

# The Story of Jake Spencer Greenlee

This story is about our youngest son, Jake Spencer Greenlee. Below is a compilation of some of the blog posts that were written throughout the time that Jake was in the hospital.

**3/4/2008**

Friends,

I could not think of a better topic to start my Blog. I envisioned this blog being mostly about photography and a little about life, but it appears that little Jake had his own plans in mind. Apparently we were chosen to be the parents of not one, but two strong willed little boys! What a whirlwind of blessing these last two days have been. Let me begin at the...beginning.

I was awakened by a frenzied call from my wife early monday morning, "Jim, Jim!!" Angela was experiencing some heavy bleeding and we knew that we needed to rush her to St Joseph's to make sure that she and Jake were okay. We hurriedly dressed and woke up Ty. Luckily Ashley and Casey recently moved into a town home next to ours. We pounded on Ashley's door until she opened it, obviously woken from a deep sleep (lovely hair, Ashley!). We left Ty with my sister and sped to the hospital, finally having a good reason to go 60 down Villa Maria.

When we arrived at St. Joe's we were checked in by a confused emergency tech and were ushered into labor and delivery by a gracious and caring nurse. Angela changed into a "luxurious" hospital gown and our nurses began to see to her needs. It was determined quickly that she was still bleeding and she was experiencing some "cramp contractions". Her doctor was notified and he rushed over from the Med. He was caught by both the rain and traffic at Briarcrest for almost 20 minutes. He confided later that he was worried if he would make it in time. Angela was put on an IV medication, after Dr. Ben Zivney arrived, that was intended to slow her ever increasing contractions and give Jake some steroids to help his growth. Our doctor and nursing staff anticipated that we would be having a delivery by C-Section and prepped Angela as a precautionary measure.

After about 20 minutes Dr. Zivney came in to examine Angela. While examining Angela he said with a rushed, but steady voice "Let's go now, It's time to have this baby!" The room became a rush of action and I slipped into my "form fitting" paper scrubs so that I could be with Angela in Surgery. They whisked Angela to the back and begin prepping her for surgery.

They gave her anesthetic directly into her spine, basically paralyzing her from the waist down. I was then greeted by Dr. Raju, a very kind and caring man. I followed him into the operating room and joined at least 10 others who were waiting for him to put their years of training into action. I joined Angela next to her head, as she was awake throughout the C-section. During this time my sister was rushing my camera bag to me so that I could begin to document our second son's first moments. I received my camera shortly after Jake was delivered by the steady hands of our doctors. I asked permission from my wife to leave her side and to photograph our son.

After a few minutes of care, Jake was taken to a separate room and I was taken to a recovery room where I was met by my wife about 30 minutes later. Her surgery was a great success and our doctor commented on how easy it was to operate on her due to her small size.

During this time, I was also able to see and photograph Jake as he was cared for by a team of passionate professionals. Angela was then moved to her room to get some much deserved rest.

As the day progressed we learned that the main concern for Jake was his lung development and his ability to breath on his own. St. Joseph's cutoff for care for premies is 30 weeks and Jake was in week 27. Although Dr. Raju is starting a NICU center at St. Joseph's, it was determined that Jake would need to be transferred to Scott and White in Temple. At this point Jake was stable and it was pouring outside. For these two reasons a team of four from Temple began to make the trip down by ambulance instead of helicopter. The team arrived and had Jake ready for transport by around 5pm. The team was then gracious enough to bring Jake in to Angela's room so that she would be able to see the child she had been carrying for 27 weeks. Angela was a precious and swooning mother at the sight of her little treasure. It was hard for both of us knowing that she would have to stay behind in Bryan, as she recovered from surgery. After the team departed for temple, my mother and I drove with haste to pick up Ty and pack for our trip to Temple to be with little Jake.

There was a beautiful sunset as we drove north on hwy 6 to meet up with my beautiful, little son. This was the first time that the day had slowed enough for me to begin to process the day's events. No more was I surrounded by excited doctors, anxious family members, or caring nurses. The myriad of phone calls had slowed, if only for a moment. The sunset was speckled with vicious storm clouds, as if God had painted Jake's first day on his canvas of sky. What a Glorious God we have. He did not leave us yesterday, He held us yesterday. I hope that this story, a new chapter in our lives, has in someway touched yours. Please leave your comments, prayers, and your expressions of joy below, so that one day Jake can understand all those who have cared for him from the beginning. Thank You All.

Jim

**3/6/2008**

Thanks to all of those who left comments on my last post. Please continue to do so as we hope to keep these for Jake to read someday. Our experience in Temple has been an interesting one. For the most part our days are filled with sitting in the parent's lounge at the NICU, sitting by Jake's bedside, sitting in wheelchairs (Angela's recovering well from her C-Section), sitting around and editing pics and blogging, sitting at dinner, sitting to drive to my grandparents, and various other places and forms of resting our rumps. We also do a little bit of laying, just to break up the monotony :) Overall these last two days have been good for Jake. Yesterday was spent under the bilirubin light working on his tan. He was experiencing some jaundice, and was under the light for 24 hours. The lighting in the new pics is a little more dramatic than in real life. The camera didn't really know how to read all of the ultraviolet light. Mostly our days have been uneventful, but that changed around 4:30 yesterday afternoon. Jake had his first setback. My Mom and I were visiting Jake one last time before heading to Hamilton to spend the night at my grandparent's. We were just watching Jake and he began to be very active, squirming and flailing quite a bit. This was unusual as the only trick Jake has been able to master is lying around looking cute and wrinkled. On a side note, man this kid is hairy. If you look close at some of his pics you can see that his entire body is covered in hair. I guess is normal for newborns and premies, but all things aside we love this hairy, wrinkly little guy. Sorry, back to the story. We were watching Jake struggle and were disconcerted by this because it looked as if he was struggling to breath. He is still on the ventilator, although he is depending on it less every day. Suddenly his stat monitor showed all of his stats begin to drop. The alarms started going off and the nurse came from across the room to his bedside. She quickly called in others and begin to check Jake. His stats continued to drop, his pulse from around 170 to 100, and his oxygenation levels from around 95 down to

as low as 35. My mom and I has stepped back and we we're pretty much freaking out. We kept our emotions inside not wanting to distract the team of pros from their work. Our doctor, as well as, a nurse practitioner, another M.D., and a respiratory specialist(I forget the exact title) came into the room. Our nurse had put a bag on part of Jake's tubes from his ventilator and begin forcing more breaths. The other team members took over and Jake's stats quickly jumped back up to normal levels. All of this took place over about the span of 1 or 2 minutes. Apparently during this time, the team could see some small amounts of blood coming from Jake's ventilator tubes, in turn coming from his lungs. Jake remained stable after this incident and an X-ray was ordered to check out his lungs. Me and my Mom left the room after this was over, shaken and in tears. It was more shocking to us because Jake had been doing fine and this was really the first time anything like this had happened. The doctor found us about 30 minutes later after reading the x-ray and explained what happened. Jake had a pulmonary hemorrhage into his lungs. Some blood from the lungs surrounding blood vessels had soaked into his lungs and had inhibited his breathing. She explained that this happened sometimes when the preemies lungs weren't fully developed inside the womb. There are medicinal treatments for this but Dr. Guo said that she didn't think this was necessary yet. She would watch him overnight and see how he was the next day(Thursday). My mom and I left shortly after this because our nerves were pretty much fried and we needed some rest.

Today was a great day for Jake. He has had no more bleeding into his lungs and around 4pm today they were able to lessen his ventilator dependency one more level. Also his jaundice has subsided for the moment and his skin was looking much better today. It was not as dark and red as Tuesday or Wednesday. He will most likely be having a blood transfusion, but this is pretty normal due to the amount of blood that is drawn daily for tests, and the bleeding that he experienced yesterday. Yesterday was rough, but today was better. Jake also got to meet his mommy today. Angela left St. Jo's this morning and arrived around 2pm. Angela was ecstatic to get to see her little treasure again. Also ya'll are my witnesses. Angela loved the fact that she was able to change Jake's diaper. Let's see if this type of admiration keeps up a few months down the road when we're elbow deep in poo :) Check out some new pics of Jake at [jimgreenlee.exposuremanager.com](http://jimgreenlee.exposuremanager.com) and pray for us as we continue to ride the waves...

### **03/08/2008**

Today was really a great day. We were able to share our little bundle of joy with tons of family and friends. Today we were able to spend time with Angela's dad and sister(Tony and Gloria),

My grandpa(Jim, pictured above in a state of deep contemplation a.k.a. I woke him from his nap saying "Hey Grandpa!". You always have to beware of those pesky photographers laying in wait for their unsuspecting prey) and his wife Ralene, Janis and David(Coach) Greeno, J and Kristin Allen, and Joey, Leslie, and Claire Dunn. My dad was also able to drive up late this evening. It was great being able to take family and friends back one at a time and to see their faces light up when they were able to see Jake for the first time. It is truly a blessing to have great friends and family such as these. It definitely brings down the stress level when you are able to enjoy a meal and a good laugh with some great people. By the way if you ever decide your too thin and need to put on some weight, may I suggest the have a preemie, sit around the hospital all day only getting up to drive to the nearest restaurantorium and consume three or four times your daily allowance of calories eating plan. It'll pack those pounds in places you didn't even know you have! I'm going have to see if maybe we can get a treadmill in with Baby Jake.

For all of you who joined us today, thank you so much we really loved having you. Enough about me let me get to the reason ya'll are here. Little Jake had a great day today. As you know, he started the medicine to close his heart murmur last night, and received another dose around 10 this morning. I spoke with Dr. Guo shortly after this time and she said that his renal output looked good and she thought the heart murmur sounded quieter. This means that the medicine is doing what it is supposed to. Throughout the day today Jake continued to have stellar renal activity and had no other major issues. He received the last dose of medicine around 10 tonight and we will know in the morning if it did its job. Also Jake is currently under the bilirubin light again for jaundice. They did say he probably would not need an entire 24 hour treatment this time, which is good news.

We have received tons of support from family and friends. I have noticed while reading through comments that people have said things about me and Angela being strong throughout this time. We have to admit that this is not done on our own. From 9:30 on Monday morning we have both had a sense of peace about this storm we are going through. God has been our source. I love the verse Psalm 121:1-2 "I lift my eyes up to the hills-where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and earth" There is no better way to say this. When we are in the pouring rain, rain up to our necks, we have to but look up and remember this: We may be wet, but we do not drown. There is a personal, loving Father who holds are head above water. And when our limbs flail and scream for solid ground and we are at our end, we need only to lean back and be enveloped in his embrace. We WILL float on...in Him

**3/08/2008**

G-L-A-M-O-R-O-U-S

Is that Fergie Ferg in that motorized cart in the Wal-Mart parking lot looking so hot. No that's Angela Greenlee flaunting the latest fashions, making all the other Premie Moms J-E-A-L-O-U-S.

