

I recently read a passage about the widely told religious story, *The Drowning Man*. It went something like this.

A religious man living in his small, quaint home is warned by passersby of a terrible storm and is told he must evacuate. The man dismisses their advice, stating, "I have faith. God will save me."

The next day, the storm comes. The wind howls, and the rain batters his windows. A police car drives by and notices the man still in his home. They bang on his door and tell him he must come with them; the storm will only worsen. The man, again, dismisses the officers, stating, "I have faith. God will save me."

His house begins to flood and he works his way onto the roof. A helicopter spots the man and hovers above his home. A fireman is sent down on a rope to collect him from his roof. However, yet again, he denies help, stating, "I have faith. God will save me."

The religious man's home is washed away and him with it.

When he reaches heaven, he is angry. He wants to know why God abandoned him after all his years of loyalty. He demands an answer. God replies, "I sent you everyone I could, David. What on earth are you doing here?"

I've thought a lot about this story since reading it. Not because it's about religion, but because it's about expectation. We often imagine help coming in the form of something extraordinary: a sign, a moment of clarity, a beam of light shining down on us from the sky and the hand of God coming down and patting us on the back.

But it doesn't work like that. In reality, it arrives disguised as ordinary people offering ordinary kindness. And, for reasons ranging from pride to fear to oversight, we often refuse it.

I have always felt there is a strange contradiction in human nature. We all want someone to be there for us in our darkest moments, yet many of us struggle to accept help when it is offered. We convince ourselves that we aren't worthy of help, that someone else deserves the help more, or that asking for help is a sign of weakness.

With this mindset, we become the man on the roof, unable to see help for what it is and instead waiting for a miracle that never comes.

If a God does exist, he won't send an angel or saviour. He sends the friend who always makes sure to text. The neighbour who asks how things are when you pass by on the street. Your dog who, no matter what, is always happy to see you. The colleague who occasionally brings donuts for everyone in the office.

We spend so much time waiting for a miracle that every lifeline thrown our way is missed. Maybe the tragedy here isn't that help never comes; it's that we don't always recognise it when it does.