



## Who is God When Life Stinks?

### The “Old Folks’ Home”

The length of Bob’s stay at the nursing home was uncertain, but Bob determined to work harder than ever during his two hours of physical therapy each day. A quick release was his only hope at surviving this “old folks’ home”! Many of the other residents were bed-ridden, and almost all of them were elderly. Certainly everyone seemed so much older than my mid-fifties husband. Bob noticed that several of the more mobile women were hanging around the hallway outside of his room. He asked the nurses about this. “Oh, Mr. Bell”, they said. “You are fresh meat!” Bob pleaded with me to visit him often, to emphasize for sure, to his new “lady friends” that he was not available! I had to giggle!

Bob humbly accepted these new surrounding, although I could tell from his tears that first night, how difficult this was for him. There was no internet available in the resident rooms – and Bob would be spending long hours here with nothing to do except his two hours of PT per day. Sharing his dad’s love for technology, our son got creative and hooked up wires along the ceiling of Bob’s room – connecting the telephone line from the empty bed across the room to a trial version of dial-up internet! Bob’s “survival skills” were now strengthened by being able to connect to the outside world, and to keep his mind busy with some of his computer skills!

My survival was helped too! Not only could I email Bob from work or home, but one late, dark night I would need to call him to rescue me, from his bed! It was very late as I drove home from visiting with Bob after a long day at work. In my tired condition, the unfamiliar roads confused me and I took a wrong turn. Hoping to navigate back in the right direction, I continued driving but ended up miles from home in an unknown area of the county. Pulling out my cell phone, I called Bob and, while still in bed, he accessed computer maps - patiently guiding me from my street address location to more familiar territory. My knight-in-shining-armor had rescued me, even from the confines of his locked-in facility!

Bob had to get permission to venture out from “the home” for several doctor appoint-

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ments in the next two weeks. He was still in the wheelchair, so the nursing home staff scheduled for a “short bus” to transport him. Bob again swallowed his pride as they wheeled him on the lift and then strapped in his chair in the back of the bus. Bob needed me to meet him at the drop-off, so I would drive from work and join him at the physician offices.

These adjustments were wearing us both down, and we were in need of encouragement. The new environment for Bob, plus the obstacles of my work schedule, was causing strain to our relationship, and to our faith. Unexpectedly, God brought this encouragement through one of our appointments with a local nephrologist, who had been assigned to us by the hospital.

I had left work early and was waiting at this new doctor’s office as the “short bus” arrived with my man. We tried to be upbeat and hopeful about the upcoming report on Bob’s kidneys. The port for dialysis was still in Bob’s neck, but the nursing home doctor had not sent him for dialysis in the two weeks since he arrived. We wondered what the future held for Bob’s kidneys, which had shut down completely during the days of his coma, requiring 24 hour dialysis. It was a relief when dialysis reduced to 3 days a week, and now we marveled, with some doubt, as the nursing home declared dialysis was not necessary.

This new kidney specialist was from India, and he entered our room carrying a huge folder. Bob’s medical record had been sent ahead of our appointment – pages and pages of complicated details. As the doctor seated himself, cross-legged, on the examining table across from our chairs, Bob began telling him the history of his surgeries and complications. The doctor was skimming page after page as he listened. Suddenly he stopped, and abruptly looked up.

“Mr. Bell”, he stated emphatically. He had our attention as we waited for his important medical evaluation.

“You are lucky to be alive!” We looked at each other and then smiled gratefully back to him in acknowledgement that yes, we knew how generous God had been to spare Bob’s life!

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Now the doctor began shaking his head back and forth, and we grew concerned. Thoughtfully, he came out with a forceful “NO!” We looked at each other and wondered ...why he was changing his mind?!

“There is only one word for this...” The doctor was putting heavy emphasis on each of his words. He pointed to the handful of complicated medical reports and then to Bob. With his heavy accent he exclaimed slowly and pointedly, “GAUD!”

Yes, we were beaming now!

Were we weary of these adventures? Absolutely!

Did we wish to be back home together and healing? Yes!

But would we trade away these stormy days, if it meant that we lost the opportunity to see people recognize the amazing power and love of GOD? The answer for both of us was an adamant “NO!”

Thank you, God, for shining your love and power through the storms!

**Isaiah 25:4**

**“You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress,  
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.”**

From: Ruth Bell  
Date: September 9, 2007  
Subject: God's Power Seen!

Don't you LOVE IT when God shows His power? This is the time of year in Florida when lightning and thunderstorms come often. Sometimes it is fun to sit by the window or on the porch and just watch the awesome lighting of the sky and listen to God's powerful thunder in the distance.

Bob & I were just sitting on the porch in the Nursing/Rehab center on Sunday. Bob welcomes any chance to be out of his 8x10 cubby of a room! Rain started pouring down, splashing through the screen, overflowing the gutters, and even seeping through the roof.

Ahhh - we know the feeling of storms "pouring down", splashing over into all areas of our lives and the weight of the storm threatening to crush through our

"roof". BUT... we are also taking the time to sit and watch the awesome POWER of a loving God.

Bob saw several doctors this week locally - and each specialist reviewed Bob's history then SHOOK THEIR HEADS... amazed that Bob would have survived all the unusual, catastrophic events of the past 3 months.

One doctor commented "you are lucky to be alive!" He then corrected himself and said in his heavy accent "No, no! I must say this one word... GAUD". We beamed when we realized he was giving GOD the credit and we told him that we DO thank God, EVERY DAY and MANY TIMES each day!

A doctor assistant in the surgeon's office saw Bob today. We asked him to thank all those involved, and he responded that they are all amazed Bob is alive. He was present when Bob arrived for the second emergency surgery, and told us that he and many others there were "so sad for Ruth because we saw Bob die". We assured him that GOD was the one working in our lives, and for now, He is working to restore life and strength to Bob.

We are grateful how God has chosen to work HIS POWER - first by strengthening us in the rough roads, then by giving us so many "butt-pushers" as the mountain kept getting steeper. We are privileged to have front row seats to watch God's power recognized by so many in the medical field. We heard that the ICU nurses, weeks after Bob left, were sitting around one night talking about miracles and what they had seen God do in Bob's life!

We love you, and can't say THANKS ENOUGH for the way so many have loved us. Clearly, we needed desperately for our family and friends to hold us up. The storms are less drastic right now, but we continue to need prayer for God's power in the cancer treatment for Ruth's tumor, as well as Bob's continued rehab.

Love,  
Ruth & Bob

PS Bob should be released from REHAB tomorrow, Friday, 9/7!! He will then be re-admitted sometime soon to the hospital for several days to remove the dialysis catheter and PIC line, carefully monitoring the blood levels while there.

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