But seriously folks, today was a relatively good day for Little Jake. When we arrived this morning we were told that Jake's ventilator had been reduced from 28 breaths per minute the night before to 24 breaths per minute. This may not sound very significant, but preemie's usually take about 60 breaths per minute. So Jake is taking almost 2/3 of the breaths on his own. Also Jake's blood pressure has been a little low on the diastolic side(the bottom number). They like for the bottom number to be about the same as his gestational age (27 for 27 weeks), and the top number(systolic) to be about double that. Mostly they are concerned with the bottom number. Jake's was hovering more in the high teens, which is lower than what they would like to see. Dr. Guo said that this could possibly be because the murmur was decreasing the pressure in his heart too much. A couple of days ago the murmur was okay because it was ensuring that there was not too much pressure in the heart. If your confused, it was a little confusing to me too. They also noticed that his H and H(Hematocrit and Hemoglobin) was low. This is basically his red blood cell count. To help with his low red blood cell count, Jake had a transfusion today. It was given to him over the span of three and 1/2 hours, and everything went well. Earlier today Jake was given a PIC line to replace his current IV's. IV's only last around three days on little ones and have to be moved around. A pic line is a Peripherally Inserted Central line. It is able to carry a little more fluid and is put directly into an artery. This also means there is more risk of infection, but everything is kept sterile around the line to combat this. Jake also began to receive his first round of medicine to try and close

his murmur around 8:30 tonight. The medicine is given every twelve hours in three rounds. This medicine has a side effect of possibly closing other blood flow, such as to the kidneys. To monitor this they check his renal output(how much the little guy pees) and make sure that it maintains a healthy level. We won't know if this medicine is working until Sunday or Monday.

Also we had a wonderful surprise the evening. Grace and Cindy Dewitt have a track meet in Killeen tomorrow and offered to stop by and buy us dinner. It was great to be able to see some familiar faces and take a break from the monotony of hospitals, hotel rooms, and the Ronald McDonald House. We enjoyed a meal at El Chico, one of Angela's favorite restaurants. After dinner we went up to the hospital and Grace and Cindy got to introduce themselves to little Jake. It was great to see the look on Cindy's face when she saw and got to touch little Jake. It is really cool to be able to share the joy and wonder of Jake with our friends and family. Please feel free to come and visit in Temple if you feel so inclined. We would be more than happy to have you.

On a sad note, a family lost there little one today. He was born at 23 weeks and was just too young to make it. This is a sobering reality for us. Please pray that Jake will continue to progress and that this medicine will close his murmur and nothing else. If the medicine doesn't work after 36 hours, they will try another 36 hour session. If it doesn't work over two sessions, he will have surgery to try and correct the problem. Dr. Guo said that the surgeon has completed many of these surgeries successfully, but we would rather avoid that if possible. Pray for Little Jake and enjoy some more pics at [jimgreenlee.exposuremanager.com](http://jimgreenlee.exposuremanager.com)

### **03/09/2008**

I was able to see something pretty cool today. Being a parent is definitely one of the most rewarding things you can do. I saw my son interact in a way with my wife that was just amazing to me. It's hard not to cry just thinking about it. As Ty was getting ready to go back to Hamilton with my grandparents he was giving everybody hugs goodbye. Angela was sitting on the floor and Ty came up and hugged her from the side. He took his head and rested it on her back and just held her for about 30 seconds. As I was watching, it was as if everything got quiet. The craziness of our week left my mind and everyone else in the waiting room just seemed to fade. It was just the three of us in that waiting room, with our little one down the hall. Ty just seemed to know what his mom needed. Ok now I am crying. It totally melted Angela's heart and she couldn't help but to cry after that. Ty has really amazed both Angela and I this week and weekend. It's like he just grew up this week. He has been great and sweet and I am very proud to have been entrusted with him. I can't wait to see how he will react when he finally gets to see his little brother up close. I really love that kid.

Jake is really doing great. He was finished with his bilirubin light this morning and received the third round of medicine to close his heart murmur last night. He is really trucking along now. His ventilator is down to 16 breaths a minute and Dr. Guo said it is very likely that they will take him off the ventilator tomorrow. They will also be ordering another ultrasound tomorrow to see how much his murmur has closed. Be in prayer that the medicine worked well. If the murmur hasn't completely closed they will begin another 36 hour round of medicine. His blood pressure was up this afternoon and we are hopeful. In fact, we thought that he has been progressing so much that it was time to get him into training. We figure the younger the better!

The camera was actually Ty's idea. He says he wants to be an "Essence Fotogeipher" when he grows up. That reminds me...(Warning, Shameless Plug!) Please choose Essence Photography for all of those memorable moments that you never want to forget

Essence Photography - Capturing What Matters Most  
<http://www.essencephotobcs.com/>

Thanks to everyone who has been leaving comments. It is very uplifting to read what ya'll have written and just to know that our friends and family care. I am back in Bryan to go to work this week. Angela will be taking pics and I will continue blogging, although the entries may be a little shorter. Thanks

### **3/11/2008**

Whew, what a day to start back to work. It rained all day today, but it was still a good day. Jake is doing better. It appears that his murmur has closed somewhat. It's not completely closed, so they are starting him on another round of medicine. His blood pressure is holding in the high 20's/low 30's which is right where it is supposed to be. Also his ventilator is down to 12 breaths a minute. They lowered it down to 10 breaths per minute, but had to bump it back up to 12. He wasn't quite ready to come off so hopefully Tuesday he will. Keep praying as he continues to improve.

Also I would like to address any questions anyone may have. If you have something you would like to know, little or big, leave your question in the comments. If you have trouble doing that go ahead and email me at [jimgreenlee@gmail.com](mailto:jimgreenlee@gmail.com). Thanks for your support. Also Angela should be posting some new pics later today.

### **3/11/2008**

I could not stop laughing with glee at the site of this pic. First of all this is the cutest kid ever. Second this was taken by my wife (awesome "essence fotogeipher" in training), and third just look at this kid-Jake has all the little preemie girls swooning, and who could blame them.

Don't forget Mr. Cool here decked out with shades and a purple paci (purple is the new black, you know) Anyway Jake gets stronger everyday. They turned the ventilator off, but later in the day they had to turn it back on at 10 breaths per minute. Also we will find out more about the murmur tomorrow. His pressure was back down tonight after being in the low 30's yesterday. These two things do seem to be a step back, but we will know more tomorrow. We love this little guy and if he needs a little extra time growing we're okay with that. In my opinion he is just trying to get the most out of life, showing up to the party 13 weeks early. And believe me when little Jake comes home we will be throwing a phat party and yes, you are invited.

### **3/12/2008**

At the end of the day yesterday it wasn't looking very promising for Jake to get off the ventilator. They had turned it back on and his blood pressure was low. We thought the murmur might be reopening or just still open. Well at about 6:30 this morning Jake decided he had enough of this tube down his throat, and he proceeded to yank it out. After he removed his own tube he was able to breath well on his own. Also Dr. Guo said that sometimes she could hear the murmur and sometimes she couldn't. She decided to go ahead and give Jake another day or two before ordering the ultrasound. Today was a great day for Jake, and as

you can see, after all of his hard work today, he decided to take some much deserved relaxation time.

### **3/13/2008**

Wanted to share with ya'll Angela's only maternity picture since little Jake came so early. Angela Was also able to hold little Jake today, and they started him on milk, through a feeding tube.

### **3/13/2008**

It's so great to read everyone's encouraging comments. They lighten my load, just knowing that there are others out there pulling for and praying for my little guy. God sure heard your prayers this morning when Jake took matters into his own hands! Thanks for keeping the candle burning, we'll have our little guy home in no time. I love you all! ~ Angela

### **3/15/2008**

Thank you to everyone who has been so gracious to donate to us through this time. We have been blessed greatly and God has worked through all of you in different ways. Thank you to everyone who donated money and food cards to us last week. We have put these to good use and were blessed by your generosity. Thank you to all who have visited, both in Bryan and Temple. It is a great blessing to be able to share this time with both our family and our wonderful church family. Thank you also for your prayers. It is reassuring to know that when we lay our heads down at night to pray, Jake is supported by not only our prayers, but yours. Your support has been a vital brick in the wall of support and protection that we have experienced during this time. We could not face this with tenacity, if it weren't for our Saviour's support, but we could also not face this time, with peace, without everyone of you.

Jake is doing relatively well although we have had some small steps backward last night and today. Jake removed himself from the ventilator earlier this week. He originally had just some nose tubes in, but had struggled with some spells of apnea. For this reason they put him on a CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure). This provides the lungs with pressure to keep the airways open, and supplies some oxygen. They began feeding him yesterday, but had to fore go any further feedings for now. Last night they found some undigested food in his stomach, but he did have a diaper full of, we will call it digested food. This was bad and good so they have stopped feeding milk and are just watching and waiting right now. The problem that could occur, due to his murmur, is that the stomach and intestines may not get enough blood supply to digest his food. This can cause bacteria to build up and this can be very dangerous for Jake. Also the doctor said that the murmur is louder this morning. We can't be sure yet if this is bad or good. It could be that the murmur has opened back up, but it could also be that the murmur has closed to a point that there is less room for blood to flow out. This could cause it to be louder, similar to putting your finger over a water hose. They will have another ultrasound for him on Monday and we will find out then. Please pray that it has closed as surgery would be the next step.

Also, due to Angela and I both taking unpaid leave, we have decided to put on a benefit for Jake. All the proceeds will be going to cover the medical bills that won't be covered by insurance (Scott and White is out of network), and to supplement our income while Angela stays here in Temple and I take days off to visit. We will be putting on an "Online Gallery Benefit for Jake Spencer" from March 28th-31st. We have felt blessed that God has given to me the gift of photography and the ability to provide for my family through that. We will be hosting an online gallery of my fine art prints that I have created in the past and some I will be creating between now and then. We will be selling these prints online through my secure business site. Everything online will be accessible through Jake's new website - <http://www.jakespencer.com/>. Along with my fine art prints we will be selling some Pro Life bumper stickers inspired by little Jake and his early arrival. We will also have a section where you can order offline if you prefer. I am still in the process of creating this website, but hope to have the bulk of it done by Sunday Night. Also I will be constantly adding to it throughout the coming weeks, so please check it out periodically. Thank you for everything you have done for us.

