

IN HONOR OF MY DAD DAVID OBERT

Greetings to all, I am Todd, the son of David. As I've grown to love and appreciate the Word of God, in the Bible that is how persons were known. They were either described by their lineage or by their place where they were from. My sisters, Debbie and Mindy and myself come from the lineage of our dad, David, who came from Frank and Bea OBert, who also have gone on to be with the Lord, and then also of my mother, Sandra Walters who is still residing in Rock Island, IL. The real reason I speak of my lineage, of being the son of David is that first of all I am proud of, or maybe the more proper term is that I am thankful to God that I am from the lineage of the OBerts, or more specifically in why we are here today, I am thankful and proud to be Todd, the son of David yet it may not be exactly the reason some would assume, or of what I am getting at, but I will explain all that a bit later.

In reflecting back on the times with my dad as a child, I can think of many times to where we were of the same mind and purpose. Usually it revolved around sports but also food. In my grade school years, we lived right behind the grade school playground to which we played many a game of baseball with the neighbor kids there. My dad and I also would go out back to the playground, usually when there was beginning to be a nip in the air, that signalled the coming winter and football season. My dad and I would go out back there with a football and my dad got to air out his arm and throw long distance bombs to me as my little legs would try to, with all my might, catch up to the great distance that dad had thrown the ball. I'd see my dad when he was getting ready to throw, he'd lean way back and throw it as hard as he could. I have to admit I can't really even remember a time of actually catching the ball but I was just thrilled to be having that time with my dad. There were also many times where we would play catch with a baseball and sometimes my dad would run me through drills of catching grounders. Those indeed were special times. I wish I had the insight and wisdom then to realize how blessed I was to have those times with my earthly father. One other sports moment that I remember of my dad, of which I actually didn't get to do though with my dad, has forever stuck in my mind. My dad would play tournament basketball at the YMCA with guys from the church. I assume that it was a church league but I don't know. I seem to remember one of the tall Engstrom boys were on my dad's team. I just remember he was taller than all the other guys and overshadowed my dad, even though my dad was 6' tall. Sadly, I didn't inherit his height. Anyways, it was a thing where us kids were able to go with my dad to the Y to watch the game, as there was a running track that was above the ball court that encircled the outer part of the area. But, as was somewhat typical of myself, I had done something wrong to which my mom said that my punishment was that I couldn't go with my dad to watch the game. You'd think maybe that a kid could just brush

that off and move on. It's not as though I had to endure some horrible hardship with that punishment. Yet, I so longed to go see my dad play ball that I passionately sobbed all night long. One more story about my dad, that I had totally forgotten about, is what my neighborhood friend Paul reminded me of not too long ago. He's now a teacher living in Washington state now but just out of the blue he called me up after not seeing or hearing from one another for over twenty something years. He had looked me up on Facebook I think and found our ministry page and he was wanting to contribute to the homeless ministry that we have been doing the past couple of years. I brought that up because that ties in with something shortly. But my friend Paul reminded me of the time in 1975 and the Cincinnati Reds and the Boston Red Sox were in the World Series together. That's the championship games of the major league of baseball to the uninitiated. The Cincinnati Reds were my favorite team as a child, I'm not exactly sure how that came about but nevertheless I was rooting hard for the Reds. My dad and I were watching the game, and I don't remember if anyone else was or not but it had gone into extra innings and it was the bottom of the 12th inning and if Boston scored that inning they would tie the series up at three games a piece. What became one of the all-time sports highlights of broadcast television, Carlton Fisk drove a ball deep towards the outfield. It looked like it could go foul and Carlton Fisk, in what is now a historical moment in sports, Fisk was waving the ball to stay fair, while I, from our living room in Milan, Illinois was waving it to be foul but, MUCH to my dismay and fury it stayed fair and the Red Sox won the game. I totally lost my head and just rushed up to the tv and turned it off and stormed out of the house while I heard my dad say, "hey, I was watching that!" I then went outside and Paul was outside so I told him what I had done and he thought that was pretty funny and he ribbed me about "my" team losing. Dad never did make an issue about me turning the tv off though. As a fellow sports enthusiast I think he understood.

There are many things I could recall and mention about the good times I remember with my dad. I could mention the vacations we took each summer as a family to where many times we went to Florida, to which planted a seed within me to want to move to Florida with Susie, not long after we had been married. She had done an internship in Florida, and we were both eager and willing to leave behind the harsh winters in the Quad Cities. Perhaps Dad and Marg watered that seed when they relocated to Scottsdale. Nevertheless, between Florida and Arizona we knew we didn't have to suffer every winter if we didn't want to. Other noteables about Dad is that although he loved to play golf, my desire to follow him in his passion waned as I just couldn't seem to get the slice out of my drives. I do remember a few times of golfing with Dad but for me it was like playing a game of miniature golf against Jack Nicklaus. That probably dates me by that reference, I suppose. One other area of interest that I initially had mentioned

was our like interests in food. I remember numerous times on a Saturday that my dad would take off in the morning and return with donuts and other assorted goodies and then more than a few times my dad would cook up some greasy potatoes and sausage or something.

