**1**When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body.

**2**Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb

**3**and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?”

**4**But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

**5**As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

**6**“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

**7**But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

**8**Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Happy Resurrection Sunday First Baptist Members and Friends. I greet you in the name of a Risen Savior. A short while ago a friend asked me to tell her what made us Christian as opposed to any other religion. I labored to provide her with a clear and concise answer. I told her that we believe in believer’s baptism by immersion and in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. I told her about the four fragile freedoms that we hold as Baptist: Bible, Soul, Religious, and Church freedom. And I explained how scripture supported all of this. But in my telling I forgot to say that the basis for our faith is a **Risen Savior.**

I don’t know how I forgot! I guess I just take it for granted that everyone knows that you cannot have Christianity without a Risen Christ. As Baptist we declare that we believe He is Risen and not only Risen, but He has Returned to the Father that sent Him and He will return again to claim His own.

Today, this Easter Sunday 2016 – this Resurrection Sunday - we stop to remember and celebrate what God did for us when He sent His Son to die for our sins. We celebrate the death and the resurrection because both our needed in order for the scripture to be fulfilled.

Yet if we are not carefully Easter will become another commercialized holiday designed to help the retail community make money. So what should Christian folks, Baptist folks in particular be thinking about on Easter Sunday?

I think we should be thinking about what the angel told the women when they came to the tomb:

But go, tell (Mark)

Then go quickly and tell (Matthew)

Would you pray with me and for me as I raise this question?

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

SHALL WE PRAY?

“Heavenly Father, thank You for the grace, mercy, love, and longsuffering that You extend to anyone who calls upon Your name. We thank You this day for the resurrection of Your Son Jesus the Christ, and ask You for Your empowering grace to press toward the mark of Your high calling in Christ Jesus. Help us be faithful witnesses of what You are doing in our lives and in the world. Thank You, and praise Your holy name. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen and Amen.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

The American tradition of wearing new clothes for Easter dates back to the American Civil War.

***Post Civil War****. Easter traditions as we know it were not celebrated in America until after the Civil War. Before that time, Puritans and the Protestant churches saw no good purpose in religious celebrations. After the devastation of the war, however, the churches saw Easter as a source of hope for Americans. Easter was called "The Sunday of Joy," and women traded the dark colors of mourning for the happier colors of spring*

***The Easter Parade****. In the 1870s, the tradition of the New York Easter Parade began, in which women decked out in their newest and most fashionable clothing walked between the beautiful gothic churches on Fifth Avenue. The parade became one of the premier events of fashion design, a precursor to New York Fashion Week, if you will. It was famous around the country, and people who were poor or from the middle class would watch the parade to witness the latest trends in fashion design. Soon, clothing retailers leveraged the parade's popularity and used Easter as a promotional tool in selling their garments. By the turn of the century, the holiday was as important to retailers as Christmas is today.*

***The American Dream****. By the middle of the 20th Century, dressing up for Easter had lost much of any religious significance it might have had, and instead symbolized American prosperity. A look at vintage clothing ads in a fashion school library shows that wearing new clothes on Easter was something every wholesome, All-American family was expected to do..[[2]](#footnote-2)*

What I just shared with you regarding the wearing of new clothes for Easter did not come from a history book, but rather a fashion website. **The world of fashion has a story to tell about Easter.**

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

**Last year an article appeared the day before Easter.**

Easter is tomorrow, and it looks like Americans will spend more celebrating the holiday this year than they did last year: $16.4 billion in all. Flowers, decorations, greeting cards and jelly beans galore will cost the average consumer $140.62, the **National Retail Federation** has reported. That’s up compared to last Easter's spending of $137.46 per person, or a total of $15.9 billion. Retailers look to Easter as the kick off for spring shopping when consumers stock up on everything from garden equipment, clothing and home goods in addition to traditional Easter items, [said NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay](https://nrf.com/media/press-releases/consumers-the-hunt-candy-new-spring-apparel-this-easter" \t "_blank).[[3]](#footnote-3) **The National Retail Federation has a story to tell about Easter.**

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

For as long as I have been married my husband has taken a vacation immediately after Easter. First, it was my father-in-law Daddy Brown and my brother-in-law Sonny and the grandsons and nephews. Often as many as 10 men and boys would go fishing immediately after Easter, sometimes to TN or Arkansas and often to parts of Wisconsin. The fishing stories from those trips became the legends of the family: Richie asking his father to talk to God and make the rain stop; Michael braking his arm on the very first trip he made with them; Russell returning with minnows in his jean pockets with the intent of reviving them and keeping them in the fish tank.