### **3/17/2008**

Jake had a good day today. He got another echo on his heart today to determine the size of his murmur. Unfortunately, the cardiologist is on vacation so they sent the tape of the echo to Austin by courier. When it arrived the neonatal cardiologist attempted to read the tape, but discovered it was BLANK! So we won't know anything until tomorrow, hopefully. Jake did get a new bed today. One that is for more stable babies so that is a step in the right direction. The respiratory therapist also said that Jake was doing very well on his breathing and his heart rate only dropped once today. Sometimes their little brains forget that they have to have everything going at once! Continue to pray that Jake's heart murmur will be small and no longer effect the rest of his systems. Also we are waiting to hear more about whether Jake will be eating again. They took him off milk after his body was not digesting it all. It seems that the little guy has digested the rest of what he had (stinky!) so we will be asking about his feeding tomorrow. Please continue to pray for the little guy.

Also above is the design for the bumper sticker inspired by Jake. I am getting a quote to have these printed and will let you know when they are available. Thank you again for all of your wonderful prayers and support.

### **3/18/2008**

Today was a mostly good day for Jake. We did get the results from yesterday's echo and Dr. Guo said that there is still a moderately sized murmur. She decided to go ahead and stop his feedings, lower his fluids, and give him Ibuprofen. This treatment can have a similar effect as the original medication to close his murmur, but with less side effects. They are planning to try this for three days and we will go from there. Earlier today they had started his feeding again, but are changing it now due to the murmur. Also Jake is off the CPAP! This is great news as it is a step in the right direction. He is now on just a nasal cannula which supplies oxygen through nose tubes. They also began the steps to allow him to regulate his own temperature. In the past, Jake's bed has automatically adjusted temperature depending on his body temp to keep his temp within a normal range. Today they turned off this feature and just put the bed at a constant temp. This is similar to just turning on the heater in your house. Now Jake will have to regulate his own temp as they bed will not change automatically to make him warmer.

I feel like I am forgetting something and will try to have more detail about the murmur tomorrow.

Also I have got most of Jake's new website up. I am still working on a place to get the bumper sticker's printed and am thinking about t-shirts also. Let me know if there would be interest in a t shirt. Thanks for everything. Jake's site is [www.jakespencer.com](http://www.jakespencer.com)

### **3/19/2008**

Check out Jake's new shoes handmade by his mom. Jake is doing well overall. He is stable, and he is beginning to regulate his own temperature. Unfortunately, we also got some bad news. Jake's murmur is about the same size as it was before the medicine. Right now it does not appear to be affecting the rest of his systems. Dr. Guo is trying to treat the murmur by stopping his feeding of breast milk, reducing his liquids, and giving him Ibuprofen. He is being nourished by a sugar water fluid with vitamins. This treatment has been known to have the same effect as the medicine administered before, but with lesser side effects. It is also less potent. If this treatment does not work, then we will wait. As long as Jake remains stable they will put off heart surgery. It is a very risky surgery and the older Jake is, the better his chances are of coming through surgery without any problems. Please continue to pray that Jake's murmur will close.

### **3/20/2008**

I just drove up to Temple from Bryan tonight and got to see and hold Jake. My first response was, "Man, Jake is getting big!" I could really tell, after being gone this week, that Jake is starting to fill out. He had a smooth day today. He is still on the new treatment for his murmur. He is also wearing clothes now. Little itty bitty socks, and onesies. I just uploaded some new pictures of Jake in his outfit.

Today was a good day. My workload was pretty light, and I got home about 4:45. I was able to get the house clean before I left. It's great to know that the next time you walk through the door everything will be spic and span. Also I had a great drive here. I took the back way down some very windy roads. There is nothing better than blaring some of your favorite music, as you drive into the sunset. Also flying through some curves at 75mph can really help relieve pent up stress!

### **03/21/2008**

Today was a really fun day. Angela and I invested some time with Ty today by taking him to the Cameron Park Zoo in Waco. We walked the entire zoo and saw every animal they had to offer. The one that Ty kept talking about was the invisible bear we saw. There was an empty area and Ty asked what was in it. I told him it was an invisible bear. I explained later that I was just joking, but when we went to dinner tonight with "Nana"(my mom), Ty said his favorite animal was the invisible bear. It was really a great time at the zoo. I got some pretty cool shots of some of the animals. There was one section of nocturnal animals. They were all lit with ultraviolet lights. It was like they were all under a bunch of giant bilirubin lights. I'll post some of these pics later tonight.

Jake has had pretty smooth sailing the last couple of days. There is still concern over the

murmur and it is still evident. He is getting his last dose of the new treatment tonight. Dr. Guo told us today that the murmur is dynamic, meaning that at some points throughout the day it is smaller and sometimes it is larger. She explained that it has closed some because all of his vitals look good and his blood pressure is good. As long as he remains stable there will be no surgery. She did say his lungs were still hazy, and this is a point of concern for me. If this doesn't clear up at some point, he could possibly get chronic lung disease. This would mean possibly asthma, as well as, multiple bouts of pneumonia throughout his life. Please pray that God will breath into Jake's little lungs and clear them out. Jake has also gained some weight. I commented last night that he looked bigger and indeed he is up to 2 lbs. 15 oz. Almost three lbs! They also began his feeding of breast milk again today. So hopefully everything will begin to go smoothly with his digestion.

Let us also remember what today means for us. Today is both a sad day and a day of gratitude. Last Sunday I drove back from Temple. It was dark when I arrived at my house and I had a contemplative trip home. I really love being able to drive by myself. It helps me to be able to sort out my thoughts. As a matter a fact, the first time I realized I was in love with Angela was on a lone drive to my grandparents for thanksgiving, but that is a story for another time. As I arrived in the parking lot in front of our townhouse, it hit me. I had been praying for Jake and suddenly I was very aware of Christ's sacrifice for us. It was like it was new to me. I just sat in the car thanking God for our little one and thanking God for his sacrifice. I felt a great peace as I sat there praying and thanking God with a tear streaked face. As I was finished I opened the door and for a few moments, experienced a beautiful silence. There was peace and quiet in the air. I felt wrapped up in a blanket of peace, evident through God's creation. I think one of the best gifts God gave to us was his creation. It reminds me that God is a true artist. It inspires me to capture that creation as best I can, to share with you. For me, photography is a way to share our God with others. To see love and beauty in a pure form. A form crafted with love from a Great and Gracious God. Let us remember his sacrifice on this day. And let us prepare ourselves for Sunday...

### **3/23/2008**

Today was a special day. This morning Angela and I got up to the hospital early to share in Jake's 1st Easter. We brought back his Easter outfit which you can see above. After spending some time with Jake we left for Hamilton, where my grandparent's live. We went to church with them. It was a good service and one part really stood out for me. I forget the song, but there was a verse that talked about holding a newborn baby. I saw my grandma (Mawmaw) put her arm around Angela. Once she did that Angela really started crying. It was hard for me to fight back the tears too. It is strange to think about our situation and it seems surreal sometimes. To not be able to hold your baby and have him sleep on your chest. To not be able to take him home and just enjoy him, can be difficult sometimes. Today we thanked God for what He did and we thanked Him for the opportunities we do have with Little Jake. Every time I get to hold the little guy I just want to unhook all his tubes and take him home. I know that Angela feels the same way. Times are hard right now, but we will continue to persevere in this time. We will hold our heads high and walk hand in hand with our Lord. Whenever Ty gets frustrated with something and wants to quit we have a saying. "Greenlee's Never Quit!" Ty repeats this phrase after me and it gets him motivated to finish his task. Tonight I'm telling myself "Greenlee's Never Quit" Yeah this is hard, but we stand strong. Though the enemy may use this opportunity to beat us down, we will stare him in his pathetic face with a look of defiance. We are pressed, but not crushed... We are weary, but we do not quit. We will

continue to stand as a family, four strong. We will fight, backed by a countless alliance of fellow warriors. We will look ahead and smirk, under the pressure. We know what is ahead for us. The world may trouble us, but it will not take us. My friends, stand strong in what you face. And if you feel beaten, and feel at your end... Remember our Lord, and remember..."Christians, Never Quit!"

### **3/24/2008**

A quick update on Jake. He has been doing great lately. He is eating well, slowly gaining weight, breathing well, and digesting. He only has one or two heart rate drops a day and the murmur isn't currently affecting any of his other systems.

Many of you have commented on my writing and thanks you very much for your compliments, but tonight you are in for a treat. You are about to see where I got some of this ability from, although my Dad is much more gifted in this area than I. So here it is...

#### My Dad's account of Little Jake

The following is an account of Jake's journey from the eyes and ears of his Nanna, Susie and his Poppa, David. It is the factual truth except for what we may or may not have made up.

In the early morning hours of March 3rd, 2008, one phone call pushed its way through the crowded airwaves and sprang into the sleepy calm of our bedroom. It was our oldest son Jimmy. He was beating a hurried path to St. Joseph Hospital in our hometown, Bryan, Tx., his wife Angela clinging to the front seat of their streaking Dodge Caliber. She was about 6 1/2 months pregnant with their 2nd child. When she awoke that morning with the usual pregnant bathroom urges, she discovered she was bleeding. A shout to Jimmy to come quickly catapulted him into a blind bedroom bull-rush. As I was only an eavesdropping bystander I couldn't quite put a rope on how serious this might be.

"Jimmy, you're where?"

"I'm taking Angela to the emergency room, and I'm driving really, really fast!"

"Why are you going to the emergency room?...and slow down."

"Angela was bleeding this morning. I'm flooring it mom! Everything's a blur."

"Jimmy how fast are you going?"

"Over 40 mom, maybe even 45."

"Be careful and let us know something soon. Love you."

"I will. Love you too."

I had been up for a bit wandering around the house in a pre-coffee stupor before the short poignant phone call. Now I was awake. Between hurried gulps of coffee and swift spattering of make-up, it was decided that Susie, the school teacher, would go to work. As I had the day off I would go to the hospital and check on NASCAR Jimmy and mother in waiting, Angela. Twenty-five minutes later I backed my truck into the one remaining spot at the emergency room parking lot. Sliding out I grabbed my extra large fresh mug of coffee. With the front pockets of my jeans full of change I was ready for the obligatory three hour wait in the emergency room. Only then would a bleary eyed E.R. doc make the standard diagnosis, "Looks like you're not feeling well. Here's a one day prescription for something or other. You should make an appointment with your doctor."

I was surprised by the robust, gleeful lady at the intake desk of the E.R., she almost jumped to her feet and with a welcoming smile asked,

"How may I help you?"

"My daughter-in-law, Angela Greenlee, is in the E.R."

"Greenlee, is that spelled ly on the end?"

