



Who is God When Life Stinks?

The Miracle of LIFE!

Now it was time. The CICU staff said that we could see Bob for a few minutes only. Ohh, how eager we were to see his breathing body. Ohh, how unprepared we were for what he would look like!

We could only enter two at a time, and I let some of the men go first. They stayed only a few minutes, but were visibly shaken when they emerged from the room. It was an obvious clue to the difficult sight that Bob must be.

But he was my husband, whether he appeared familiar or not. He was my partner in life, and that partnership had been severely threatened today! I knew that we might not have a “tomorrow”, so it did not make sense to delay. I gathered whatever courage I could and entered the pod.

As the door into the pod was pushed open, the sounds and smells of a struggle for life attacked me immediately. A cacophony of whirring and beeping came from a shelf full of assorted machines. More than TWENTY machines were around his bed—working valiantly—pumping medications, monitoring vital signs, forcing his breathing and other life systems to work. There was the rush of so many staff members, attending to the multitude of issues with his fragile body.

In the harsh glare of the bright overhead lights, it was hard to focus on this lifeless-looking body laying on the bed directly in front of me. The curtains were drawn starkly out of the way, and when I avoided the distraction of people and machines, I discovered that on display before me was Bob’s torn up body, laying under a thin sheet, trapped by a mess of wires and machines.

It was NOT an attractive display. My gut wanted to wretch but I tried to take in all the details. Bags of blood or medication were hung on both sides of the bed. Tubes for breathing and feeding went into his nose and mouth. Under the sheet were more wires and drains from a myriad of incisions in his chest and groin.

The sight of him was gory, and agonizing. It would take all my discipline and determination to focus on the beauty of life, or we would be completely shaken by this gruesome scene.

I wept at the sight of my husband—tears of pain for his mutilated body. Emergency surgery meant that his body was completely stained with the disinfectant poured hastily over it. His incisions were roughly cut, into the same locations as his earlier surgery, but this time with jagged edges and closed with large, black stitches. His face was swollen, his eyes closed. His arms were tied down, a breathing tube strapped into his mouth and throat.

I also wept with joy—knowing there was *life* in this beat-up, sewn up, and hooked up body. Bob may not appear to have life. Only the machines seemed to be breathing, but the doctor had affirmed there *was* life. There was a chance that Bob could recover.

LIFE! It is a gift. For today, life was miraculously given back to Bob. It was beyond medical explanation. It was fragile and cherished. We would treasure it today... and see what God would choose for tomorrow.

**”Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.
Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:34**

From: BECKY BELL
Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2007 10:16 AM
Subject: Update on Bob Bell (Daddy!)

This update is from my mom:

Dearest Family and Friends,

Yesterday we saw a true miracle. Around 7:30 a.m. the nurse asked me to come and kiss Bob goodbye around a multitude of tubes as they rushed him off to a "desperate attempt" at surgery. She explained this would probably be the last kiss we would have.

I had been sitting watching Bob's bed for the past 2 hours as over 30 medical people came and went, working rapidly, tubes were inserted, medications begun, and a stream of professionals consulted. The many clots in Bob's lungs were too large for his heart to push the blood through, and finally the nurse came over to tell me they were doing CPR on him.

The quiet truth of God's love for us throughout our marriage overcame the noisy chaos of the room, as I kept repeating to God my gratefulness for 32 wonderful years with this man whom I adore, enjoy sparring with at times(!), and who has made me laugh over and over.

The surgeon had told me 30 minutes prior that if he tried open heart surgery again, in effort to remove the clots, Bob would bleed to death. Now, through my tears, Dr. Martin touched my shoulder and said they would be going to attempt surgery... which led to my hurried "good bye" kiss.

So... 10 hours later, after surgery, I came back to the same room. Bob had returned with MORE tubing attached, still very sedated, and when I saw him look at me, my tears of amazement at God's work started again.

Bob did NOT know he would have surgery again at Shands (he was rush-transported to Shands hospital for observation but they immediately him put to sleep to start multiple interventions). Last night he was confused and worried why he has a breathing tube and so much more. However, overnight he was writing notes to the nurse on a clipboard to ask questions, and that shows encouraging brain function.

We are eager to go visit him today but wanted to FIRST LET YOU KNOW that the God we serve is King of our lives, and He is entitled to do whatever He chooses with us. How humbled and grateful we are to Him and to YOU for the continued gift of Bob's life.

THANKS!!!

Ruth and Family

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