

“THE LORD DESERVES MORE THAN A CARD!”

Psalm 103:1-5

Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks, honor, power, and strength be to our God forever and ever. {Rev 7:12}

What would we do without **Hallmark**? **Hallmark** is a store in the Rothschild Shopko mall OR a store on Wausau’s north side by the County Market/Shopko mall where you can buy any little knick-knack or ornament you can think of. **Hallmark** is a cable channel #78 (or #636 if you’re into HD programming) on the Charter system. **Hallmark** is a card company which has a card for just about every occasion known to mankind.

And now **Hallmark** is ready to shine big time more than any other time of the year, except Mother’s Day. Christmas is coming and once again those special cards will fly off the shelves for Mom/Dad, sis/brother, Grandma/Grandpa, husband or children. The wives’ cards will fly off the shelves either the day before or the day of Christmas as husbands hustle out to find a card at the last minute!

Cards are nice, a little pricey sometimes, but nice. But don’t we feel really good when we’ve got those holiday cards out in the mail and the pressure’s off and now we’re off the hook. Or we open our mailbox to a pile of cards for us to sit down and look who they’re from before even reading them? Yea, cards are nice!

What kind of Hallmark card would you send God? “Hey, Lord, you’ve been good this past year (most of the time). Thanks a lot” Love, ____ (your name). As chintzy as that sounds, isn’t that kind of what our thank-you’s seem to say? We go through 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days every year to this day – and then we gather to say thank you. And like most cards we get, we throw them away until the next one comes and do it all over again.

David’s 103rd Psalm is anything but a Hallmark card. It’s a **way of life** for the believer. It’s a **daily read** never throwing away the thoughts of gratitude. On this Thanksgiving Day, let’s use this psalm to review how...

“THE LORD DESERVES MORE THAN A CARD!”**Look in the bulletin, p. 7 and let’s read the text together....PRAISE THE LORD...**

PRAISE THE LORD, O MY SOUL, PRAISE THE LORD. The word praise means “**bles**”, ie. tell of his goodness and heap praises of thanks on him. Those of us a tad older remember the King James version saying: “**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.**” **All my inmost being** = who I am, everything within me – my emotions, sentiments, thoughts, ideas, desires, and will – united all together to praise God’s name.

King David wrote this psalm. He was Israel’s king for 40 years. Imagine if we had the same President for 40 years. We have them for 4 or 8 years, but 40?

David knew times of triumph and trials. As a young shepherd boy, he battled a giant, not with a .306 and a high-powered scope, but with a leather slingshot and a deadly aim. He won victory after victory against the enemies of his day left and right. He totally flopped when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and committed murder to cover it up. When the prophet Nathan confronted David with his sin, the Spirit worked repentance leading David to write: **SURELY I WAS SINFUL FROM BIRTH, SINFUL FROM THE TIME MY MOTHER CONCEIVED ME.** (Ps 51:5) Two verses later, **CLEANSE ME WITH HYSSOP, AND I WILL BE CLEAN.** (Ps 51:7) The hyssop was an OT custom. The priest would take a branch of a leafy hyssop shrub and dip it in the blood of a lamb – and then he’d shake that branch and the blood would splatter all over on the sinner. Sounds gross, doesn’t it?

But sins are gross. Your sins, my sins – they are disgusting to God and offensive to His holy name. But God sends Jesus as the Lamb of God to splatter his holy precious blood all over our souls to cleanse us from our sins and declare us clean! **Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- 3 who forgives all your sins.** You’re starting to prepare for Christmas with your usual routine, but here’s why **God deserves more than a card.** That holy season is about a baby as small as a grain of sand in a virgin’s womb put there by the Holy Spirit. And when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman...to redeem those under the curse of the Law by laying down His life on the branch of the cross so his blood could splatter our souls clean! How could we ever forget that benefit?

...Who heals all your diseases, **4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.** From **a nagging cough** to a chronic disease, **from shoulder surgery** to shingles, from a **knee replacement** to a medical reaction, **from a fall** off a ladder to a deer crash with the car, **from infections** to infusions, God has brought us through **our trials and troubles** in His way in His time for our good! And then when we lost our loved one this past year, He crowned us with his gracious love and compassion

and put his comforting arms around us and said: “YOUR LOVED ONE IS WITH ME!” **Doesn't our Lord deserve more than a card?**

They say Thanksgiving is the time to count our blessings. That's great – but are they less any other time of the year? Read another of David's psalms, #145, and you have another reason why God deserves our praise: **THE EYES OF ALL LOOK TO YOU, AND YOU GIVE THEM THEIR FOOD AT THE PROPER TIME. YOU OPEN YOUR HAND AND SATISFY THE DESIRES OF EVERY LIVING THING.** {Ps 145:15-16} All three of our festival readings touch on this point. Moses said in Deuteronomy: **When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.** (Deut 8:10,18) Paul wrote the Philippians: **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.** (Phil 4:12) And Mark reported from the scene: **They all ate and were satisfied and the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.** (Mark 6:42-43)

Thanksgiving is so much more than deer hunting & football, turkey and Grandma's stuffing, sweet potatoes with marshmallows and pumpkin pie. **Thanksgiving is the opposite of complaining.** And goodness knows we all have Master degrees in that. The weather is too cold, too rainy, too cloudy, too bright, too windy, too gloomy. Kids complain about homework and school and then on the 2nd day of summer vacation complain “I'm too bored – I don't have anything to do.” We have fresh fruits and vegetables all year round and then complain there's nothing to eat. We have 2/3 flat screens around the house with potentially 100's of channels of programming and then complain there's nothing to watch.

What did David say? **Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.** An eagle rejuvenates every year. It molts and loses its feathers, but soon he is covered with new and fresh feathers again. **That's us.** Our sins are the bad feathers we need to shred. So Jesus comes with His love and gives us **“fresh feathers of forgiveness”** so that we don't continue to fall into hell, but rather fly to Him for his mercy, his grace, his promises, and his love. Our strength is renewed, our hope is certain, and our future is bright – all because of His marvelous work of redemption for us. Isaiah writes: **Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.**” {Is 40:31}

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits... Today we remember those benefits in our Thanksgiving worship. But let's not forget them for another year. Let's not wait for **Hallmark** to open its doors on **Black Friday**. Let's open our hearts and send the Lord our humble thanks and praise for who He is, what He's done, and what He blesses us with every second of every day. Because when you look at it that way, there's just no question: **THE LORD DESERVES MORE THAN A CARD! AMEN**