"No ma'am, its lee."

"Sorry sir, no Angela Greenlee here, lee or ly."

I should've known there would be a catch. She was nice but incompetent. She had lost Angela. I inhaled, smiled back and in my best non-accusing voice said,

"Ma'am I'm certain my son said they were here."

"Your son is here? What's his name?"

"Not my son, his wife. She's pregnant and..."

"Oh she's not here sir."

"Ma'am I know there here. If you could please just..."

"You said she's pregnant, so she wouldn't be here."

"Are you telling me that St. Joseph doesn't admit pregnant women? I've been here many times and I've seen babies, lots of babies. Just where do you suppose

all those babies are coming from if there are no pregnant women here?"

She raised the index finger on her right hand, glanced up and said,

"Upstairs."

"Uh, you mean from God ma'am?"

"What's that sir?"

"I asked where all these babies are coming from. You said upstairs. I reckon that's a buzzword for God."

"Third floor."

"Third floor?"

"All pregnancies are immediately sent to obstetrics on the 3rd floor."

"Hmm, I did not know that. Thanks for your help ma'am."

I tipped my head toward her as if I was wearing my hat, which I wasn't. I turned to go upstairs and immediately thudded into a locked door.

"Sir you can't get to the 3rd floor through there."

"Isn't it in this building?"

"Yes but there's no access from the emergency room."

"Allrighty how do I get there?"

"Go out the door you entered. Take the first door to the left and then the third door on the right. Follow the spiral staircase and go through the door at the top of the staircase. Go across the rope bridge traversing Bottomless Gorge. There you will find a firepole and a safety harness. Strap on the safety harness and slide down the firepole. Once at the bottom take one of the electric carts and navigate the parking lot maze. If, that is, when you reach the front door of the hospital tag the security guard and he will let you inside. Then walk fifty paces and turn right. There you will find the elevator that will take you to the 3rd floor. Any questions?"

"Are you kidding me ma'am?"

"No sir. The elevator will be there."

"Okay then I'll be on my way."

"Wait sir, you'll need these. An unreadable map, a compass with moss in it, a flashlight, waterproof matches, signal flares and 3 days supply of water. Don't worry sir, most people don't need the entire 3 days of water."

I did the only thing I could do. I took the supply pack and lowered my head to keep the windblown torrents of rain from blinding me as I set out on my trek to the 3rd floor.

Perhaps I exaggerated that last part a t-tinsee bit. But doggone it, sure would've been better to just go through that locked door and to the elevator I knew was around the corner. Instead I had to go back outside and hike the winding mile and a half trail leading to the front of the hospital and that same elevator. Okay maybe it was only a few hundred feet. I'm just sayin' would've been easier.

That's not all, but that is all for tonight, check back tomorrow for more

**03/25/2008**

We got some great news from Jake's Dr. today. Dr. Guo could not hear Jake's heart murmur today. She checked three or four times and each time she could not hear the murmur. We are excited, but are cautiously excited. In the past she has expressed that murmurs are dynamic, so they can change. Hopefully his murmur will continue to be quiet! Everything else is going well and he is up to about 5cc's per feeding which is great because he started out at just 1/2 a cc.

Without further redue... The rest of my dad's story. There will be more to follow through the weeks to come.

Also the pic at the top is one of the flowers pics I will have for sale this weekend, along with some other landscapes.

Slightly winded I arrived at the third floor. I took a deep breath and asked the young lady at the nurses station for Angela Greenlee's room.

"Sir is that Greenlee with an ly or lee?"

My chin dropped against my chest and I simply sighed before answering.

"Goatheads and grassburrs ma'am. That's Greenlee with a baby!"

The young ladies eyes widened but the voice I heard wasn't hers. It came from an older nurse whose back was to me. Without turning around she said, "straight down the hall, 2nd door on the left."

My search for Jimmy and Angela was at an end. Ahead was an up in the air, sideways, circling around to nearly upside down ride. Jake was the bull and the rest of us would be trying to hang on for our eight seconds. After I open the door of Angela's room and slide on in

you'll see.

PERSONAL NOTE(From My Dad): We've wiped away more than a tear or two while reading the comments about Jake. It does shine up the tarnished outlook on life that a lot of folks tend to develop. People going out of their way to gift us with a portion of their hearts and souls is inspiring to a family who must daily harvest the spiritual, mental and physical strength needed for a time such as this. Keep those comments coming. They are our manna. And Kelly McCarty, you are Cuzuncle Kelly.

**03/26/2008**

Tomorrow starts our online benefit gallery for Jake. Check it out at <http://www.jakespencer.com/>

Above is another picture available for purchase.

The following is the story of my Dad and his monday alone with Jake

I, that being Jake's Poppa, got to spend an entire day alone with Jake. Yep, just me and Jake... and his gang of nurses and doctors. It was a long day spent in a stiff chair and a sterile room staring at Jake in his clear plastic incubator and not being allowed even one sip of coffee. Holding my breath every time an alarm sounded from a sudden drop in the rate of his breathing or the beating of his heart. Anxiously pacing in front of the chair while waiting for the medical staff to check on him. Wanting to drill the seemingly nonchalant nurses on the purpose of alarms and the swift response merited by the sounding of one. Leaning over with my hands on my knees I would peer into Jake's plastic world straining to see the rising and falling of his chest. Exhaling long held sighs when he would move his small, so small arms and legs. I wanted to be able to help him. In some way to charge into Jake's world and fight this fight for him. To breath for him, to give him food, to pat his back and let him know that everything was going to be alright. I couldn't. Instead within the breadth of a second, maybe two Jake brought a warm smile to my face and a spring of encouragement to my soul. His eyes blinked open and he looked at me and I looked at him. Jake's first words. No sounds were uttered, but he was understood. I'm here Poppa and I'm fighting. One day you can give me a high five and hug, but for now I need only the strength of your love. I know that Jake is not the only child who has had to battle his way into this world. But he is our son and grandson. We labor with every breath he takes and shout for joy with every heartbeat. We have come to realize that many of you like us are eagerly awaiting Jake's next blink. As a family that is what we have been leaning on, where we have found rest. You. Your sacrificial love, your selfless caring and the pleading of your prayers. We want to simply say thanks and to selfishly ask you not to quit. Jake isn't.

**3/27/2008**

Thank you to everyone who has received the email and forwarded it along. We have had a great response and have had about 500 people visit the site today, which is great. We will be hosting the online gallery through monday.

Update on Jake

Jake did some more tube pulling today. He pulled out his nose cannula and his feeding tube. They put his feeding tube back in, but they left his cannula out. He has been doing good on just room air. This is really great news, and brings him one step closer to home. They did find some undigested food this morning so this is a setback, but a minor one.

Don't forget to check out <http://www.jakespencer.com/>

**3/28/2008**

Jake is still doing great, and is really chugging along. He is up to 3 lbs and 5 oz. I just saw him about an hour ago and he really looks great without his nose cannula. He is started to fill out and is looking more and more like a chubby baby everyday, instead of a wrinkled, super small, old man.

Thanks to everyone who has been visiting Jake's site. We had just over 500 visitors yesterday and about another 250 today. These are really great numbers and we appreciate all of you have have taken your time to share in our journey. Thanks also to all of you who have helped to support us by ordering t-shirts, bumper stickers, and fine art prints.

Also wanted to let you know that Jake's story is supposed to be in The Eagle on saturday. This is the local paper in Bryan/College Station and we will post a link to the story if one becomes available.

Lastly, below is some more of the story that my dad has been writing. I have really enjoyed his take (and sometimes hyperbole) of our story and know that many of you have enjoyed it also. Dad has been great to keep me supplied with material for the blog this week. I wore myself out trying to get everything ready for the online gallery this weekend so please enjoy the gallery and the story below.

I opened the door ever so slowly, not wanting to catch Angela, or Jimmy for that matter in any sort of embarrassing position. That was to be the last slow thing I did as this day became nothing short of a sprint too fast down a hill way too steep. Angela was laying half on her back and half on her side on the small hospital bed. Jimmy was sitting on the edge of a fold out, stay the night chair scarcely more than a foot from her side. If I interrupted a conversation you wouldn't have know as the room was resting in its quietness. So I figured it would be best to wake it up. I took only a step inside and found myself at the foot of the bed. Angela wasn't displaying any overt signs of discomfort. She seemed to be peaceful, even had

a wisp of a smile on her face. "Hey! How ya feelin?" The smile was instantly sucked from her face by a sudden and rapid inhaling of air. OOPs I thought, probably shouldn't have been so loud. "I'm having a little pain," was Angela's soft response. Whew, said a little voice in my head, it wasn't me, it was the pain. I'm still a father-in-law in good standing. Even so, I decided it would be best to talk with a bit less volume. I started asking questions directed at neither Angela or Jimmy, just to whomever would answer. "Has the doctor been here yet?" "No, just the nurses." "Have they said anything." "Yes, they said put this gown on." "Well, what happened this mornin'?" "When I went to the bathroom I noticed blood, so I called for Jim to come here." (Jim is the same as Jimmy. He makes his peers call him Jim because it makes him more refined and mature. The coin is still twirling in the air as to whether or not that works..) With a gentle chuckle, Jimmy said, "She didn't call. She yelled." He took a deep breath and continued with his tale of the morning events. "Basically it was more like a scream, a scary scream. I was still in bed, but not after that. I didn't know what was wrong. I thought it might be an intruder. I threw back the covers and grabbed my nightstick from under the bed in one super-fast simultaneous move. Running across the bedroom floor to the hallway I kicked a pile of clothes in two, sidestepped no less than three pairs of shoes and stomped an unruly stuffed animal with the heel of my foot. Then I did a mid-air layout converting to a front flip which carried me through the bedroom door and into the hallway landing squarely on both feet. I threw my head back and let loose with my best attack yodel. That's right I said yodel. Moving with unimaginable speed I charged forward. Each time my foot would touch the ground thunder sounded and lightning shot out in front of me." Or maybe he just said he grabbed his nightstick and ran into the hallway. You may never know. When Jimmy did reach Angela his imagination was pushed aside by the reality of why she had shouted. A startling fear for the well being of Angela and Jake became the fuel that swiftly brought them to the hospital. Once there they were whisked away to the 3rd floor, which as we learned is where all pregnant women are sent. You would think it would be the 1st floor. Why? For obvious reasons. The squeaking of the door drew our attention to the man that entered the room. Angela's doctor had arrived.

**03/30/2008**

Jake is still doing great. No new news really. Below is some more great stuff from my Dad

Susie, Jake's Nanna, arrived back at our house one Wednesday evening after spending a few treasured hours with Jake. As I ask her for the latest report on Jake she thinks I don't notice the beginning of tears pooling up in the bottom of her eyes. "I need to be there everyday!" she blurts out. "I'm the Nanna."

