"We went from yesterday having a very serious situation to today having a very grim situation." These were the words we heard on Friday, February 6, 2009 late in the afternoon. Just 30 hours earlier, we visited the doctor to receive the great news that we would have another baby boy. Very shortly after that news on that Thursday morning, our ultrasound technician and doctor had conferred, and found that our baby boy had a lot of fluid in his chest cavity. They sent us immediately (right then) to a fetal specialist, who ran more tests including an amniocentesis. The fetal specialists shared with us that the fluid was one of three things was going on……1) the baby's lymph nodes had not developed; 2) the baby has an infection or 3) there is a chromosome deficiency or Down syndrome. Now the fluid was not only in his chest cavity; they also found it in his belly and skull. Therefore, when we left that Thursday, the doctor said, "*we have a very serious situation."*

As the day went along on Friday, we didn't think we would hear from the doctor (since the tests he ran would most likely not return until after the weekend; although he would try very hard to get them to us before). Around 4:30 Friday afternoon, the doctor called and shared the devastating news, *"We went from yesterday having a very serious situation to today having a very grim situation."* He said this because the fluid the baby had was very serious and would not drain (hydropsis). He also shared with us that the baby did have Down syndrome. The doctor gave our baby a 50/50 chance……..50% chance that one day I would go into a doctor's visit and there would be no heartbeat, and a 50% chance that we would make it full term and deliver the baby, but that he would only live a week, at the most, because the fluid would not allow his lungs to develop. Regardless, our 50/50 chance would have the same result. Our baby being diagnosed with Down syndrome was not our main priority as we had to go through the next four months being very unsure of our future.

Our doctor told us that the information he was sharing with us is what they had always seen medically; however, he told us although it was a slim chance of our little guy surviving that "miracles do happen; so pray." And that is exactly what we did, we lifted our baby up in prayers along with so many others around the country. For months, we prayed. We did not get a room ready; we did not prepare our 2 year old to be a big brother; we just prayed over our baby boy.

Fast forward, on June 1, 2009 (a month before his due date), Hunter Reid Clark felt it necessary to make a premature entry into the world. Although fluid was still showing the week before, he was born as healthy (as you can image) as he could be. He did not need any fluid drained from his skull, chest cavity or belly…….he was only on 30% oxygen for 3 hours……..he spent 10 days in the NICU. He battled typical issues like eating. The NICU doctor, who released us, said "Congratulations, you win the award for leaving with the most paper work." We left with follow up visits to just about every "ologist" you can image (except a pulmonologist – strange yet amazing, huh).

As Hunter continued to grow and eat better, over the next few months we discovered he had hypothyroidism; that he would need multiple surgeries with the urologist, but that also he did not have the large hole (ASD) in his heart as first expected. So with all the appointments and "pokes and prods," Hunter handled it all like a little trooper.

At almost 8 months old, Hunter was having therapy at daycare, and I received a call at work. Hunter had shown signs of seizure activity. Once I arrived at daycare, his therapist quickly called a contact (rehab specialty doctor) at Children's Hospital who agreed to see us right then (we lived in Birmingham at the time).

They ran an EEG, CAT scan and blood work. We also saw a neurologist that day, who told us there is no way you get all these tests and see two specialty doctors at the last minute, and all in one day (but we did). Hunter was suffering from seizures (infantile spasms). It was the hardest thing to watch, and we felt so helpless. The doctors agreed to treat them aggressively with medicine since they caught them early, and that if we did not then it could cause severe developmental delays. After one month, the seizures stopped with the medicine, and Hunter has done well since.

Now fast forward to today, after seven surgeries (including urological and eye), and many, many doctors' visits, a ton of therapy sessions (physical, occupational and speech), glasses and ankle braces, and a few medicines along the way, Hunter is the happiest and most fun 3 year old…….he smiles, laughs, babbles, hugs. Although he does have developmental delays, and is just learning to walk and feed himself, he has come a long way from that grim February afternoon when the doctor told us he would not be here.

We are extremely BLESSED! Our verse during my pregnancy and even now for Hunter is Jeremiah 29:11……."for I know the plans I have for you……plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." We believed then and still do that regardless of our outcome; we knew that if our story could reach one person; that was the whole purpose.

We are thankful every day for our little boy with Down syndrome. He has inspired so many people, and all of these people we have to thank for their prayers…….miracles do happen, and ours has Down syndrome; his name is Hunter, and he is extremely LOVED!!