These stories are told almost every Easter when we gather as a family. I am sure there will be more as this year we are taking all three grandkids and MacKenzie on the Annual Easter Fishing Trip.

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

All four of the gospel writers – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – tell us the Easter morning story. They each record the concern the women had as they approached the tomb where Jesus had been laid. They wondered who would help them to roll the stone away. They had come on that Sunday morning to anoint Jesus’ body with oil. Even though they had been with him, some for the entire three years of His ministry they did not understand that He would not be dead in the grave. So they came to pay their final respects. But only Mark and Matthew record the story of the angel who tells them what to do when they discover that Jesus is not in the tomb. Mark says, “go and tell” and Matthew says “go quickly and tell”.

I wonder what you did when you understood that the God you serve was a Living God. Not a God hanging on a cross, not a God laying dead in a tomb, but a true and living God who had died, and arose for you.

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

Well, I cannot tell your story, I can only tell mine. But if my story happens to ring a bell in your spirit I won’t mind if you shout with me.

**See, I have something to tell!**

I can tell you about the God my mother introduced me to when I was just a little girl. I can tell about an older cousin who took me to church and Sunday School when my mother was too ill to take me. I can tell you about the God I met at 7 years old. A God that promised to never leave me or forsake me.

I can tell you about a teenager and young adult who put that God on a shelf and lead her life as she saw fit.

A little drinking, a little smoking, a little cussing, lying and cheating –

A little hitchhiking, a little sex before marriage, a little looking for love in all the wrong places

A little failing to honor my parents, a little wishing for material things and not the things of God, a little staying away from church cause it was too early after Saturday night; too long when I had plans for Sunday afternoon and evening and too unrelated to the things going on in my life.

I can tell you about a middle age woman who had a child, an ill mother, who had buried her father, her two brothers, and her five uncles. I can tell you about asking God what do you want me to do. I can tell you about applying and entering seminary; earning some of the best grades I had ever earned!

I can tell you that He is not just the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is not just the earthly son of virgin named Mary and a carpenter named Joseph. He is not just a Comforter, an Advocate, or the Holy Spirit.

He is my Lord! He is my Savior! He is God all by Himself.

I can trust Him when He says no weapon formed against me shall prosper. I can depend on Him when He says He will never leave me or forsake me. I can lean on Him when I cannot lean on anyone else. I can confess my sins, my anger, my trials, and my disappointment to Him and He won’t tell anyone.

He is my Lord! He is my Savior! He is God all by Himself.

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

He is Lord! He has risen from the dead and He is Lord!

Death could not keep Him in the grave.

False accusation could not hold Him down.

Friends turning their backs did not move Him from His course.

I got something to tell!

**DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL?**

ADDENDUM

The following [acrostic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acrostic) [acronym](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acronym), spelling BAPTISTS, summarizes Baptists' distinguishing beliefs:[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist_beliefs#cite_note-1)

* **B**iblical authority ([Mat 24:35](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Mat&verse=24:35&src=!); [1Pet 1:23](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Pet&verse=1:23&src=!); [2Tim 3:16-17](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=2Tim&verse=3:16-17&src=!))
* **A**utonomy of the local church ([Mat 18:15-17](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Mat&verse=18:15-17&src=!); [1Cor 6:1-3](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Cor&verse=6:1-3&src=!))
* **P**riesthood of all believers ([1Pet 2:5-9](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Pet&verse=2:5-9&src=!); [1Tim 5](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Tim&verse=5&src=!))
* **T**wo ordinances (believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper) ([Acts 2:41-47](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Acts&verse=2:41-47&src=!); [1Cor 11:23-32](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Cor&verse=11:23-32&src=!))
* **I**ndividual soul liberty ([Rom 14:5-12](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Rom&verse=14:5-12&src=!))
* **S**aved and Baptized church membership [Act 2:41–47](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Act&verse=2:41%E2%80%9347&src=!) [1Cor 12:12](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Cor&verse=12:12&src=!) [2Cor 6:14](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=2Cor&verse=6:14&src=!) [Eph 4:3](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Eph&verse=4:3&src=!)
* **T**wo offices of the church (pastor and deacon) ([1Tim 3:1-13](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1Tim&verse=3:1-13&src=!); [Tit 1-2](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Tit&verse=1-2&src=!))
* **S**eparation of Church and State ([Mat 22:15-22](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Mat&verse=22:15-22&src=!))[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. adapted from <http://reallifedownloaded.com/wp-content/plugins/rld-maintenance> mode/pdf/RLD\_AD\_032716.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/3982197 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://spendmatters.com/2015/04/04/2015-easter-spending-tops-last-year/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist\_beliefs [↑](#footnote-ref-4)