

1 Well, like we did last year, in the weeks  
2  
3 leading up to Easter, this year we once  
4  
5 again are going to bless  
6  
7 ourselves as God's family here by hearing  
8  
9 from voices out of our congregation  
10  
11 as messages are brought to us by  
12  
13 others other than the normal guy.  
14  
15 This was a great blessing to me and I  
16  
17 believe and heard a blessing to many  
18  
19 others last year. This year, kind of on a  
20  
21 little bit smaller scale, but over the  
22  
23 next few weeks, we're going to be hearing  
24  
25 from some other folks out of our  
26  
27 congregation. Today we're going to be  
28  
29 hearing from Stan Schmidt.  
30  
31 Stan has been a faithful  
32  
33 worshiper with us over the last many  
34  
35 years, sitting right there  
36  
37 on Sunday mornings. Um  
38  
39 And many of you know and have been  
40  
41 blessed by Stan's  
42  
43 uncommonly deep thinking  
44  
45 and and really wonderful gift for  
46  
47 communication. Written communication is  
48  
49 what we're familiar with so far, but he's  
50  
51 blessed us at many times in  
52  
53 our devotional booklets right up to the  
54  
55 one that we're enjoying right now leading  
56  
57 up to Easter today. What What  
58  
59 some of you may know, but many of you  
60  
61 perhaps don't know, is that among  
62  
63 his many, and i he can list them for you  
64  
65 later if if he wants or you can ask him,  
66  
67 but among his many advanced degrees  
68  
69 includes a degree in theology.

70  
71 He and I have spent some time together  
72  
73 chatting every once in a while about  
74  
75 things theological. I have enjoyed his  
76  
77 insights and and fellowship.  
78  
79 Another thing that you may not know is  
80  
81 that Stan is a gifted writer.  
82  
83 And in some ways, I'd say probably an  
84  
85 extraordinarily gifted writer, because  
86  
87 what he's most known for around the world  
88  
89 is math curriculum  
90  
91 books. Now that sounds exciting, doesn't  
92  
93 it?But he's written a whole  
94  
95 curriculum from basic math all the way, I  
96  
97 believe, up to calculus, under the  
98  
99 heading Life of Fred. That  
100  
101 sounds like a math book, doesn't it?And I  
102  
103 actually have not seen them, but I've  
104  
105 heard about them. And in these books,  
106  
107 Stan teaches math concepts  
108  
109 by using interesting life  
110  
111 circumstances and  
112  
113 engaging puzzles to teach math,  
114  
115 which sounds to me like quite a chore  
116  
117 that he set for himself. And And then all  
118  
119 these math creaking books that people are  
120  
121 using in home schools in various places,  
122  
123 I think around the world. I'm I'm  
124  
125 fascinated by that. I mean, how do you  
126  
127 how do you write, you know, about  
128  
129 somebody going into the grocery store and  
130  
131 then stopping for a moment, you know, to  
132  
133 do a differential equation or a  
134  
135 quadratic equation to figure out what  
136  
137 they're going to buy in the grocery store  
138

139 that day?I don't know. But apparently  
140  
141 he's able to do that. So I'm really  
142  
143 excited to welcome my friend Stan Schmidt  
144  
145 to come and preach for us today. But  
146  
147 before he comes, I'm going to read the  
148  
149 scripture for us. As we  
150  
151 continue, oh you know one other thing to  
152  
153 mention, this life of Fred idea  
154  
155 makes me think of our  
156  
157 theme as we head into Easter, you know,  
158  
159 behold the man. We're going to look at  
160  
161 Jesus as we head into Easter. Stan's  
162  
163 going to help us do that today. But I  
164  
165 think, you know, life of Fred, you know,  
166  
167 it's really life of everybody that we're  
168  
169 talking about here, for it is good for  
170  
171 everyone to prepare for Easter, and it's  
172  
173 good for everyone as they do so. To look  
174  
175 to Jesus. Well, we're going to keep  
176  
177 trying to do that today. We're going to  
178  
179 do it using texts from Ecclesiastes  
180  
181 and the Gospel of John. Hear the word of  
182  
183 God, first from Ecclesiastes chapter  
184  
185 2, verses four through 6, and then  
186  
187 chapter 11. I made great  
188  
189 works. I built houses and planted  
190  
191 vineyards for myself. I made myself  
192  
193 gardens and parks and planted in them all  
194  
195 kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pool  
196  
197 from which to water the forest of  
198  
199 growing trees. And then skipping down to  
200  
201 verse 11. Then I considered all  
202  
203 that my hands had done and the toil I had  
204  
205 expended in doing it. And behold,  
206  
207 all was vanity and a striving after