She arrived at the hospital that afternoon and was granted permission by the Grand Guardian of the Wooden Door to enter. (That's what I call it. It's really just a clerk sitting behind a glass partition who asks your name and then checks to see if you're on the visitors list. If you are they press a button on the counter unlocking the double doors of the neo-natal unit.) She walked down the tiled hallway to Jake's room passing a cleaning lady pushing her cart in the direction of the double doors. Stopping at the lavatory, a deep, hard plastic, square shaped tub with a glistening drain at the bottom, she reached up and squirted two drops of soap into the palm of her left hand. She waved her hand in front of the single spigot as if it were a

magic wand. Warm water bordering on hot shot down into the sink and she started the methodical routine of scrubbing her hands, wrists and forearms. This becomes an elusive task as the stream of hot water has a mind of its own and begins to play games with her. Shutting off as she moves her hands toward it, then spewing out when she pulls them away. Finally her hands were washed and dried. She put on a hospital gown and tapped on the door of Jake's unit and waited. No one came. She could see him through the glass in the door. She saw first one arm began to flail, then the other. His scrawny legs shot up kicking holes in the air faster and faster. During a past visit one of the nurses had told her that Jake was by far the most active of any of their premature babies. Was this sudden sporadic movement just Jake being Jake...or was it something else? A thousand dark thoughts spun in her head creating a tumbling knot in her stomach. She knocked harder on the door. A smiling nurse came from somewhere off to the side, opened the door and ushered her in. She quickly went to Jake's side and with a puff of air escaping between her lips she smiled. Jake was just being Jake. His sudden flurry had subsided. He now had only his right leg moving back and forth.

Susie has been nothing short of remarkable in her determination to stay abreast of Jake's treatment. Sometimes remarkable has transformed into dogged persistence. During the first few days of Jake's stay it was commonplace to see a doctor or nurse dashing down the hallway like a calf turned loose from a chute with Susie closing in, the noose of a lasso swinging above her head. Now the medical staff comes to her. As was the case during this visit. Jake's doctor was in the unit and had seen Susie enter. She hurried over to give her the latest news of his condition. The doctor puffed her cheeks full of air and cupped her hands around her face. "He's getting so fat," she said. Susie learned they were increasing the amount of Jake's in-line feeding, his blood pressure had improved, his heart rate was better and he was close to breathing on his own. The doctor saved until last a possible miracle. Jake's heart murmur hadn't been heard that day.

Susie clutched this last bit of news as if it was gold from heaven. She would hold this gold but for a moment until hiding it in her box of hope. Every jewel of good news you get you carefully place into your box of hope. But you know this box can't be locked. Even as you stand vigilante watch over this box its lid can be lifted and the precious stones of encouragement stolen away.

Suddenly Susie found herself surrounded by three nurses. Where were they when I wanted in the door, she thought. "His hands on isn't until five o'clock one of them tells her. "That's okay," she says. "I'm just here to be here." She lifts up the corner of the blanket draped around the curved plastic top of Jake's incubator in order to get a good look at him. She starts talking to him as if they were going to have a run of the mill, grandmother to grandson conversation. His eyes were already open but at the sound of her voice they widen as if he was excited to see his Nanna. No, she thinks, not as if excited he is excited. She feels a lump in her throat and a hollowness in her chest. Her hands slightly tremble as she clasps them together. Her only desire, her only thought was of whisking him from that plastic shielded crib and snuggling him in her arms. He would be free of the tubes and wires that were for now his breath, his heartbeat, his food. She imagined our home on a day when a light rain was falling. It would be only Nanna and Jake slowly rocking in the same chair in which she rocked his father, Jimmy. She would hold him gently against her chest, stroking the hair of his head with her soft fingertips while quietly singing a lullaby from years gone by. Glancing out the window to watch the rain, drop by drop bring new life to the earth.

Jake was again asleep. She looked at the time display bouncing across the computer monitor's screen. It was time to go.

### **3/31/2008**

God has done some pretty amazing things over the past few days. It is a true comfort to have know that He is watching out for me just like I watch out for Ty. Becoming a parent has really opened my eyes up understanding our relationship with Christ. You always hear about how He is our Heavenly Father and would never leave us, but for me I didn't really grasp those things until the latest chapter in our lives. I feel like everyday I get to spend with Ty and Jake is a day that I can learn a little bit more about God. To realize that He experiences the excitement of watching us discover our gifts, just like I love watching my little guy riding his bike, or writing "I Love You" all by himself. To know that He is concerned for us and our well being. To know that sometimes when things don't happen the way we would like, He was just stopping us from "playing in traffic". It also helps me to understand his sadness when we knowingly do what is wrong, and understand His grace in those situations. He really never would stop loving us, no matter how bad we screw up. I know this, because it is how I feel about my son. We are His sons and His daughters. He will always show up to our little league games, and buy us a snow cone afterwards. He loves it when we bring Him our latest "drawings" and there is always room for them on his refrigerator.(That must be one giant fridge). He is always there to pick us up when we fall down and scrape our knees. He is always there to hold us when there are no words that can make the situation better. He loves us, truly. Please know this. I know not everyone has had a great life, or even great parents as a role model. I have been blessed, so please here me when I say that God is your Father. He is real and He did die for you. He didn't give up on you and there is nothing that you have done that he won't wash away. He holds us all and He holds little Jake now as I write this. He has heaped the blessing on us this weekend, through you. Through those who have felt his guidance and have responded to our situation in kindness. Thank you

### **4/01/2008**

Well we got some tentativley exciting news today. It may be possible to have Jake transferred to the Med in College Station. The date is set for next Tuesday. We were unaware that the Med had a level 3 NICU, but they do! There are still discussions to be had between docs, but please pray for this to take place.

Here's another fix for you David Greenlee(my dad) junkies...

Allright Ya'll this is one time in my version of Jake's Journey that I'm gonna' ask for some leeway. At the end of the last segment I said Angela's doctor had arrived. Sorry. I got things a little wunkerdoodled. I didn't start writing events down until Jake's third week in the hospital. The words you will read chronicling the first three weeks are based on my recollection. The following had hidden behind the rocks in my head until I rolled my eyes back and there it was. Coming through the door wasn't the doctor but the ultra-sound technician there to take pictures. I backed away as far as possible in the small room pressing against the wall facing the foot of Angela's bed. This was my time to exit stage right. "Jimmy, Angela I'm going to step out for a minute." "No, stay and see the baby." Oh my goodness! What could I say to that

without sounding indifferent? It's not that I wouldn't be as happy as a cow with a new salt lick to see my grandson, it's just that I'd been trying to avoid that ever looming embarrassing situation. Not much chance of that when someone is rubbing gel on my daughter-in-law's belly and chasing my grandson around with a baby locating apparatus. So I stayed. An ultrasound is a miraculous tool of medicine. It allows one to conduct an exhaustive search inside the body without endangering our fragile core. That is for those who can make any dadburn sense of what they're seeing. Angela and Jimmy both ooh-ed, ah-ed and coo-ed as the tech slid the wand across and around Angela's stomach. I moved closer and closer trying to catch a glimpse of the new soul living within Angela, my grandson, Jake Spencer Greenlee. Gawking at what looked to be a black screen with small ponds of white movement I was drawn in until it happened... "Please sir move back. I don't have enough room." "Sorry ma'am." What else can you say when you've boxed in the ultra-sound tech and sent her into a near sprawl on top of your daughter-in-law's gel belly. I awkwardly backed away with a, hey your fly's open look on my face. Then I saw it, rather him. Jake was curled up with his back slightly curved, his arms pulled up in front of him, his legs bent at the knees and drawn toward his stomach. When I turned my head sideways it looked as if he was creeping up on an unsuspecting playmate intent on scaring the twinkle from their eyes. Turned out we were the playmate. The little stinker. Without me tucked in her back pocket the tech finished with a flourish of strokes rivaling those of a masterful painter. She smiled and wished Jimmy and Angela well. Turning to me she said, "Sir I need out the door." Even though I was in the way again I did what I was raised to do. I reached around and pulled open the door for the lady. She wheeled the picture taking sound machine into the hall. With yet a cushion of air left before the door shut Jimmy spoke, "I noticed that when she marked some of the measurements it was with a 29." "29 on a scale of 100?" I asked. Angela chimed in lifting her head slightly off the pillow. "29 weeks I think." Even I understood that. "Exactly how far along did they think you were?" "27 weeks." "Then 29 weeks is good? Right." "Yes its good." She inhaled deeply and let her head sink into the pillow. Now wait for it...wait...wait...the door opened and in it stood Angela's doctor.

**04/02/2008**

I'm in Temple tonight because we got a call from the hospital today. Little Jake is being moved from Temple to College Station tomorrow at 10am!! This was very, very exciting news that we got today, because I honestly thought getting him transferred was just a pipe dream. The doctors talked this morning and decided to go ahead and transfer him tomorrow. The main difference between Temple and College Station is size and the lack of pediatric surgeons in College Station. We thought this might keep him from transferring due to his heart murmur, but since they haven't heard it in over a week it's time for Jake's second trip in an ambulance. We are all very excited to have our family back in one zip code. Praise God for how he works and continues to work in our lives and hopefully through them. Thank you to all who have prayed. Jake will most likely be in the hospital until the end of may, but what a blessing to be able to be back in Bryan. Also, as an added bonus. Since rsv season ends in april, children 3 and up are allowed in the NICU. This means Ty will finally get to see his little bro close up. He has been asking about this and we are very happy that he will get his wish.

**04/03/2008**

Jake is now a resident of the College Station Medical Center!! Jake arrives in CS at about 4 o'clock today. The trip went well and our nurse said she could see Jake relax once they put him in his bed. The trip down had wore him out. We met our Dr. - Dr. Steiner. He was a very knowledgeable man and put us right at ease. We also got the 5 star treatment when we arrived. Everyone knew who we were and kept telling us they were so happy that we were here. One of the best things was that Ty was able to go in and see Jake. He also got to touch him. It is great getting some sense of normalcy back in our lives. Also Dr. Steiner was confident that there was not much chance that Jake would be in the hospital until the end of May. Today was a great day, but we are super tired. We had so much stuff. I'll expound more on the packing fiasco tomorrow. Also new pics of Ty getting to see Jake will be up.

