



Who is God When Life Stinks?

“Extra Large”

Do you remember Bob’s words, when the physician in our local hospital showed him the IVC filter which was to be inserted? “Does that come in extra-large?” were the comments of my over-sized man. These words hung heavy in our memory. After that filter broke loose and travelled to Bob’s heart, there were questions raised. Was the wrong-sized filter used? (The doctor inserting it has insisted it was the correct one.) Was Bob’s vein measured incorrectly? Now that Bob had survived his second emergency surgery and was being weaned off life support, some of the medical staff began talking about the need for a new filter. Bob still had clots that could break off again! Other staff objected—they felt that thinning Bob’s blood was the only therapy needed.

But I knew what to do! Let’s go quickly to this next step! Bob’s life was spared, and I wanted every effort made to stop another clot from potentially travelling to the heart. A newer, larger filter was explained to me, and I tried to carefully explain this information to Bob. It was uncertain how much he understood, but ***I understood that we were now almost two weeks past the horror of his heart-stopping clots, and neither he nor I could endure it happening again!***

Added to my eagerness for Bob’s safety was my nervousness about my own procedure coming up. It had been four months since the initial breast cancer PET scan, and three months since I began the alternative treatment. Some nights I lay in bed, alone, wondering if the tumor had grown. I hoped and prayed that it had shrunk. However, all the cancer research I read emphasized that STRESS is one of the largest contributors to encouraging cancer growth. Yes, I was trying to rest when I could, take walks, eat right and keep positive. There was no denying, though, that my body had become weary, worn and stressed!

But the debate to do the filter, or not to, continued with the medical staff. These extra large filters were specialized, had to be ordered, and needed a specialist present for the procedure. “Okay”, I insisted, “let’s just do it!” In my mind, the clock kept ticking. I needed to leave Bob soon for my scan. I needed to know that this procedure was at least scheduled! I had to be here on the day it was done! None of these details seemed to be working out!!!

I'm embarrassed to admit that perhaps I thought God needed a break from our drama. Perhaps it was time for ME to "take charge of things" again. Maybe I needed to "help him out"! During Bob's life support days, it was easy to rest in God's power. In order for me to face the horrible sights each day, I would hum the song "in the presence of Jehovah, God ALMIGHTY, prince of peace". Yes, God was present in those places and he gave me eyes to see a blanket of his mighty power covering my husband there in his CICU bed. God's presence was real and his peace was unexplainable.

Now, Bob had been moved to a different cubicle, still in CICU, just as tiny as before, but a bit brighter because it had a window. The future looked a bit brighter, too, and I started to think God had other people to look after and that he needed to focus on them instead of us. Maybe we could handle these scheduling problems on our own.

How could I push my agenda so soon after watching the hand of God do miracle after miracle? Does he really need my help? Why do I think that he needs a break and wants me to take over for him? Does he only enter our lives in the critical issues, and lose interest in our every day events?

Yes, although I was still respectful to the staff, I was becoming pushy with my own insistence. And yes, I was moving ahead too fervently to even stop and ask God for directions.

Finally, on the day to head home for the PET scan, I anxiously kissed Bob good-bye. I had been successful at convincing a groggy Bob to push for this filter too, but he was feeling uneasy about it. "Ruth", he quietly admonished me. "Let's back off and trust God's timing on this." Driving home, I slowly relinquished the need to push for my terms on Bob's safety, and admitted that we still needed Someone far bigger than us, larger than life and death, and more powerful than all the very best physicians. I must trust his timing.

Arriving at home, I checked the mail and email. It amazed me each time how those little words added to a greeting card, or a short email promise of prayer, would bring such HUGE encouragement to my heart. Yes, I was trusting a BIG God, who was interested in all the big to little details of our lives. I would head to the PET scan and keep my eyes on him.

Then my eyes noticed our "answer call" light flashing. I needed to check for phone messages. There were a few encouraging messages from friends, and the last message had come just this morning. It was from the PET imaging center, checking with me to say ..."the machine is broken today, and we're sorry, but we have to reschedule"!

I should be crying in frustration over this, but standing there, alone in an empty, dark house, I burst out laughing! My husband's humor usually kept me laughing, but God had even filled that void today! All this worry, all the efforts to push my time schedule and my agenda, and God was gently reminding me of how little I really do know. I could picture a kind, compassionate twinkle in God's eye as I thanked him for being BIG ENOUGH for handle every detail.

Surely, he is a MIGHTY GOD!

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand.

Cast all your cares on Him, because He cares for you."

I Peter 5: 6, 7

From: Bob Bell IV

Date: Saturday, July 21, 2007

Subject: "God Almighty"

Another update from Mom/Ruth:

An amazing group of friends/family have been inviting God to touch our lives and we THANK YOU!! We want you to know that God is a MIGHTY GOD.

Each time that I entered the hospital or Bob's room over the past 10 days new crises or developments have greeted me, many intimidating machines are whirling, dozens of IV lines are dripping, and everyday has new surprises!

(some good, some serious) Your prayers have made possible a perspective that looks beyond the pumps, the IVs, and the big yellow eyes of my jaundiced husband. Instead, I hum the song "in the presence of Jehovah, GOD ALMIGHTY, Prince of Peace." Yes, He promises to BE HERE and I've seen His touch EACH DAY!

Just one week ago today (Sat 7/14), Bob was on TOTAL LIFE SUPPORT, completely sedated (for 5 days) with every organ's future unknown.

Tuesday, 7/17 Breathing tube was removed & Bob's breathing has remained good.

Wednesday, 7/18 Continuous dialysis disconnected and replaced by intermittent (3 times/week)

Thursday 7/19 Feeding tube removed (with some complications) but today (7/21) Bob is gingerly nibbling his first meal in 2 weeks.

Friday, 7/20 Bob begins to "make sense" in his speech and to discern some of the events around him.

Coming up this Mon or Tues (7/23-24) Bob is scheduled for a filter to be inserted in central vein (through groin) to block the clots from travelling. In early June this procedure was done but the filter broke loose to travel to his heart which required his first open heart surgery just 4 weeks ago. This time, they have ordered a LARGE filter, to be inserted by a renown specialist in this area.

WED 7/25 RUTH is scheduled for a repeat PET scan, to determine if medication is working to reduce a breast cancer tumor which was diagnosed in February (we've been using this medication for 3 months in lieu of chemotherapy, due to other health complications). Results should be back in early August.

Thurs 7/26 Bob's specialized blood clotting tests are due back

TODAY - It's one more day to be "in the presence of Jehovah". We pray that whatever your walk looks like today, you'll enjoy the company of the ONE whose presence makes the trip WORTHWHILE, regardless of the circumstances.

So grateful for HIM, and for YOU,

Ruth

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