208  
209 wind. And there was nothing to be gained  
210  
211 under the  
212  
213 sun. 16  
214  
215 You did not choose me, but I  
216  
217 chose you, and appointed you that you  
218  
219 should go and bear fruit, and that your  
220  
221 fruit should abide, should last,  
222  
223 so that whatever you ask the Father in my  
224  
225 name, he may give it to you.  
226  
227 Well, let's welcome Stan to our. pulpit  
228  
229 this morning.  
230  
231 As we look at Jesus' life,  
232  
233 we see the things he has  
234  
235 done, the stories he's  
236  
237 told, and the promises he's  
238  
239 made. You've heard a  
240  
241 million sermons about the things Jesus  
242  
243 has done, and a million  
244  
245 sermons about the stories he's told.  
246  
247 But the promises that Jesus has made  
248  
249 are what really excite me.  
250  
251 The average member of the congregation  
252  
253 generally knows  
254  
255 one of his promises.  
256  
257 They can recite it, you know, he died on  
258  
259 the cross, and because of that, somehow  
260  
261 or another, I get to go to heaven.  
262  
263 But ask a member, what are  
264  
265 other promises that Jesus has made?  
266  
267 And you hear silence.  
268  
269 One cynic has written, The one  
270  
271 promise of God is pie in the  
272  
273 sky when you die.  
274  
275 In today's New Testament reading,  
276

277 Jesus said, I chose you  
278  
279 to go and bear fruit.  
280  
281 Now, bearing fruit is the kind of obvious  
282  
283 stuff. You know, give a cup of cold  
284  
285 water, ohh visit somebody in the  
286  
287 hospital, or listen to your  
288  
289 spouse when she complains.  
290  
291 That's bearing good fruit.  
292  
293 But the second part of his sentence,  
294  
295 Jesus' sentence, is the real shocker.  
296  
297 He wrote, he said, I choose you to  
298  
299 go and bear fruit, fruit that will  
300  
301 last.  
302  
303 That's a promise.  
304  
305 Jesus is promising us,  
306  
307 his followers, that  
308  
309 somehow or another, what  
310  
311 we do in love, will  
312  
313 last. A  
314  
315 real loving act is changing a  
316  
317 diaper.  
318  
319 I watched my wife do it and with male  
320  
321 ego as big as all outdoors,  
322  
323 I said, I'm going to do it and I'm going  
324  
325 to do it right. You know,  
326  
327 cloth diaper and you  
328  
329 run a safety pin through your hair To make  
330  
331 it go in easily, I got nods in the  
332  
333 audience on that one.  
334  
335 And happily, happily, I did  
336  
337 not pin my daughter's belly to the diaper.  
338  
339 With only a little trickle of sweat on my  
340  
341 forehead, I announced to my  
342  
343 wife, See, that's how it's done.  
344  
345 The diaper change will last forever.

346  
347 One and done.  
348  
349 Fruit does not last.  
350  
351 Fruit that lasts sounds crazy.  
352  
353 Some people I've talked to said that  
354  
355 Jesus really didn't mean it  
356  
357 literally. If he had wanted  
358  
359 to take it seriously, He might have said  
360  
361 that we should bring forth mountains that  
362  
363 will last, or build church buildings that  
364  
365 will last a thousand years. But  
366  
367 fruit?  
368  
369 Was Jesus joking?  
370  
371 After all, he joked on many occasions.  
372  
373 Elton Trueblood's book, The Humor of  
374  
375 Christ, is filled with examples.  
376  
377 Maybe when Jesus said, I choose you to  
378  
379 go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,  
380  
381 he was speaking of a kind of  
382  
383 recycling.  
384  
385 When we obey the commands to love,  
386  
387 when we plan a birthday party, or speak  
388  
389 words of forgiveness, or  
390  
391 make coffee for the coffee hour,  
392  
393 that's a kind of stone in the  
394  
395 pond ripple.  
396  
397 The waves are big to start with, but then  
398  
399 they spread out and they diminish.  
400  
401 Everyone knows  
402  
403 that you can't see the ripples an hour  
404  
405 after you've thrown the stone in the  
406  
407 water.  
408  
409 You can't hear great grandpas  
410  
411 whispering to his wife those  
412  
413 words of love. Can't hear him.  
414

