



Who is God When Life Stinks?

From Bad to Worse

“Smooth sailing!” were the words we heard as Bob came out of the operating room where the filter had been inserted into his central vein. Bob was then moved to a recovery floor and put on blood thinners in an attempt to dissolve the clot. For the next few days, many friends from work and church visited cheerfully – happy for such a quick improvement. We all were delighted at Bob’s quick diagnosis and treatment, feeling confident that the problem had been fixed!

Then the pain began. Despite repeated requests for help, the staff dismissed Bob’s pain simply as constipation. Bob requested a laxative to relieve the pressure, but none came. His mind was overcome with the reality of how, in just a couple short days, things for us had gone so quickly from **bad** to **worse**! His desire was to be the healthy, supportive husband for his wife during this crisis of cancer but instead he lay in pain at our local hospital.

By the next morning, Bob’s abdominal pain was excruciating. Still no help came from the hospital staff. Ruth had gone to church, as had all of Bob’s visitors, leaving him alone in his room to cry out to God. Promptly at 12:00 noon the phone rang. Bob smiled at the sound of the phone— knowing for certain it was not Ruth or friends from our home church as services go well past noon! Instead, a pastor friend from another church had announced Bob’s hospitalization that morning as a prayer request. A physician in the congregation called and offered, “Is there anything I can do to help?”

Bob was relieved at hope of medical attention to his pain, and asked if this kind-hearted physician could arrange by phone for the staff to finally bring a laxative. Within twenty minutes, a nurse arrived with the requested medication and it worked quickly. However, the pain continued to increase. There was no obvious reason for the pain, so an order was placed for a CAT scan of the abdomen.

The results of the CAT scan revealed what the doctor described to us as a “humongous” bleed (hematoma) near Bob’s kidneys. It measured over five inches wide and deep, and was pushing the kidney out of place. Bob always does like to do things “large”!

Other specialists were called in for consultation. Because bleeding like this raised such concerns for Bob’s life, he was sent to the ICU for close observation. Blood thinning

medications were immediately stopped— for obvious reasons. It was unnerving to know that Bob would need several blood transfusions to stabilize him until the bleeding stopped.

Regardless of this new crisis, together we spent a quiet Sunday evening, chatting, relaxing, and smiling at the irony of our summer plans to have time to enjoy each other's company! Ruth stayed overnight and slept in the "not-so-comfortable" reclining chair next to Bob's bed. Bob would remain in the ICU under close, constant observation, as the medical staff watched, hoping and waiting for blood from the internal hematoma to absorb back into his system.

Over the next several days we found time to read, enjoy visitors and talk together at a relaxed pace. Friends from church took turns bringing home cooked dinners to Ruth each night. (Incredibly, they went out of their way to prepare organic meals, as we had eliminated any added hormones from Ruth's diet after the cancer diagnosis!)

Together we agreed that God was still in charge, even in these new scary details of our lives. Bob had a large room with glass walls, and no other patient to share it. For each new day, we were content to sit in our glass room, Bob reclining on the bed, and me on the chair. We joked together that this was "almost" like relaxing at the beach or pool. We clung tightly to the One who would guide us through tomorrow's challenges, choosing to trust today and not worry about tomorrow.

Cancer for Ruth, blood clots and bleeding for Bob. Could it get any worse? Could we really believe that God works all these things for our good? It would... and we would!

So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries.

Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 6: 34

From: Bells
Sent: Tuesday, June 11, 2007
Subject: Bob's Big Bleed

Since Tuesday's admission into the ER for a blood clot, we have been grateful for attentive medical staff - in each level from his 2 nights in ER, 2 nights in Intermediate Care and the first of 2 nights in General care.

However, Saturday night was HELLISH for Bob - he was in excruciating pain, and no one was attending to his needs. Crystal & I had left him before dinner as he was

calm, comfortable, and feeling ready for a quiet night. A deep pain in his back set in and he asked for a laxative thinking it was constipation. Nothing came all night, except increasing pain!

Finally, he was given help and by Sunday afternoon the constipation cleared up, BUT the pain became even more intense, particularly across his lower back and abdomen. We pushed for more investigation and a CAT scan revealed a large bleed in Bob's abdominal cavity.

They immediately set him up for ICU, typed him for transfusions, and STOPPED the blood thinners.

Today (Monday, 6/11) was a long day, as we met with many doctors and asked many questions. Each one relayed the delicate, intricate balance of thinning the blood to AVOID CLOTS while not thinning it too much to CAUSE BLEEDING. Both of these conditions could be life threatening.

By this evening, it was determined that since his vitals are holding stable, they will hold off on a transfusion. Every doctor has commented on how "huge, humongous, very, very BIG" the bleed is, and a great amount of blood is pooled in his abdomen.

My medical terms are non-existent, but we know that CLOTTING and BLEEDS are both conditions that need to be dissolved or absorbed by the body over time. So, steps are being taken to avoid worsening these conditions, but we all recognize that the Healer needs to touch Bob's body.

We are confident that God's hand of protection has been on Bob because of much prayer and we are soooo grateful.

Please pray for WISDOM tomorrow as we hope to meet with hematologist (blood specialist) as well as Bob's family doctor who returned today from a week vacation. THANK YOU so much for loving and praying for us... this morning we woke from our "sleep" on bumpy bed and bendy recliner in the ICU all night, and actually felt rested. That is nothing short of a miracle!!

love you,
Ruth (& Bob)

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