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Easter Day, 2012 (April 8)

Dear Hayden Bobby:

Today is a very special day. Today is the day of your baptism. It is also a special day for the church. Today is Easter Day. Easter is a special celebration for the church. It is the most special day of the year for the church. What we believe happened on Easter is that God sent Jesus, God's own child, into the world to show people how to live – to show them what it means to be human. And that rather than following Him and learning from Him, we killed Him in a most terrible way. Rather than punish us as we deserved, God just loved us more. And what we believe happened on Easter was that God simply walked into the tomb, where we had laid Him and gave Him new life. That wonderful and miraculous gesture says to us that God's love for us is so great that nothing we can do will ever separate us from that wonderful love. It also says that God loves us so much that God cannot bear to be parted from us and has given and is giving and will give us the gift of eternal life! These are wonderful causes for celebration, but what does Easter really mean?

It seems to me what Easter means is simply this. Of all the creatures God made and put on this earth, we human beings are the only ones who remember the past, live in the present, and look forward to the future. Now, I know there are some people that will argue with me about this. They will say: "I had a dog who remembered every person who ever came into my house." Please do not get me wrong, Hayden Bobby. I am not saying human beings are the only intelligent creatures on the earth. I am continually amazed by how intelligent all God's creatures are. I have a friend who had a cat and she moved to a new house and you know what that cat did? That cat walked over a mile and a half back to her old home without knowing the way. I find that truly remarkable. Or I marvel at how sunflowers always turn toward the sun. How do sunflowers know where the sun is if they have no eyes? Scientists will tell you it is because the sunflower has special cells that are sensitive to light but that is like saying the sunflower always turns to the sun. It still does not explain how the sunflower knows where the sun is. But what I am saying is this. You never see several dogs saying to each other: "Say, you know we always gulp our dinner down each night and then are hungry in the morning. How about if we only eat half of it tonight and save the rest for the morning." Dogs can't do that. Like all God's creatures, except for humans,

