



Why are there so many Psalms?

This is another question that came from one of our confirmation students. It's a great question. There are a grand total of 150 Psalms in the Book of Psalms. If you consider an individual psalm to be comparable to a chapter in the other books of the Bible, the most chapters found in any other book is 66. (That's in the book of Isaiah.) It certainly does seem that there's an extraordinary number of psalms.

The differences in size of the books of the Bible starts to make sense when you remember that the Bible is actually a collection of many different types of writings. In fact, I tell the confirmation class to think of the Bible as a mini-library instead of like a book. The Bible library contains books of History, Poetry, Wisdom, Prophecy, Letters, Biographies, Law, etc...

With that background, the reason there are so many psalms is that the Book of Psalms is a hymnal. Yep. We have a hymnal right in the middle of the Bible. In fact, the Psalms is often referred to as "The Hymnal of the Old Testament."

As you read through the book of Psalms you'll notice that many psalms actually have musical instructions. For example, Psalm 54 and 55 (among others) have the heading: "To the Choirmaster: With Stringed Instruments." Psalms 120-134 all begin with the inscription "A Song of Ascents." These psalms were songs the Israelites sang as made the trip up to (ascended) the temple on Mount Zion for one of the festivals God commanded them to celebrate.

Unfortunately, we don't have the musical notes that go along with the words, but like other songs, the words of the psalms express lots of emotions. This is one thing that makes the Psalms such a favorite book. We find emotions like joy, gratitude, love, sadness, anger, grief, fear, confusion, trust - all of which we can relate to as we follow God through our daily lives.

The psalms include prayers as well as praises, thanksgivings, prophecies and instruction. When we begin each Sunday Service with a Psalm, we are joining our hearts and voices with those of God's people throughout the ages, speaking the same words they spoke and sung as they worshiped God.

With all of this in mind, it seemed fitting to focus on the Psalms for our daily devotions this month. You'll find the listing of the daily (Monday - Friday) readings on the Daily Readings page in this Newsletter. As always, I make audio recordings of these readings and combine them with a devotional thoughts and a prayer. The link to these audio recordings are sent daily via text message or email. If you'd like to sign up to receive them in your inbox, just let me know and I'll get you added.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net