

Due to heavy rain this little town got flooded including the rectory of this small church in town. His parishioners called him and asked this pastor to evacuate but he said the Lord will save me. As the flood rose one rescue boat came as the pastor was looking from his second-floor window. They asked him to jump in the boat. But, the pastor said, the Lord will save me as he saved St. Peter from the storm. As flood rose higher and higher, the pastor climbed on the roof of his house. Again, a rescue helicopter came. But, the pastor said, I am fine the Lord will save me as he saved St. Peter from drowning in the sea. Of course, finally he drowned and reached at pearly gate of heaven where St. Peter was guarding.

With sad eyes, the pastor asked St. Peter “why didn’t the Lord save me as he saved you from drowning in the stormy sea. I also had full faith in him.?”

St. Peter, flabbergasted, replied “we sent your friends, a boat, and a helicopter! What else could we have done?”

The main theme of this Sunday is Lord save me.

In the first reading Prophet Eliza faces a big storm of his life. He is running for his life. It is the same Elijah, one of the old Testament Prophets who is taken into heaven alive. He is the same prophet who fought on mount Carmel with the 450 false prophets of Baal who shouted and prayed to their god to rain fire on the sacrificial animal. Prophet Elijah teased them by saying, “shout louder, may be your God is asleep, or maybe he is in a journey”. These false prophets were executed. But this did not please the queen Jezebel. And because of her there is this big storm in the life of the prophet. So, he fled for 40 days and 40 nights and God miraculously fed him in the desert through an angel until he finally reached mount Horeb where God has established a covenant with Moses. Here hiding in the cave, just as the man in our story in the beginning, the prophet also expected to see spectacular miracle by God to save him and protect him. He expected to meet God in the great powers of nature like lightning and thunderstorms, fire etc. to strengthen his faith. However, the presence of God was not in the spectacles of thunder, earthquake, or fire but in “a tiny whispering sound.” Elijah acknowledged God’s presence by covering his face and coming out of the cave where he had taken shelter. He was content with God’s quiet sign of His presence, and was consoled, trusting that his God was helping and protecting him.

Just like Elijah, we can miss God’s presence by limiting our experience of Him to certain places and persons and forgetting that He is everywhere. Just like the man in the story I told in the beginning, we can also miss God's saving power extended to us through the people around us.

In the Gospel reading today, we see that the disciples of Jesus are faced with big storms. And they are praying to God for some miracle.

After the miraculous feeding of the people with five loaves of bread, Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to Bethsaida.

The boat with the disciples was facing strong storms.

And Jesus knowing the distress of the disciples came to them walking on the sea. But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out in fear. Jesus Christ immediately spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

Then, the Apostle Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is you, let me come to you on the water."

The Lord said, "Come."

So, Peter got out of the boat and started to walk on water and toward Jesus. As long as his eyes were focused on the Lord, he was able to walk on water in the midst of storms. But when he got distracted and saw the wind and the big waves, he was afraid, his faith vanished; and he began to sink. At least he remembered to call the Lord as he cried out, "Lord! Save me!"

Jesus Christ immediately reached out His hand and caught him saying, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

This is exactly what happens in our lives. As long as our eyes are fixed on the Lord, we fear nothing, and we go forward to reach him in the midst of storms in our lives. But the moment we get distracted by worldly things we begin to sink.

Just as Peter did if we remember to call the Lord in the midst of storms in our own personal life, he is sure to extend his helping hand. But remember Lord may not calm the storms but we may be able to walk on water in the midst of storms if our eyes are fixed on him, His helping hand may not come the way he expected as we saw in the case of prophet Eliza and the pastor in my story.