415 You can't eat last year's banana.  
416  
417 How can fruit last  
418  
419 forever?  
420  
421 When it comes to really difficult  
422  
423 questions, we have to turn  
424  
425 to Hollywood.  
426  
427 This singer and dancer  
428  
429 Right there is a singer, a  
430  
431 dancer, and an actress who was  
432  
433 known for the fruit that she wore in her  
434  
435 hat.  
436  
437 She made 14 Hollywood films  
438  
439 and wore the fruit hat in every one of  
440  
441 them.  
442  
443 This has got to be the fruit that lasts.  
444  
445 One year, she was the highest  
446  
447 paid Hollywood entertainer.  
448  
449 In another year, she was voted in a  
450  
451 national survey the third  
452  
453 most popular personality in the  
454  
455 United States. Here's the  
456  
457 second photo of that star.  
458  
459 She died when I was 11 years old.  
460  
461 Now, okay. participation. How  
462  
463 many of you recognize and could name her  
464  
465 name?One, two, three, four, five, six,  
466  
467 seven. 32 of you, okay.  
468  
469 Ohh Good at that, math, remember, math is  
470  
471 mine.  
472  
473 If my grandson preaches from this pulpit  
474  
475 20 years ago, there won't be  
476  
477 32 left.  
478  
479 In Hollywood, fruit does not last.  
480  
481 Famous fruit like that. Gone. See?  
482  
483 Was Jesus thinking of the fruit of

484  
485 our labor to become  
486  
487 compost that finally  
488  
489 fertilizes another generations of love?  
490  
491 If he meant that, he could have  
492  
493 said it more directly, I choose you to go  
494  
495 and bear fruit, fruit that will be  
496  
497 recycled indefinitely.  
498  
499 Or maybe he meant fruit that will last a  
500  
501 long time.  
502  
503 After all, when a woman gets a  
504  
505 permanent  
506  
507 well Everybody knows it's not permanent.  
508  
509 I helped paint the walls in the church  
510  
511 that it was at years ago, and  
512  
513 two years after that, the church burned  
514  
515 down.  
516  
517 The athletic clubs in Reno  
518  
519 are eager to tell you to come and work  
520  
521 out at their facilities. They advertise  
522  
523 that you can get a great body,  
524  
525 but which club advertises  
526  
527 That that great body will last.  
528  
529 Do you know what an ossuary is?  
530  
531 Learn something new here. It's the  
532  
533 place where they place the bones of the  
534  
535 dead.  
536  
537 There's one in France at Verdun.  
538  
539 It took 10 years to build it.  
540  
541 Verdun was a major battlefield in World  
542  
543 War I.  
544  
545 At that battlefield in France,  
546  
547 130,000, that's a  
548  
549 number from math, 130,000  
550  
551 bodies were found.  
552



553 That's a lot of bodies.  
554  
555 Soldiers, they were French and German,  
556  
557 and their bones were placed in this  
558  
559 famous ossuary.  
560  
561 If you walk on the grounds, you can view  
562  
563 the bones through windows that have been  
564  
565 placed there.  
566  
567 Fruit that will last.  
568  
569 Bones without names.  
570  
571 The promise of World War I was, everybody  
572  
573 knows, the war to end all wars.  
574  
575 If our bones have  
576  
577 been placed in that ossuary,  
578  
579 If we had been one of those that had been  
580  
581 shot, or had frozen  
582  
583 in the trenches, or had  
584  
585 suffered gangrene and a lingering death,  
586  
587 how might we have felt if we had seen  
588  
589 into the future,  
590  
591 and as we lay dying, seeing that the  
592  
593 carnage of World War I, World War  
594  
595 II, would be 21 years ahead?  
596  
597 My prayer to God is I want  
598  
599 to bear fruit that lasts.  
600  
601 I don't I don't want it to turn out to be  
602  
603 some kind of fruit that lasts like an  
604  
605 oxymoron, like a full-length bikini.  
606  
607 I want, dear God,  
608  
609 your words to not be some kind of joke.  
610  
611 I want my efforts  
612  
613 to not be just some anonymous,  
614  
615 forgotten contribution to the great  
616  
617 recycling of love in the  
618  
619 universe.  
620  
621 I want my work to be the hands and heart

622  
623 of my heart to last, to  
624  
625 last longer than the guarantee on a used  
626  
627 car.  
628  
629 So I pray to God.  
630  
631 I say, you've made this promise,  
632  
633 to bear fruit that lasts. If  
634  
635 these had been my words and my boasts,  
636  
637 I would blush for the  
638  
639 shame of their boldness. I'm  
640  
641 only a man. I would  
642  
643 love you as you, dear  
644  
645 God, command me to do.  
646  
647 There is much joy in doing that.  
648  
649 When I kiss my wife.  
650  
651 When I say a kind word to the clerk at  
652  
653 the store. When I give a blood  
654  
655 donation at the local blood bank. I  
656  
657 am loving you, oh God.  
658  
659 But how does a kiss, a kind  
660  
661 word, a pint of blood  
662  
663 last?Not any  
664  
665 monument.  
666  
667 Monuments decay. not in any news  
668  
669 report, they fade away.  
670  
671 So finally,  
672  
673 let's know that Jesus  
674  
675 really meant,  
676  
677 literally, exactly what he said.  
678  
679 In some sense, in some  
680  
681 sense there's an obvious answer.  
682  
683 If you ask a child,  
684  
685 how does the fruit that we bear last?  
686  
687 That child might answer with a simple  
688  
689 question.  
690

