

April 20, 2015  
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

John Eggebraaten Funeral  
Sowing the Seed

*To Joan, Dennis, Donna, Darlene, Shirley, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, other family and friends, and members of Trinity Lutheran Church, Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Anybody that has sown seed, learns where to plant it, how to aid its growth, when to water it, when to fertilize it, etc. Anyone that gardens as a hobby or in a grander scheme farms as a living knows where the good soil is, knowing this, helps the gardener and farmer sow his seed.

As we think about how the farmer sows his seed, we are going to see how this relates to John's life, not just in that he farmed for many years, but how he lived his life of faith.

John was born on August 12, 1926 to the late Arthur and Helga Eggebraaten in Grand Forks, ND. Even while in his mother's womb, I am sure the seed was planted into John, because just 17 days after he was born on August 29, 1926, John was welcomed into God's family through Holy Baptism. John's faith was born, the seed was planted. The seed of faith that was given to John, was planted into very good soil, because it grew. As John grew in years, as well as in a large family with many brothers and sisters, he would grow in wisdom and stature. He would grow in faith as well, for on May 12, 1940, John stood before God Himself, and confirmed his faith, and promised that he would remain steadfast in the true faith even unto death. John's faith was sure growing. His parents made sure of that.

As John grew in years, while helping his dad on the farm, he knew what good soil was, he knew how to plant seeds. John continued to grow in years when he met a very special lady, that is you, Joan. John married you on June 15, 1947, as the years go by, John's seed grew, this time not into plants, but into four very dear children, Dennis, Donna, Darlene, and Shirley.

John was very special to the five of you. He was dad to the four of you kids, and husband to you Joan. He loved you all very much. He also knew what was important in your life, and that was your faith life. He made sure you were in worship consistently. He made sure that seed of faith was planted into your lives as well. He knew that that was the most important thing in life.

Through the four you, John's seed continue to spread to 12 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. The four of you kid told me that John loved his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He even bought a cabin on Island Lake and then pontoon boats so that he could take them around the lake and enjoy spending time with grandpa.

John loved his family. Dennis, Donna, Darlene, Shirley, and Joan. You told me the other day about your camping trips, your trips to California, and so much more. It's almost like I have known John for more than just the last 9 months.

During John's 88 years on this life, the Holy Spirit was working in his life to make sure that seed of faith was on good soil, not on rocks, in the midst of thorns, or even with weeds. As the Holy Spirit kept working in John's life, John kept sowing the seed. He actively began farming in 1950 with his dad and his brother Paul. As many farmers in this territory he was a Sugar Beet Farmer. As he farmed, I learned that his favorite thing to do was crop-spraying. John retired from full-time farming in 1985, but would help his buddies out, even being out in the fields during harvest just over a year ago. What a joy it was for John to be out amidst God's creation.

As John enjoyed being out in God's creation, he also enjoyed his fishing and hunting, another chance where he could sow seed with his friends and family. A chance to live out his faith, with his deep love for others. I saw this through some of the pictures yesterday with his fish and elk.

As John loved his family and his creator, he used the gifts that God gave to him for the benefit of others. He thoroughly enjoyed his wood working, his building of different things, including the camper. He also enjoyed music and would use his gift of music, singing in a local barbershop chorus for many years. John was a man that used the gifts God had given to him.

There are so many more things that I could share with you about John, for over the past few days, I have gotten to know him even more, even though his soul has gone to be with the Lord and his body lay before us.

John's lived a good life, he lived it to God's glory, but it doesn't mean there weren't difficult times for him and his family. Besides having to say good-bye to his parents, he has also said good bye to his brother Bernard and his sister Doris. Death is always painful, for it is not what we were created for. He's also had to place two grandchildren into the ground and one great-grandchild. What difficult times those were.

As John and Joan were growing old together, the hardest thing for John was not being able to live with Joan over the last year or so. Whenever I would visit with him, he would tear up a bit about not having Joan by his side. He loved you very much Joan.

His body would be breaking down as well, several back surgeries, several bouts of Pneumonia. He knew that he was not living in a perfect world. He knew he was not in a perfect body. John was a sinner, just like all of us are. The consequences of sin were showing in John and stare at us today, as his body lay in the casket before us today.

Today is not an easy day for any of us, we are placing John's body into the ground. We will never him again on this side of heaven. John's body is dead. John was not created to die. You and I are not created to die. We are all created to live.

As I had a chance to get to know John over the past 9 months or so, I always enjoyed my visits with him. He would always ask how the people of Fisher and Trinity were. Even though he wasn't here in worship, he was worshipping with you as the Saints in heaven and around the world worship with you. John had even told me about a month or so ago, that he wanted to come to church. As we talked his faith showed. His love for his family and his love for the Lord was quite evident. The seed that was planted into him over 88 years ago was living until April 14, 2015, last Tuesday when the Lord in His infinite took John out of this veil of tears to be with Him.

Dear family and friends of John, those loved by God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. John was a good man, he lived his life of faith, I can call him a friend, not just one of my shut-ins. I want you all to know this, because John lived a life of faith, because he trusted that Jesus saved him from sin, death and Satan, because Jesus forgave him of his sins, John's body will one day rise again. It will rise out of the dirt that it is being planted in, and he will live forever. He will have healthy back again, he will be able to walk without assistance. He will be able to live without pain, without tears, without sin, without death. He will live again in perfect perfection. This will happen only because Jesus Christ, John's Savior died a horrific death on the cross and walked freely out of the tomb on that first Easter morning. He destroyed the power of sin, and overturned death. He has made physical death just a gate to life immortal.

You and I, as long as the faith is alive in us, will see John again in the resurrection of all flesh. For Jesus Christ isn't just John's Savior. He is your Savior, He is my Savior. He is the one that grants you the Holy Spirit that causes the seed of faith in your life to sprout and grow so that it flourishes.

Today, we gather, to laugh, to cry, to mourn, to share stories, to remember our dearly departed John, our father, grandfather, husband, brother, uncle, and friend. More importantly today, we gather to hear Words of Comfort, Words that come straight from our Savior Jesus Christ. Words that can cause us to say with Job... "I know that my Redeemer Lives." Words that can cause us to believe that John is one of those clothed with the white robes that have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. There is also one of those robes for you and me awaiting us, which is even now ours because of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Dear family and friends of John, know this, John will live again. John will one day, when the Lord Returns walk with each of us who die and rise again in the faith. John will live again, because My Redeemer Lives, because your Redeemer Lives, because John's Redeemer Lives. John will live, because of the flourishing crop of faith that the Lord caused to grow in John.

In the name of our Risen Lord. Amen.

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord and Savior.  
Amen.*