



Who is God When Life Stinks?

EEeek! It's a Mouse!

Bob's blood was allowed to thicken a bit after the latest dreadful bleeding episode. Today he was going to have the feeding tube removed from his nose— and this was a big event! Bob had been many days in a coma, and was gradually being weaned off the heavy sedatives. We anticipated that Bob would soon be able to raise the head of his bed and eat some real food!

Our pastor was planning to visit Bob later this morning, so I decided to drive home in the early hours to spend some time catching up at my office. The hospital was on the way home from the apartment, so I stopped by the CICU room early and saw that Bob was resting well. Good! Things looked calm for this day. I nodded to his day nurse, who had just arrived. We had never met her before, and I learned that she was called in from a sub pool for the day.

When arriving at work, it felt good to sort through my pile of mail and to think about something other than hospital issues and emergencies. The morning was quiet and I was looking forward to spending several hours here. But never would I have imagined what was hiding around the corner this day!

Around noon, I received a call from Bob's nurse. This nurse was a tiny, older woman. Typically, the nurses in the CICU are strong and young because of the physical demands of caring for acutely ill patients. During our brief five minutes together this morning, the nurse had impressed me as being a bit excitable. Okay, so why was she calling my cell phone?

The nurse told me that Bob wanted to speak with me privately. Bob was hardly able to speak, so it surprised me that he would want to call and "converse". His voice was thick, and I imagined this was because of residual sedatives still in effect. But his voice was urgent. "You need to be here NOW" was all I could make out. "It's a mouse" or something like that. "I really need you here NOW!"

Delusions are part of the after-effect of some sedatives, and perhaps that was this situation. However, in the background, I heard the shrill, anxious voice of his nurse, being counterpointed by the strong deep voice of a male nurse or physician. What could be

happening? Would Bob be okay while I travelled the 50—60 minute drive to the hospital? Was anything really happening, or just a delusion in my husband's mind?

Bob needed me there, so I dropped everything, made my apologies to my colleagues at work (who were very understanding) and started to drive with anticipation the 45 miles to the hospital. That is what a partnership is—a commitment to be there for each other. The irony strikes me that my husband is always MY rescuer—when our home is visited by sticky green tree frogs, huge Florida palmetto bugs, or even mice, I squeal or look helpless, and he comes to my assistance! Surely this partnership runs both ways. If there is a mouse, what is it doing in the hospital, and why does Bob need me? Regardless... he does.

I entered the CICU room to see genuine, desperate relief in the eyes of my man when he saw me. His speech was still thick as he talked, but the nurses and others were trying to speak to me all at once. It would take a while to piece together the story.

Bob's feeding tube had been inserted down his throat at the time of his surgery. When the blood was so thin, and running out of his nose just days ago, some had collected below his throat. So when the feeding tube was removed earlier today, it moved a collection of blood that had since become thicker, and positioned it as a blood clot in his throat. Bob felt his breathing constricted by this and asked the nurse to help. She seemed clueless, and Bob felt he was going to choke to death. He continued to request her help, and finally she reluctantly looked down his throat.

What the nurse saw frightened her!! It appeared to be some kind of internal tissue, perhaps dislodged from one of his organs, and she refused to remove it. What if it was something that needed to stay and she was responsible for pulling it out? She knew nothing of Bob's bleeding or clotting history, so did not suspect it was a clot.

Still, Bob could not breath well. He coughed, wanting this blockage out of his throat! He prayed and urged God to bring it out! Finally, after much coughing and gagging, a huge, mouse-sized welt of soft blood moved from his throat to his mouth, and his nurse was horrified as he spit it out for her!

She excitedly called for the critical care doctor, and they immediately put the clot into a specimen jar to examine it and determine just what it was. Yes, the critical care team assured everyone that it was blood, clotted into a soft elongated welt that was indeed the size and shape of a small mouse.

Poor Bob! Left alone with this struggle, and unable to make his needs known, he thought he was going to choke to death. Worse yet, with the after-effects of sedation, he felt the nurse was conspiring to let him do just that!

The medical staff really wanted to show me this unbelievable specimen. They were toting it around like a “show and tell”. Actually, they were animated and excited about this new phenomenon. I appeared interested (not so!) in this medical abnormality but you and I both know by now to expect the ABNORMAL from Bob!

My interest, instead, was in the panic of the man who always quiets my heart in danger. My concern was for the paranoia of my husband who thrills in exposing me to movies that showcase his enjoyment of paranoia and intrigue. Not so today. That man was still hidden somewhere in this broken body, and it would take more days of love, care and partnership to draw him back to mental and physical health.

Mice, paranoia, emergencies, and panic. We’ve been through crises before in our lives together. This was a partnership we had committed to “for better or for worse”. It did not escape my attention that for one more day, God allowed for this partnership to continue.

Thanks, God, for the gift of my man. I look forward, with your help, to whatever the future days of partnership will look like. I love YOU, and I love HIM.

**And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him;
and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:12**

From: Bob Bell IV (son)
Date: July 17th, 2007
Subject: A High Risk Tightrope

Update from Mom/Ruth follows:

Bob's surgeon has pulled in more teams of doctors to work on Bob's case. The Critical Care Team explained that their job is to coordinate all the life-threatening aspects of Bob's organs right now -lung difficulties, liver imbalance, kidney dialysis, etc. The Hematology Team is studying Bob's health history

to determine why he so suddenly and repeatedly has produced a multitude of blood clots (they are finding it quite perplexing).

With each discussion we ask many questions (as Bob would want us to ask) and the risks and complications can be overwhelming. But God reminds us that friends and family are in conversation daily with the CREATOR of all the wonderfully detailed aspects of Bob's body and HE is capable of many more miracles.

TODAY, Bob is on blood thinners with the hope of thinning his blood to prevent further clot blockages, but with the risk of bleeding. The hematologist calls it a "high risk tight rope" and God helps me giggle at the picture of our 6'8" bulky man atop a tightrope. How thankful I am that God's grip on him is firm and faithful.

Our family appreciates so many prayers, and most of all we appreciate a God who cares about every one of His children. Thanks for showing that to us by your love.

Love,
Ruth & family

[Next Chapter](#)