



## Who is God When Life Stinks?

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Bob was discharged from Shands Hospital for the final time on the afternoon of December 31<sup>st</sup>. We were in bed and asleep when the new year of 2008 arrived!! Not even the celebratory fireworks and sirens shook us – we were HOME!

“It will be a year-long recovery”, Bob resolved. He heard others say that the minimum period for bouncing back from open heart surgery was twelve months. Bob, in godly wisdom, decided to pace his body for a long, slow recovery from his multiple, invasive surgeries and procedures during the past seven months.

My body was exhausted, and after so many days apart from my husband, and so much activity, I just wanted now to lie in bed next to him. Listening to his breathing, or simply touching my hand to his warm body, would send ripples of relief through my soul.

We were delighted that the alternative cancer medication had worked to shrink the cancer tumor a bit. The last PET scan report in December was encouraging. The alternative medicine was slowly working. This treatment had only one side effect and it was a tremendous, beneficial one. As the medicine starved cancer cells, it also attacked other “sick cells”. As long as the medicine was working, cold and flu germs were killed off and my body stayed incredibly healthy!

But there is a condition called “adrenal fatigue”. Our bodies are designed to pump adrenaline for our “fight or flight” times of life. Then, the body needs time to restore itself and its adrenal supplies. The pace of our crises this past year did not allow my body to replenish its adrenaline. Serious consequences would follow in the months ahead. But that’s another story, for perhaps another book.

Today, after journeying together through these tremendously difficult trials, we understand and recognize the love of God in more real ways than ever before. Our love for each other has grown deeper through the hardships we have shared. The strength given us by our friends and the gift of their prayers is a priceless treasure we will carry always.

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God is writing his story in EACH of our lives. He wants to be recognized as the central character of YOUR STORY. He wants to shine his LOVE and power into your trials too. When we focus on HIM, we find his love, strength, joy and holiness to appear in places that we never imagined!

Yes, “when life stinks”, we are privileged to encounter the character of God in life-changing ways. We have grown in our knowledge of how amazing is our God. KNOWING GOD brings purpose and joy to these dangerous adventures of “life on earth”.

As the year progressed, Bob and I were privileged to speak at churches and Bible study groups, telling the story of how God is bigger than any obstacle. We love inviting others to LOOK FOR GOD’S LOVE, even in the middle of terrible, disappointing times. *(Some of these audio recordings are available to listen to on our website at [www.ruthebell.com](http://www.ruthebell.com).)*

My journey with cancer continued, with many difficult pathways ahead. Yet, during the trials in the years ahead, God continued to take our **disappointments** and turn them into **his appointments**. Opportunities continued to open up – with women’s groups, Bible studies and with families at school - allowing me to point to GOD’S LOVE in the center of these trials.

We pray that YOUR LIFE may be encouraged by knowing Jesus Christ as your Gentle Savior. He does not delight in the many complications and hardships of our broken world, but He will masterfully make beautiful things from the mess, if we let him. And he desires to WALK WITH YOU through each trial! He found HIM to be beautiful, in the ugliest circumstances of life.

HE LOVES YOU! And we do too.

**“He that is mighty has done to me great things; and holy is his name.” Luke 1:49**

**“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praise, doing wonders?” Exodus 15:11**

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## GENTLE SAVIOR

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Where are the signs?  
Which way should I go?  
I planned each step but now I don't know.  
Tomorrow is a chasm of uncertainty  
But, I will go there, if You'll go with me.

*Gentle Savior, lead me on.  
Let Your Spirit light the way.  
Gentle Savior, lead me on.  
Hold me close and keep me safe.  
Lead me on, Gentle Savior.*

Why can't I walk away from my regrets  
And why is forgiveness so hard to accept.  
My past surrounds me like a house I can't afford  
But You say, "Come with me; don't live there anymore."

**And when I reach the valley every soul must journey through  
I'll remember then how well You know the way,  
I'll put my hand in Your hand like a trusting child would do  
And say,**

**"Gentle Savior, lead me on.  
Let Your Spirit light the way.  
Gentle Savior, lead me on.  
Hold me close and keep me safe.  
Lead me on, Gentle Savior."**