### **04/04/2008**

Angela was so excited that she could hardly sleep. Just imagine being basically by yourself for two weeks. Sitting, crocheting, crocheting, and sitting. Needless to say Angela was ready to get back home. My phone alarm went off at 6:48. I thought I had turned the alarm off, because I set a different alarm for 7:30 when we were planning to wake up. As soon as the alarm went off at 6:48, Angela shot out of bed. Before I could realize what was going on she was already in the bathroom. I debated getting up to tell her that we weren't supposed to get up until 7:30, but I had driven in the night before at 10:30 and consequently, decided that my sleep was too precious a commodity to get up. Angela didn't seem to agree with me. Once she was out of the shower she turned on all the lights and bothered the hibernating bear(me) until I woke up, and trust me I'm a bear in the morning. After we were ready we headed to the hospital.

The night before Angela had asked a couple of people from the Temple Church of the Nazarene to come and help her clean and pack in preparation for Thursday's jaunt. Thursday morning we found out that my grandparent's were able to bring Ty to Temple. This meant that we would be returning my grandpa's truck, which I had borrowed, and the three of us would be returning to Temple in our dodge caliber. This was great, except for the fact that we had so much stuff!!! Somehow we had accumulated an amazing amount of clothes and baby paraphernalia. I think Angela left it in the closet with the light off and it reproduced. Anyway when we arrived at the hospital we had to unpack everything. And when I say we, I mean me(Angela is still recovering from her C-Section). I laid everything out in the parking lot because I knew I would have to bust out some serious Tetris skills in order to get everything in this car and still have room for the three of us to sit. I started with the cooler that was full of breast milk. I sent Angela to Wal Mart to get some bungee cords. When she got back I had almost got everything packed and had managed to leave a little room for Ty's bags that he was bringing with him. I took the bungee chords and tethered everything down in the middle seat. The back compartment was stacked to the ceiling and so was the section next to Ty. At about 10:30 we headed up to see Jake. We found out that the team left Bryan at 10 and should be there around 11:30. Much to my dismay we also realized that there was a giant bag of frozen breast milk in Jake's room. By this time Ty had arrived so I took his stuff and the milk and headed back to the car. I moved about 5 bags to get to the cooler and popped the lid. I soon realized that there was no way I was getting all the milk in the cooler the way it was

originally packed. I had to remove almost everything from the back and take out the cooler. I emptied the cooler and began neatly stacking everything in the cooler. I was barely able to close the lid, but after putting the lid back on the hinges twice, I was able to get it closed. Then I just had to put back all of our, what I was lovingly referring to as "junk" at this point. I was able to get everything back in the car and we headed upstairs. The team ended up being about an hour late, but we were overjoyed when they arrived. We left shortly after they got Jake packed up and rushed back to Bryan, enjoying what we knew would be our last trip to Temple. We drove fast and got to our house and unloaded the car. We then headed to the church. We walked in to a surprised and excited Pastor Lonnie. His mood changed from excitement to awkward agreement when we asked if we could store some of Angela's milk in the church freezer until we found it a home. After this we headed to the Med, and I must say we received the red carpet treatment. It was great, everyone knew who we were and were extremely nice. Jake got snuggled in at his new home and we met the great Neonatologist, Dr. Steiner, and his wonderful and caring staff of nurses. We had a very eventful day yesterday, but we loved every minute knowing we would soon be home, and would be one step closer to bringing Jake home.

**04/07/2008**

Hello to Jake's extended family. Thanks for your continued prayer, love and support. Please forgive our absence from the blog. We had to catch a little down time. After Jake was moved to The Med in College Station we all exhaled a timid sigh of relief which led to sleep. Sleep in our own beds at our own homes. Perhaps the one most excited about their own bed was Jake's mom, Angela. She became Jake's constant bedside companion. The rest of us gave in to work and other responsibilities allowing ourselves to be pulled away. Angela didn't. But she couldn't go with him right away because of her surgery. Her first hours after Jake's birth were an uncertain time. The following is about that. More of the story will follow tomorrow.

She had lain down that night within the security of her home and fallen into a contented peaceful sleep. She awoke that morning to fear and uncertainty. During the night her assuredness had been stolen when the unborn child cocooned within her had suffered an attack. Not by any mortal evil. Not by a seen enemy. The attack was carried out by a morally neutral force. A storm of nature that suddenly raged within her womb. A mysterious eruption which to this day has not been solved. The effects were not cryptic. They were blatantly overt in their intended effect. Into this world came her child. He came unannounced and without preparation. He was to spend the first days of his life without his mother's embrace. Her kiss would not be on his forehead. She longed to hold him in her arms and whisper her love for him. She could not. She saw him but for a moment and then he was swept away in a wind of humanity. It was as if he was already a memory. The tears on her cheeks and the flux of her heart being the only evidence he existed. With him went her friend, her love, her advocate and champion. She was alone. Her throat tightened, her breathing labored and she fought to control the trembling of her lips. Locked within this isolation her fear and agony were free to torment her. Would my child live? Did I somehow cause the premature birth of my son? Their assault of self accusing doubt was short-lived. The touch of a friend drove them away in an instant. His fingers uncurled and His gift of peace was revealed resting in the palm of His hand. She reached out grasped the gift and let it rest against her chest. A warm assuredness flowed throughout her being and she knew that in these uncertain events God's plan for Jake was being unveiled. Jake was in the gentle powerful embrace of his eternal protector. God's

presence so filled her room that she expected to open her tear soaked eyes and see His face. She paused...there was a knock at the door. "Thank You God," she said aloud. Smiling she said, "Come in." She could not know who stood on the other side of her door but she did know they were intended to be there.

**04/07/2008**

Sorry guys, but I am running out of titles to use so send me some ideas. Jake has been doing great. He did have to get a transfusion Saturday night, but other than that everything has been pretty smooth. He also started breastfeeding and bottle feeding Friday. He is still being fed through his feeding tube primarily, but they are building up the amount that he is breast fed and bottle fed. He will be home before we know it. Also we got the t shirts Friday and the shipments, for those of you who ordered online, will be going out tomorrow. Thanks for your patience. Below is more from my Dad.

He looked to be about 6 feet tall with a small buffer around the middle. His light colored hair was groomed and neatly trimmed. He was dressed in surgical scrubs and spoke with a baritone, easy to listen to voice. His eyes would slightly widen and narrow with the inflection of his words. He held his hand out to me and I noticed a firm confidence in his grasp. A grasp that also turned out to be good for wielding scalpels. Without averting his relaxed stare from me he let loose of my hand, took a step back and put his hands on his hips. "So, How has your wife been doing this morning?" "Okay I reckon". She had a meeting first thing this morning, but I haven't talked to her since I got to the hospital." "Are you Mr. Greenlee." "Yessir," I answered without hesitation. With a slight squint of his eyes he pressed his lips together and started to speak but faltered. When he did Jimmy popped his head around and said, "hello doctor." "Oh," the doctor said. Then he forgot about us and turned his attention to Angela. Walking to her bed he rubbed her arm and asked her, "How are you feeling?" "I've got a little pain in my stomach and I feel weird." Due to everything Angela has been through I choose not to comment on her last remark. "I'll be checking the results of the ultrasound but first I'll need to examine you." No matter how uncaring it may seem I determined I would not be present for that and I announced my intentions. "I'm gonna' mosey on out into the hallway." There was a silent pause in the room as Jimmy and Angela exchanged looks. I remained quiet but the voice in my head was screaming, "no stinkin' way!" I spoke quickly. "Angela have you called your parents and let them know you're in the hospital?" Her response was hesitant. "Not yet. I was hoping to find something out before we called." "Why don't you go ahead and let me do that while the doctor's checkin' ya'?" "Okay, I guess." "I'll just tell 'em you had a little bleeding and your in with the doctor." Angela's doctor perhaps in an effort to move things along said, "from all indications and what you've said this is probably not anything to worry about." "There you go. Straight from the doctor's mouth. That's what I'll tell your parents." "That's fine," she said. "Jimmy would you give your dad my phone?" "I've got mine on me." "My parents phone numbers are in my phone." "Oh okay." Jimmy patted himself down until finding her phone in the sidepocket of the shorts he was wearing. "Here you go dad. This is Angela's PDA." With an irresolute reach I took from him the device he offered. Dubiously I stared at what I held in my hand. "I thought you were going to give me her phone?" "I did." "No. You said this was her PDA." "Her phone's in there." I looked up at him then back at the prodigious instrument of communication that was laying in the palm of my hand. It looked as if

it had a screen within a screen, at least 500 buttons no bigger than the head of a pin with indiscernable markings on them. There were NASA designed controls running along both sides with lights strobing horizontally and vertically across it's face. I handed it back to Jimmy. "Jimmy can you take the phone out for me?" Jimmy laughed while saying, "it doesn't come out." "Howbout just giving me the phone numbers and I'll use my cell phone?" "Dad just go to the directory and highlight mom and dad." "You gotta' be kiddin' me son." A loud snap-slapping sound halted our PDA versus Phone banter. It was Angela's doctor. He had gloved up and was moving in for the exam. I yelped and snatched the PDA/Phone from Jimmy's hand. My legs and feet were moving in a whirring blur. My body from the waist to the top of my head momentarily froze as I leaned back toward Jimmy and shouted, "I'll figure it out!" The wake of air trailing my hasty departure caused the door to slam with a double thud. I leaned against the wall to catch my breath. Regaining my poise I set forth on my mission. That of finding a cell phone signal within the walls of St. Joseph Hospital.

### **04/08/2008**

The amount of support through prayers, visits, and financially has been incredible over this last week and weekend. We have received support from many different people and places. From Bryan, College Station, Temple, Hamilton, Odessa, DeLeon, Fort Worth, Henderson, Tyler, Franklin, Centerville, and Austin. From cities in North, South, West, and East Texas. From California to South Carolina, Oregon to Montana to Idaho, and from all over the country. We have received support from churches of varied denomination and non-denominational churches. From family and close friends and strangers to us. From factory workers, bankers, teachers, business owners, politicians, farmers and ranchers and many other occupations. Mainly we have received support and help from our Heavenly Father. He is what we have in common with those who have reached out to us. Whether they are believers or not, they felt God tugging them to help and they have responded. They have been touched by Jake's story and have reached out to touch back. We have been blessed beyond what we could have imagined. Our story will remain as a testimony to God's faithfulness and we hope and pray that it will be told. We hope that through all of our blessings, we will be able to bless others. We pray that God will use us for His glory. We pray that lives will be touched and will be changed. We pray for those who have prayed for us and for little Jake. Never stop believing and never forget that you have all played a vital role in our story. You have been chosen by God to intercede in our lives. To change us in ways that we could not have imagined, and have not yet realized. We are strong because you are strong with us. Thank you for your support and may God continue to work through Jake.