With all of the many special memories I have with my family and of the times I've mentioned with my dad, it is not really in the times we had together enjoying sports, food that is bad for you, or in the trips together that really bound us together, by my perception and what is in my heart, in what I am most thankful for and appreciate the most. Just being of the lineage of being the son of David was not what gave me a full appreciation of my relationship with my dad, even though as a kid I took my dad's business card to school to show my classmates and to brag on my dad being an account executive at Xerox, but it is in coming to the understanding to how much I have been blessed by God to be the son of David. I chose that phrase because it reminded me of another son of David and that was King Solomon, who God spoke of in His Word, the Holy Bible as we call it today, to be the wisest man to have ever lived. By the way I am not trying to even remotely imply there is a similarity to me and King Solomon. Also, I am not trying to necessarily preach a sermon, but to share what is in my heart in reflecting on my dad and of being the son of David. There is a Proverb in the Bible, that is attributed to being from King Solomon, to where he says this "a wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother." (**Proverbs 10:1**) I remember many times my dad, throughout my growing up and even in adulthood, always impressed upon me that there is no easy path to success, that there are no shortcuts. King David is described as a man after God's own heart and he had instilled in Solomon the wisdom he had learned and had done everything that was within himself to ensure King Solomon's success, which included getting all of the materials ready so that Solomon could build the temple of God that had been in David's heart to build, but God had said that David could not build the temple for it was God's will for Solomon to do that. What should be mentioned of King David and of his son King Solomon is that neither of those men were even close to being perfect. Just as we can get from Scripture that we all have sinned against God and fall short of His glory. But also, another thing we can get from King David and his son Solomon was in what Dad multiple times professed to me. He gave all of his successes and credit to God. Dad very much recognized the sovereignty of God and that we were created for God's purpose and His pleasure. "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." (**Revelation 4:11**) We were also created for, get this, God's glory! "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." (**Isaiah 43:7**)

The other thing that can be learned from David and Solomon is that God is great in mercy and ready and willing to forgive those who

repent and turn back to God. In the book of Ecclesiastes, that is attributed to being written by Solomon, was written toward the latter part of his life. He said he chased after folly, did whatever his heart desired, building his kingdom, and he concluded that it was all meaningless and that the conclusion of the matter is to fear God and keep His commandments for that is the whole duty of man.

(Ecclesiastes 12:13) What the words of wisdom that my dad spoke to me about there being no shortcuts speaks of how God has the perfect plan for us according to His purpose as He is building His eternal kingdom, even now and seeking those who will love Him and obey Him. That leads us to THE son of David, who John the Baptist when he saw Jesus coming to him to be baptized said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" **(John 1:29)** Jesus tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." **(John 3:16-17)**

What has blessed me most in my memories of my dad are not in the times of sports and food and the fun we had, although I am not saying that those times were not meaningful and special. For quite a while, each time I would talk with my dad on the phone he would ask me if we had found a church. Most of the times I would just have to lie and say no but we're still looking. But over time, we were able to talk about God our Heavenly Father, and His grace He gives us through Jesus Christ. That is what I rejoice in and in knowing where Dad is now. In recent years, when I talked with my dad on the phone, he was first of all interested in what Susie and I were doing in ministry, how we were honoring and blessing God by serving others. He loved talking about his time of being involved in the soup kitchen and so it always blessed my dad to hear of how we were feeding the homeless or doing stuff for the food pantry and such. I don't say all that to point to me and Susie as being anything other than saved by the grace of God. As **Ephesians 2:8-9** states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." But then the next verse says this, "For we are **His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." My dad and I came to to the same understanding that our lives ARE for the glory of God just as Isaiah the prophet spoke of. In **John 15** that Pastor Bob is going to read, which by the way is one chapter in the Bible I tell people, if you want to know what is the meaning of life, what this is all about, read John 15. I'm with Dad, I adore John 15 and am so blessed to know that Dad treasured this chapter as well. In it is one of my favorite verses. The verse that I speak of is this, **John 15:8**, which is Jesus speaking by the way, "**By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**" There is no easy path or shortcuts in honoring God and doing His will but it is in Christ alone. As we have come to know

God, to love God, by His Word and His Spirit that He gives us, the one thing my dad had recognized and now I do too, is that we are richly blessed in THE Son of David, who is Jesus the Christ, who takes away the sins of the world, to all who will put their trust in Him, so to God be the glory, forever and ever. See you soon Dad, I love you and am thankful and blessed to be the son of David and to know THE son of David, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.