-there’s one **BIG** difference between their trust and hers.*

‘How so?’ you ask. Well, I’m glad you asked that question.

*Allow me to explain. The first woman is sick. She, too, like the flood victim, has faith & trusts Jesus to heal her, **BUT**... she realizes she must do more than merely ‘trust.’ She knows she must do more, i.e., **‘take it one step farther’** and do **HER** part. She doesn’t sit at home and wait for Jesus to come and knock on her door, depending on a kind of ‘spiritual welfare.’ She must get up, go to Jesus, & present herself to Jesus for healing.*

*The second story is about the Roman officer, Jairus. He, also, has faith & trusts that Jesus can heal his sick daughter. **BUT**... knowing that he can’t go on ‘spiritual welfare’ & merely sit at home and pray, he goes to Jesus, personally, knowing his daughter is too sick to go to him herself. He, too, does his part & **‘takes it one step farther.’***

This is where the woman in my 'flood-story' made her **BIG** mistake. She forgot that God normally acts in our lives through **ORDINARY** means. She forgot that we must do our part & cooperate with God by using the normal, ordinary means he gives us.

In other words, we can't sit around & expect God to work some miracle for us. We must 1st use all of the ordinary means God gives us to help ourselves. Remember the adage: "God helps those who help themselves!"

Once upon a time, centuries ago when I was in college, there was a best-selling novel called Jonathan Livingston Seagull. I share this quote from it that has since become a theme song:

**"If you love something, you must set it free.
If you set it free and it comes back to you, then you know it is yours.
BUT, if you set it free & it does not come back to you, then you know it wasn't yours to begin with."**

God does not treat us like puppets on a string.
He expects us to do all we can...doing our part... **not** going on spiritual welfare.
And we ought not treat him like a puppy by holding up hoops that we expect him to jump through.

I close with this prayer:

**"Lord, in your 'fatherly love' for us, you have set us free.
Help us show our 'love' for you by... returning to you...
After we've done our absolute best...all we can...
and, yet, need your special help."**

May our loving Father, our Abba, bless you...
the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.