### **04/09/2008**

Well kinda no more isolette. Jake is in the same bed, but they have removed the top and the heater is off! The nurse said that the last time she checked his temp it was at 98.7 and she thinks he will probably hit 4 lbs. tonight. That is a big number in my head, we are that much closer to 5 and we are that much closer to home. Jake has been having some reflux so pray that his little stomach will settle because he has a terrible look on his face when he gets it. Below is some more of our story told by our family storyteller, my Dad.

I moved away from Angela's room charting a course for the third floor waiting area. It became a laggard process as I allowed the direction of my steps to be dictated by the signal strength bars on the PDA screen. When I reached the nurses station the signal jumped to full strength. However as soon as I passed their desk the signal was reduced to one small slash under the antenna emblem. I backed up. No signal. I slightly raised the phone. One more bar. I stood on the balls of my feet holding the phone as high as I could in my right hand. Success. The signal was again at full strength. The pleasure of possessing the rarest of treasures, cell phone reception at its utmost, faded away as I stared up at the PDA. How the dickens was I suppose to talk on this thing? I could find the number, dial it and quickly raise the phone. Then I would hafta' yell. But even I knew it was against hospital rules to be standing out in the hallway caterwauling at the top of my lungs to somebody in Oklahoma (that's where Angela's parents live.) I half sat, half leaned against the corner of the L-shaped wooden desk of the nurse's station. "Hmm," I pondered. "What to do? What to do?" An idea flew out from the hundreds of thoughts gyrating inside my head and stuck in my brain. A plan. A well thought out plan? A plan that wouldn't result in damage, injury or humiliation? Probably not, but this was for my daughter-in-law. I looked to the left, no one, to the right, no one. I turned around and faced the corner of the desk. Lifting my right knee to my chest caused a woeful moan but I was able to get my foot high enough to place the sole of my boot on the corner of the desk. I slipped the PDA in my shirt pocket and snapped it shut. I knew I had but one chance at this and it wouldn't end with the PDA on the floor and me several feet above it. Bracing both arms on the top of the desk and with my left foot on the floor I heaved. Almost made it. I rocked forward bouncing on my left leg once then twice. "Go," I shouted in my head. I let loose with an audible "yee-haw." That was to be the undoing of my little scheme. Triumphantly I crouched on the desktop. Then with the creaking of my back and the cracking of a knee I stood up. I took the phone out of my shirt pocket and turned it over. "Lets see," I mumbled, "directory, how to find directory." A door across from me kerwhumped into the wall behind it. The door rattled on its hinges as a nurse burst through the opening. "Who is shouting out..." She failed to finish the first question before launching into the next. This question was asked directly of me. It was stated in a slow yet demanding tone. Her brow furrowed as her query was made. "What are you doing up there?" Matter-a-factly I looked down and replied while showing her the PDA I had in my hand. "Just making a phone call ma'am." "Get down here sir!" "Yes ma'am." I bent slid and scooted to make my way back to the floor. "I'm sorry but that was the best phone signal." "Yes sir the strongest signal is just above the nurses station. That's why we have that ladder over there in the corner." Behind the nurses station was a step ladder with a sign hung on it. The message on the sign was in capital letters and read, FOR CELL PHONE CALLS DON'T REMOVE FROM STATION FLOOR 3. HOSPITAL PERSONNEL ONLY. "May I use the ladder?" "Sorry sir. You are not hospital personnel." "I won't tell." "Sir we are serious about our signs. Chaos would ensue without the many posted warnings and instructions. A weaker cell phone signal is available to the public in the hallways and waiting rooms." "Yes ma'am, I understand." "Sir when you return there will be a sign posted on the front of the nurses station, DO NOT CLIMB ON THE NURSES DESK. HOSPITAL PERSONNEL ONLY!" "Does that mean if I were hospital personnel I could climb on it?" She squared herself in front of me. "I will expect you to abide by it. Is that clear!?" I immediately snapped to. "Affirmative ma'am!" With that I turned on my heels and strode into the public domain, PDA once again out and searching. After walking in circles, lying under chairs and standing in corners I found a useable signal in a small sitting area near the 3rd floor waiting room. Not quite as powerful as the nurses, but it would work. By standing in front of a large window and placing my free hand on its metal frame while balancing on my right leg with my left leg elevated in front of me I achieved 4 bar signal strength. To my teetering

delight I found the phone function of the PDA to be simple in use. That is if you don't have big ol' fat fingers. It is exactly for situations such as this that I always carry a pocketknife. If you have a good knife, a good rope and a good hat, you can go just about anyplace and do just about anything. For today the tip of my knife became a button-punching tool. My first call was to Angela's mom, Beth.

#### **4/10/2008**

Jake had a little trouble today. He is having a problem with acid reflux when he is eating. Unfortunately this is also causing his heart rate to drop. He had at least five or six heart rate drops today. Also there isn't any medicine they can give him for that so the only thing they can do is add rice cereal to his milk. Hopefully this will help, but continue to pray for Jake's reflux to clear up.

More from my dad...

Beth works as a financial secretary for the Putnam City school district so I figured it would be easier to get her than Angela's dad, Tony. I found the number, highlighted it and pressed the phone symbol. Within seconds I was talking to a confounded voice mail system. Immediately I became trapped in a pre-recorded revolving door. A hollow, tinny digital voice reverberated in the PDA's speaker. "You have reached the Putnam City administration. If you know your party's extension please enter it now." I didn't know the party's extension, but I knew that if this was a standard voice mail maze I would eventually be offered the option of speaking to an operator. But first the pretend circuital person had to feign politeness. "I'm sorry. I did not recognize the number. Please enter it again." I responded in kind. It may be a computer, but polite is polite. "I'm sorry, I don't know the extension." Once again digi-dunce apologized. "I'm sorry. I did not recognize the number. Please enter it again." This was repeated five more times. Finally in a hushed growl I spoke into the phone. "Listen you addle-headed heap of circuits, I don't have a number!" I know, I know its just a computer. But it worked. This time the electric phantom move on to its next programmed response. "Press 1 to disconnect. Press 2 for the personnel directory." I hastily jabbed the point of my knife into the number 2 button on the PDA. "Ooops," I thought, "sorry about the top of number 2 Angela. Just don't tell her, she won't notice." "You have accessed the Putnam City administration's personnel directory..." The relief I felt was choked down by computer-ninny's next words. "Please enter your password." I had no option but to try. The knife blade flew across the face of the phone (again, sorry 'bout that Angela. Hee-hee.) I entered the word HELP. Promptly I heard, "I'm sorry. I did not recognize the password. Please enter it again." I punched in the word CRUD-CRUD-CRUD and flung, uhhh, I mean hung up the phone. Surely, I would have better luck with Tony's work number. I highlighted DADS WORK and once again pressed the phone symbol. I would've crossed my fingers if I had a free hand. One ring, two rings then, "Hello this is Tony." I started to let out with a whoop and a holler until I remembered Sgt. Nurse down the hall. Besides Tony might've hung up if all he heard was some lunatic shrieking into his phone. I reasoned it'd be better to spit everything out in one long sentence and then try to

answer any questions he might have. "Tony this is David. I'm at the hospital in Bryan with Jimmy and Angela. It's probably nothing but when she woke up this morning she was bleedin' a bit. The doc's takin' a look at 'er right now." "Beth called me earlier and let me know. But I appreciate your calling." What? I had lost a battle of wits with a voice mail system and Beth and Tony already knew about Angela. I didn't even ask how. "Tony I'm more than glad to call. I know how I'd feel if my daughter were in the hospital and I was a state and a half away." "You know it. I wish I could be there." "I know. Well I guess I'll let you go. More'n likely doctor's 'bout done by now." "Let me know what you find out." "Will do sir." I pressed the red phone symbol, took my hand off the metal frame around the window, and stood with both feet on the ground waiting for the feeling to return to my left leg. I popped my neck and stretched until my sternum cracked. Limping down the hallway I headed back hoping to share in a good report and a laugh with Angela and Jimmy.

#### **4/11/2008**

Jake had a good day today. Although he does not much care for his bath. He has a cute little cry that all the nurses love. Also he was moved to an open air crib today. Some other great news, two mom's at Angela's school decided they would like to put on a fundraiser for us. They worked with the Chicken Oil Co. off College Rd. to donate all profit from Saturday, April 19th to our family. They even made shirts that say "Burgers for Baby Jake". This really touched us when we heard it today. It is so awesome how God has heaped His blessings out upon us.

More from my dad...

I stalled outside of Angela's hospital room, leaning in close I placed an ear against the door and listened as if I were trying to open a safe by hearing the tumblers click into place. I was trying to catch any conversation that would let me know if the doctor was still there. I didn't want to barge in or even knock on the door if it would distract the doctor in his inspection of Angela. I could hear Jimmy and Angela talking though I was unable to discern their words. To me that meant all clear. I opened the door a crack and stuck my head in. "How's it goin' in here?" Jimmy spoke first. "The doctor finished a few minutes ago. But he said he'd be right back." Angela was lying on the bed taking quick deep breaths. A seed of concern sprouted within me. "Jimmy that don't look too good. That's how your mom looked in Lamaze class. I remember it well. Breathe in breathe out, slap the coach. Do they even have Lamaze classes anymore?" "I don't know dad. We didn't take any." "You didn't huh? " Angela seemed to be resting as her breathing had returned to normal and her eyes were shut. "Angela, how are you feeling?" "Okay. But I'm having cramp contractions." "Cramp contractions? What exactly is that?" Angela lay still and silent. "Jimmy do you know?" "Contractions I think." "Ohhh boyee, that's not good." The door swung open and Angela's doctor strode back into the room. "Hey doc quick question. What's the difference in cramp contractions and regular ol' contractions?" The doctor was very personable and fast with an answer. "One is a longer word than the other." I gave him a sideways one eyebrow cocked look. "So she's havin' baby'll be here soon contractions?" "We've given her nifedipine in order to help with the contractions." "Help in

what way exactly?" "We're hoping it will stop the contractions." "And if they don't stop?" "We would have to deliver the baby." "I'll do what I can to help but it's been a long time since our kids were born." The doctor allowed his sense of humor to slip out again. "Shouldn't be a problem. I doubt anything has changed over the years. If it has we're both in trouble." A loud moan and a low groan was Angela's contribution to the conversation so we decided to end the baby-birthing banter. "Okee dokee. Back to the medication. Do you have any way of knowing if it will be effective?" "Yes, the contractions stop." "Well that would be a good indication it worked. But is there perhaps a time frame?" "We should know within the next 45 minutes." "Any idea what caused the bleeding?" "The placenta appears to have started separating from the uterus." "Why would that happen?" There's not any one thing. It's called an abruption and we'll probably never know why it occurred." "Doc it sounds like your saying there's a chance this baby'll be coming today." "Yes, there is a chance but for now we're just waiting." A low growl emitted by Angela followed by several breaths was my cue to seek safety outside the room. "Jimmy I'm gonna' slip out and make some more phone calls to let everyone know where we're at."