691 Don't you think God will  
692  
693 remember?  
694  
695 Just give me a second. I need to finish  
696  
697 my notes. One second.  
698  
699 Don't you think  
700  
701 God knows?  
702  
703 Amen. Let's pray.  
704  
705 Heavenly Father, we are grateful for  
706  
707 your promise to us that we  
708  
709 actually can do things. We can make  
710  
711 fruit, as you have appointed us to do,  
712  
713 that will last. And they will  
714  
715 last  
716  
717 because they are done for  
718  
719 you, with you, in your name.  
720  
721 And things that are in you last.  
722  
723 You last forever. You  
724  
725 are before the beginning and you are  
726  
727 after the end. And everything in  
728  
729 between in your hands  
730  
731 lasts.  
732  
733 Lord, help us take this to heart, to look  
734  
735 to you, Jesus,  
736  
737 behold the man, to  
738  
739 find the one in whom we can do  
740  
741 things, we can participate in  
742  
743 things that really matter and  
744  
745 that really last.  
746  
747 Lord, we we pray now  
748  
749 for those who have asked us to  
750  
751 pray, and we believe that even  
752  
753 this is fruit that will last,  
754  
755 as by our love for one another  
756  
757 and according to your call and your will,  
758  
759 we pray. We pray

760  
761 to you and we pray for those that we are  
762  
763 concerned for. And so  
764  
765 we pray for our church as  
766  
767 we continue our search for staff people.  
768  
769 Lord, we pray for  
770  
771 Christians in Syria who are being  
772  
773 persecuted and killed.  
774  
775 Lord, we pray for June and Jolt, and  
776  
777 for Joanne, and for D&D  
778  
779 in the midst of their  
780  
781 challenges, health concerns,  
782  
783 and life difficulties. Lord, we  
784  
785 pray for the Belante family and the  
786  
787 Maxson family.  
788  
789 In their time of loss,  
790  
791 Lord, we pray for our neighbors next  
792  
793 door. We pray  
794  
795 for those serving in the military,  
796  
797 grateful for their service,  
798  
799 for Noah and Taryn, for Cody and  
800  
801 Matthew, for Weston and Chase and  
802  
803 Levi and Gary and Molly and Brian  
804  
805 and Anna and Margaret and  
806  
807 Benjamin and Chandler.  
808  
809 Lord, some of us know some of these  
810  
811 people. I doubt that anyone here  
812  
813 knows all of them. But  
814  
815 Lord, you know each and every one. You  
816  
817 know their circumstances, you know their  
818  
819 needs, and we pray to you  
820  
821 for them. Lord,  
822  
823 hear us now as we share together  
824  
825 in the special prayer that you taught us,  
826  
827 saying, Our Father, who  
828

829 art in heaven,Hallowed be thy  
830  
831 name, thy kingdom come,  
832  
833 thy will be done on earth as  
834  
835 it is in heaven. Give us this  
836  
837 day our daily bread, and  
838  
839 forgive us our sins as we  
840  
841 forgive those who sin against us.  
842  
843 And lead us not into temptation,  
844  
845 but deliver us from evil. For thine  
846  
847 is the kingdom, and the power,  
848  
849 and the glory forever. Amen.  
850  
851 Let's stand and sing together our closing  
852  
853 hymn. It's number 584, Go  
854  
855 Labor On. We're going to do verses 1  
856  
857 through 4.  
858  
859 Ohh  
860  
861 still. Go  
862  
863 labor on, 'tis  
864  
865 not for naught.  
866  
867 Your earth due us is  
868  
869 heavenly gain.  
870  
871 Men heed you, love you,  
872  
873 praise you not. The  
874  
875 master praises  
876  
877 what are men.  
878  
879 No labor on enough  
880  
881 while here. If  
882  
883 he should praise you, if  
884  
885 he deigned,  
886  
887 you're within a heart to  
888  
889 mark and cheer.  
890  
891 No toil for him shall  
892  
893 be in  
894  
895 vain.  
896