



Who is God When Life Stinks?

News Comes... Slowly

With every set of footsteps outside our closed door, my body tensed. Would this be the one bringing a message of Bob's death? How many more minutes before I officially became a widow?

The minutes turned into hours. Friends came and went. While others left the room for meals, I would stay in this sanctuary of love. I felt protected as these friends sat around a table in the room and along the wall. My make-shift "bed" was separated from the hallway and the door by the chairs and conversations of friends. Any tragic news would have to pass through their supportive eyes and arms.

I wanted to pretend it was safe here. But this was NOT a place of safety. Tragedy arrived at this trauma hospital every day. There was no guarantee that I would receive good news. On our previous visit I had met many family members with heart-breaking stories. How quickly that description could apply to me and my family also!

Occasionally, into the warmth of this room, the rattle of a phone on the wall would ring and we all would jump. But it never was news from the operating room. Time went on... and on... and on. Then, at the door there was a "runner" from the operating room with an update. Friends gathered closely to hear the report. I stayed in my corner but heard an extravagant tone of voice as she gave a brief explanation.

"This much!" she cried out in awe. She cupped her hands into the dimensions of a large bowl. "The surgeon removed *so many blood clots* from the heart, the arteries and the lungs—it was enough to form the size of a large grapefruit."

Then we waited more. Bob's survival through this surgery was still completely unknown. Together we marveled at the medical ability to open the body and remove these obstructions. It would still take more long hours of surgery before the heart-lung bypass could be taken off. If Bob survived that, the body would then need to be sutured up and re-warmed. Only after that would we know if Bob had a CHANCE to live.

After a total of eight long hours in the tiny conference room, a rumped, weary physician quietly appeared outside our door. He asked to speak to me. From my seat in the

room I could only see the figure of someone at the door, but coming closer I recognized our enormously gifted Dr. M.—the one who had decided this morning that he would attempt “impossible” surgery on my dying husband!

Dr. M. shook his head slightly. He then spoke slowly and gently. “I have an excellent medical team, and we work very well together, but ...” he started. My heart was in my throat as I waited for disappointing news. Our soft-spoken doctor continued, “... we can take no credit for what just happened with your husband.” He then silently pointed UP and my heart began to soar! Dr. M., with awe in his voice, explained that Bob had been successfully brought off the heart/lung bypass, his organs restarted, his body warmed, the incisions stitched... and there was still **LIFE!**

Together, in that empty hospital hallway, the doctor and I both knew there was no explanation for this EXCEPT that **we had experienced a God-sized miracle!**

“Oh, please”, I urged him. “Would you step inside our conference room and repeat this to our friends?” With gasps of relief, everyone applauded our thanks for Dr. M. and his team!

Dr. M. told us to keep waiting here—it would awhile before Bob was brought back to one of the CICU pods. Bob was in **VERY CRITICAL CONDITION**, but his heart and lungs were working! The surgeon then excused himself quickly and now our roomful of friends and family agreed—we must say THANK YOU to the One who gives or takes life. We held hands and with awe at God’s work we humbly bowed in prayer.

Moments later, another physician appeared in the hallway where friends and I now stood and waited. She introduced herself as the anesthesiologist during Bob’s surgery, and the tone of her voice was rapid and urgent. “You do not realize”, she exclaimed, “that your husband should not be alive!” I nodded assent, because that reality HAD definitely already touched me deeply. She continued, “NEVER have I worked on a patient who needed so much anesthesia, who was so far gone, and yet came back to life!” The awe in her voice confirmed in my heart that YES! - we had witnessed a miracle of God. I noticed on her name plate that she indeed was a doctor, and I called her by name (Dr. R).

“Dr. R”, I said, “we are so grateful to you for working with my husband, and yes, we know that **GOD is the one who has done a miracle in his life**. We are very grateful for this gift of life, for even just one more day.”

“Oh, please”, she replied, much to my surprise. “Will you pray for ME?” I was thinking that perhaps she was overwhelmed by the crisis of seeing death and life so sharply contrasted today, and of her part in this day’s long surgery and ordeal. I agreed to pray with her, and several of my friends stood with us. I asked God to help Dr. R in her life-saving work as a physician, and to have confidence in God’s power. She quickly interrupted me in the middle of my prayer ...

“No”, she said, “pray for me to have PEACE like you do.” I gulped in surprise. Humbly, and with a heart of thanks, I prayed for God to let Dr. R know true peace. My prayer was for her to know the peace that is possible through Jesus—the God-man who chose DEATH to give us LIFE! When the prayer was over, we hugged warmly and she walked away.

I resisted the urge to imitate Dr. M’s gestures of pointing UP! In the darkest corners of this crisis with my husband—and don’t forget the cancer that still was living in my own body—GOD was bursting into our lives in incredibly unexpected ways. **LIFE!** It’s so uncertain, so unpredictable, and so precious.

“I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

John 10:10

From: Kim M. (Friend in Pennsylvania)
Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2007 12:47 PM
Subject: Praise—give thanks!

Dear Friends of Ruth and Bob,

I just spoke with a gal from Ruth and Bob's church

Here are the latest details:

Bob flat lined 2x's between 7:00-8:00am this morning. At 8:00am he was rushed into surgery. Open heart.

Doctors removed clots in an artery that goes from the heart to the lungs that in total was about the size of a grapefruit.

The Doctor twice commented that this was a miracle, they could not take credit for what had taken place in Bob. No one expected him to live.

He is now breathing on a ventilator and his heart is pumping good.

He opened his eye at Ruth (she is beautiful)

He moves at the command of the nurses, i.e., hand, fingers, feet

He has a 12-24 hr period that we need to continue to pray to God for His will to be done with thanksgiving and supplication.

He is not out of the woods but he certainly is no longer in the middle of them either.

A nurse came out with the doctors who attended in surgery and said to Ruth "I am overwhelmed at what just happened. He was not supposed to live, there is no reason he is living."

Ruth with grace and strength from God said, "It is because people have been praying for Bob."

She then responded, "Will you pray for me?" Ruth immediately stood with her in the hallway and prayed out loud with words of grace and hope in Christ.

Glory to God! He has heard the cry of our voice.

Ruth's friend Kim

From: Sue V.

Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2007 3:22 PM

Subject: 2:55 update on Bob

Barbara just called. Bob made it through the surgery - truly a miracle. He was able to wiggle his toes in response to their request. They are bringing him from the Operating Room to ICU now, and then eventually to his room. In about 30 minutes Ruth and Crystal should be able to go in and see him. He is not out of danger yet, but this first major hurdle has been cleared. Barbara said the doctors almost gave up several times, but kept going. She said the Doctor said he'd like to take responsibility for pulling Bob through, but there is no way he could do that. Obviously, God's hand has been on Bob and the doctors working on him. While we thank God for answering our prayers for this miracle, we need to keep praying for the remaining hurdles. And the doctors still need to determine why Bob is having all these blood clots.

Love

Sue

[Next Chapter](#)