

Our Record Keeper

For years I would keep records of deposits and spending habits by hand. I kept that record in the back of my checkbook. Now with online banking and other software, I no longer keep track by hand. Instead, I just mark deposits and expenses by an app on my phone. But even though the method might have changed, the result remains the same: a record of my bank account. Like you, my aim was to ensure a positive flow into my account.

We all keep records. We keep a record of the ways we've been wronged by each other, which turns out to be a negative flow. We record our achievements against those of our neighbor. We say, "But at least I'm better than that person over there." We also keep records of our own achievements, working hard to tip the scales of good works against our bad works. But how can we ensure a positive flow into the account?

There are two ways we can address a consistent positive flow. On the one hand, we can deny the existence of a record keeper. In this way, a positive or negative flow doesn't matter. But denying a record keeper doesn't make it true. Just tell your bank that your negative flow is just a figment of the imagination. On the other hand, we can drown in the negative flow. The weight of that negative flow is too much. But let me suggest another option.

One of my mother's favorite movies is called *The Mission*. It tells the story about a missionary in 18th century South America who takes with him the murderer Rodrigo Mendoza to a village of natives Mendoza once sold into slavery. On the journey, which includes a climb up a steep waterfall, Mendoza carries a heavy bundle with his armor. When they reach the outskirts of the village, the natives recognize Mendoza, pull out a knife, and run towards him. Instead of killing Mendoza, they cut away his heavy bundle and throw it down the waterfall. It is a powerful scene that points us to the third option, namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The record of our sins is not addressed by denying it or being crushed by its weight. Instead, the record of our sins is taken by a deliverer. As the prophet Isaiah says, "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (53:5-6). Not only does he take our record, but he gives his record to us, the righteousness of God. This is the positive flow into our account by faith in Jesus, the Son of God.

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