**4/14/2008**

This was one of those weekends that you need a weekend after. We went by my Mom's around 11:30 to pickup Ty because he had spent the night over there. When we got there we corralled Ty and my Mom told us she had noticed something that looked like a bite on the back of his leg. We looked at it and it was about the size of a half dollar. We left and went to get some lunch. I had two senior picture sessions later on Saturday starting at 1:30. After lunch I left to go take some pictures and Angela and Ty headed up to the hospital to see the little guy. I finished pictures up about three and headed to the hospital. I got to hold Jake for about 20 or 30 minutes and then Angela and I had to leave for our 4:15 eye appt. Amanda Teran was also up visiting Jake and was kind enough to take Ty home with her while we went to the eye Doc. We went and saw Dr. Lauer in the mall next to eyemasters. He and his family used to attend my home church and they were kind enough to donate the eye exams to us. It was great getting to see them again and great getting a better prescription so that I could see better. After the exam and getting some frames next door, I headed off to take some more pics. Angela headed over to the Teran's for some homemade quesadillas. I finished with pictures around 8 and Angela and Ty were at home by this time. I headed back to the mall to get my frames and some chinese food. I was on the way home at about 8:35 when Angela called. Ty's large mysterious spot on the back of his leg was growing. The night nurse for his pediatrician said we should head up to the er. So that is what we did. After 3.5 hours of a cramped, full waiting room, two crazy cussing people, and a 5 min consultation with the doctor, Ty and Angela headed to the house and I headed to walgreens to get the prescriptions filled. The doctor wasn't sure what the infection was, but the antibiotics seem to be doing there jobs. I hit the pillow at about 1:30am. Sunday was about as busy with church, two more photo shoots, and some time at the hospital. I won't bore you with any more details.

Jake got his feeding tube out Saturday, but tonight had to have it put back in. He wasn't quite ready to have every feeding by mouth. He is growing everyday and weighs 4 lbs. 3 ozs. Please continue to pray for his strength, as well as Angela's and mine. We are both growing weary of the hospital.

On a brighter note we were blown away by the generosity of our church family, but I will talk more about that tomorrow.

**4/15/2008**

We have a wonderful church family. I grew up in the Church of the Nazarene in Bryan, but never has their compassion and unity stood out more than this past Sunday. The church took up an offering for us and were very generous. It is great to be a part of something where people really care about you and show that through sacrificing and serving you. I cannot say enough as to how much the Church of the Nazarene has meant to me. I have always loved going to church and have always been involved with the church. It has shaped me into the person I am today. I could not imagine my life without the church and I know that I would not be where I am in my spiritual life if it wasn't for the church and its members. I have been blessed to meet many great, great people at the church of the Nazarene. I have made life long friends and have had great mentors and secondary parents at the church. I cannot express enough how vital the church has been to my life and cannot express my gratitude enough for what they did for my family this past Sunday. It is something that I will never forget.

Jake had a great day today. He nursed twice for about 20 minutes! This is far more than he had been nursing in the past. I think he just needed some time to rest and having the feeding tube has provided that for him. He is a super cute little guy and we love him very much.

**4/16/2008**

Today was a good day for Jake. He nursed well at least twice today for about 20 min each time. We think he might really be starting to get the hang of things. Also he is up to 4 lbs and 4.7 ozs. So he is steadily gaining weight.

During our last Jakespencer.com board meeting we decided not to present Jake's journey in complete chronological order on the blog as there is simply no way to keep up with the ever changing circumstances. Instead we will pull anecdotes from the information we have compiled. After Jake comes home we may try to gather all the information and present it in the form of a book or short story. Jimmy, Angela, Ty, Susie and I were gifted with a fulfilling and heartwarming day at Jake's cribside. The day's lone stumbling block was the news that Ty could no longer visit until he received the latest available immunizations. As evening crept in we decided to turn fulfilling into filling and heartwarming into heartburn at a nearby Mexican restaurant. We were seated at a table against a wall and in a corner. Jimmy and Angela on one side of the table, Susie, Ty and I on the other with four year old Ty on my right and Susie on my left. Our waiter had fallen into that food service chasm between when the drinks are served and the food is ordered. Jimmy, Angela and Susie were engaged in reflective conversation about the days events and I would throw in an occasional "yep" and "sure was." I was interested in their animated words but Ty and I simply had more imperious activities commanding our attention such as placemat art, fork flipping and drink bubbling. The three colloquial cohorts simultaneously paused to douse their parched tongues. "Nuther" words they stopped talking and took a drink at the same time. Angela finished her sip first and as Ty was seated directly across from her she used this lull to bring up the matter of his vaccinations. "Ty do you like seeing little brother Jake?" "Yes ma'am." Ty didn't look up as he was in the middle of a crooked line, jagged circle masterpiece he was artfully drawing off center to the left of his placemat. I was helping by wiggling the placemat back and forth while he worked. " Ty you don't want Jake to get sick, right?" "No ma'am." Ty glanced up at Angela

then right back to his placemat picture. "Good. Well Ty the nurses said that if you wanted to keep visiting you would need to get some shots so Jake won't get sick." A startling gust of hot wind walloped my face causing my eyes to blink shut. When I opened them I saw Ty's chair on its side and all I could see of him was a blonde blur streaking toward the restaurant's double front doors. Jimmy "bellered" with his best I'm the father you must listen to me voice. "Ty James you freeze right now!" The blonde blur vacillated to a stop as if it had hit a wall. Ty's immediate braking generated a cannon shot of air that flung open one of the front doors as if he had made his escape. Jimmy's voice again boomed. "Ty get back over here!" Ty turned around, his eye's downcast and his feet dragging he slowly made his way back to the table. I set the chair upright and Ty sat down on his nearly free fanny quietly staring at the floor. Angela delicately spoke. "Ty we want to visit Jake as a family and to do so we need your help. Can you help us?" Ty looked up at his mom, tears were trailing from his eyes across his cheeks and to the corner of his lips. He used the back of his hand, his wrist and forearm to wipe away the pool of snot between his upper lip and nose. He spoke between staggered breaths. "I can help....but I can't get shots." Then the boohoo of all boohoo's plucked at our hearts strings(hey it's a good cliché). Angela's eyes were moist (but not anyone else's, especially not mine) "Oh come see mommy. Come here." He slid out of his chair and cautiously walked around the end of the table toward Angela. She grabbed him and held him in a long hard hug. Still blubbering he pushed aside the tears and the snot bubbles long enough to say in a very precise and determined 4 year old voice, "I don't want any shots!" The waiter arrived oblivious to Ty's state of mind and announced "here's the queso." Ty shot straight up, his eyes widened and he began to lick his lips. "Queso?" he said. "I love queso!" He darted from his mother's arms, ducked between the waiter's legs and launched himself into his chair. Immediately he grabbed a chip and plunged it into the mixed and melted cheese concoction. Hefting the drowned chip from the bowl Ty popped it into his mouth and began to hum "umm, umm, umm." He took a sip of his diet coke and went back to work on his placemat. Not another word was said about getting shots.....Let me ask ya'll. Do you think Ty ended up getting the shots? If he did who wants to hear that story. I bet it could have been a doozy!

**4/18/2008**

Jake is now up to 4 lbs. 4.5 ozs and decided to be a little lazy with nursing today. They are now attempting to bottle feed or nurse every three hours if Jake is up to it. In the past they only attempted a bottle or nursing every 3rd feeding(9 hours). He is doing good overall and I am putting up some new pics when he had no feeding tube.

Also don't forget tomorrow is the fundraiser, "Burgers for Baby Jake" The Chicken Oil Co. on S. College will be donating all profit from their day tomorrow to help Jake. Also Screened Images and Collegiate Illustrations donated t-shirts and they will be on sale at the Chicken Oil tomorrow. All proceeds from the t-shirts will also be going to help Jake.

Thank you so much for all you have done to help our family. It is greatly appreciated.

**4/21/2008**

Sorry for the absence in blogging this weekend. I had to do some recharging this weekend, but am coming back with great news. Jake has been rockin' it out with his feedings and pulled out his feeding tube this morning. He hasn't had a heart rate drop since friday at 4:30pm and had taken almost all feedings by mouth since friday. He is now a tubeless baby once again, and hopefully he stays that way this time. He has been doing great and maybe home within 2-3 weeks. We had an amazing response to Burgers for Baby Jake this weekend. This place was packed to the gills saturday and we were interviewed for KBTX. It has been great to see the outpouring of help from everyone and please continue to pray for little Jake. Oh yeah Jake is up to 4 lbs 6.7 ozs!

**4/22/2008**

We got some great news today. First of all, Jake might be coming home this weekend!! He was also circumcised today and he wasn't too happy about that. We will know more near the end of the week, but hopefully we will be spending the night in the hospital friday or saturday as a trial run. If everything goes well he will be able to come home the following day. Also KBTX just ran a follow up story to saturday's story and the Chicken Oil Co. raise over \$4,000. God has provided greatly for us during this time and we are thankful. Please pray that Jake will continue to do well so that he can come home.

Check out [kbtx.com](http://kbtx.com) and look for Burgers for a Baby to watch the video

**4/24/2008**

We are reaching the end of our story. Actually it's more like a new beginning. Jake is set to come home saturday and everything is looking good for that to happen. We will be spending the night at the hospital tomorrow and then it's time to come home. We have been going crazy to get everything ready around here. I know the posts have been short and sparse lately, but we are almost there. Hang in there with us. Thanks for your prayers

**4/28/2008**

Jake is home! We left the hospital around 2pm yesterday, after spending the night in a room with him. This was like a trial run and he wasn't hooked up to any monitors. We had a last minute fiasco that involved rushing out to buy a new car seat. We had our checked earlier in the week, but apparently whoever checked it didn't do a very thorough job. The design of the car seat didn't allow us to get the straps tight enough because jake is still under 5 lbs. It took us about an hour longer, but after two months we were happy to be able to leave and get home. Unfortunately, I also hurt my back yesterday so I will be spending the day today on the couch, but later this afternoon I will post lots of new pictures, including pictures from yesterday and pics from a little photo shoot we did in the NICU thursday night. Thank you to everyone who cared for Jake during his hospital stay and to everyone who has supported us along the way. God is good and he has been good to us