

**And you, who were dead in your trespasses . . . God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.
Colossians 2:13**

Dear Christian, do you know that there was once a record of debt that stood against you? It was probably an overwhelmingly long tabulation of every single one of your past, present, and future failures, mistakes, bad attitudes, greeds, lusts, lies, and God-dishonoring desires. I'm sure that if either one of us could see and hold our list we would certainly feel shame and probably even fear of God's retribution. We would most likely want to hide it or destroy it, yet we would be speechless before it, for we would know that every record was the truth.

What does God think when he reads my list? How about yours? If you have received Jesus as your Saviour, I have Good News for you today. God cannot see your list. Why? Because He has removed it from His presence—it has been canceled, destroyed, shredded! How? By the cross. Nails not only physically pierced the hands of Jesus but, more importantly, they skewered and destroyed the record of our debt that stood against us by the blood of our perfect Saviour. His blood has so soaked the list of your sins that the writing is no longer legible! He has cleansed your reproach so that you will no longer be a recipient of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) but rather, you are protected and even adopted as a redeemed son or daughter of the King (John 1:12-13, Ephesians 1:5). This is nothing short of miraculous! It's mind-blowing! This should serve to catapult us to the heights of joy and elicit an overwhelming expression of grateful praise and adoration!

Too many people have believed the lie that they are pretty good people in and of themselves and that when God sees their glorious list of accomplishments on earth the gates of heaven will swing open wide! Don't be deceived by baseless self-esteem. This reveals an ignorance of even the need for salvation. God doesn't weigh your good deeds against your bad; nor does he blindly sweep your sins under the rug and ignore their existence. *"There is no salvation by balancing the records. There is only salvation by canceling records. The record of our bad deeds, along with the just penalties that each deserves, must be blotted out—not balanced. This is what Christ suffered and died to accomplish."* -from *50 Reasons Jesus Came to Die* by John Piper

So, where do we go from here!? How do we respond? We know that we will continue to struggle with sin in our flesh until the day we die. So, do we take the gift, celebrate, and ignore our calling to strive toward living in response to this great salvation?

Brother and sister, I exhort you with all love, prayer, and shared joy! *"...live a life worthy of the Lord...please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* (Colossians 1:10-14)

How could we live any other way? Let's press on by His grace! Amen.

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