

# Talking to Yourself

by Jim Cymbala

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of talking to ourselves and questioning our feelings to overcome negative emotions and develop a deeper relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 34:22

**Scripture:** Psalm 42:5-43

**Topics:** "Encouragement"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of feeling downcast, depressed, and sad. He emphasizes the importance of talking to oneself and questioning these negative feelings. The speaker encourages listeners to ask their souls why they are feeling this way and reminds them of God's love and promise to help. By bringing God into the equation, the speaker suggests that it can have a positive effect on one's feelings and prevent them from being overwhelmed by negative emotions. The sermon highlights the need to divert attention from accepting these feelings and instead focus on God's presence and promises.

---

## Transcript

There's one sequence of psalms, Psalm 42 and 43, that most assuredly were at one time one psalm. Psalm 42 has 11 verses, Psalm 43 has five verses, but the language of it and the repetition of it is such that the experts are sure that it was part of one psalm, and somewhere along the way, they divided it into two psalms. Psalm 42, as we find in the Psalter, and Psalm 43.

In the Hebrew language, when you wanted to emphasize something, you did it by repetition. We use it by intonation of our voices, you lift your voice. We do it by using the word very, or truly, and I wanna give you three verses that are found in Psalm 42 and 43.

I know this is gonna sound strange, and you never saw a scripture reading like this, but it is what it is. Let's say it in Spanish. Es lo que es.

It is what it is. So let's look at it. Psalm 42, verse five.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Verse 11. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Then in Psalm 43, verse five. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Obviously, these two psalms were at one time one, and you notice the triple repetition of a man, the psalmist, talking to himself.

One of the most important things we're gonna learn today is the ability, under God's direction, to talk to yourself. Don't do it on the subway in front of a lot of people, or else they can come and get you, but too few of us speak to ourselves. We take it that whatever we're feeling is who we are, so we don't speak to our feelings, and that's the culprit I wanna talk to you about, feelings.

We've all been dominated, dictated, abused, and misused by our own feelings, and it's a mystery where some of them come from. Some are easily identifiable, but feelings are very, very powerful. They can be identified with chemical reasons, events in your life, something someone says, some wounding remark that someone stabs you in the back with, but once feelings set in, it's not so easy to get out of them.

They can be euphoric and lift you to a mountain, and you can be high without using any drugs, but then they can quickly go down like a sugar high that ends up leaving you quickly. The psalmist in Psalm 42 and 43, probably one psalm, as we mentioned, is really going through it. He's remembering, you wanna maybe read it when you get home, he's remembering better days that were once before compared to the mess that he's now in.

He remembers when he could go to God's house and worship freely. He remembers being surrounded by people who were supportive, but now, very well, he could be on the run. It could be David being chased by King Saul, but he's in the soup, and remembering how it used to be causes his heart to just be crushed, and he mentions, tears are my food day and night.

This is what my diet is, it's tears. I cry. I can't stop crying.

You ever have times when you can't stop crying? And then he says why, he speaks to his soul. Why are you so downcast? Why are you so depressed? Why are you so sad? What's up with you? And then he tries to remonstrate with his feelings, with his soul. He just doesn't accept it.

He steps back, and he says, why you be this way? But then, even after he does it twice, the cloud comes back. It's not till the third time where he seems to have gained traction and a hold on the situation. So here's a man, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God put it in the Bible, not to fill up the pages, but that we might profit from it and learn.

God puts this passage in here so we can learn about the importance of talking to yourself, specifically talking to the tyrant that's called feelings, because feelings are a tyrant. They're a dictator. They will use you.

They will use me. They make us do the weirdest things. They make us say weird things.

And we just feel them often innocuous, and just, well, it is what it is. You know, that's just the way I feel. We almost worship how we feel.

You hear people say, you know, I gotta be in tune with myself. Well, it just, sometimes when you're in tune with yourself, you're out of tune with the rest of the world. How many thus far can identify with some of the things I'm saying? Just lift your hand.

And you know what? It doesn't matter if you have a PhD, and you're making a half a million a year, or a million dollars a year, or whether you're a high school dropout, and just struggling to get your GED, or whatever it is, everybody is like this. Everybody is attacked by this thing called emotions, feelings. The Bible is full of examples of great men and women being overwhelmed by their feelings.

Abraham was so afraid at one time, he let someone else take his wife, and lied, and said it was his sister. That's how strong the emotion of fear was in him. Fear is an emotion.

Moses got so afraid that he ran out into the desert, and left Egypt, because he had killed somebody, and he knew that he had been found out. Joseph must have been some psychological study, because his brothers hated him, and tried to kill him, then sold him into slavery. Can you imagine your own brothers grabbing you, and you smell their hot breath against you, as they're thinking of killing you, and that's your brothers, not your enemy, those are your brothers.

Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet. He was old before his time, because of all the sadness he went through. David knew all these feelings of anger, fear, sorrow, depression.

You ever get a dark, brooding feeling come over you? Some of these feelings we can trace, because you know, you lose your dad, you lose your mom, something happens that's very sad. You watch the aftermath of the Boston bombing, and you see children with their legs cut off. Don't tell me that doesn't have an effect on you, if you're human.

But other feelings are very hard to track. I mean, just sometimes you get up in the morning, and you feel totally different than when you went to bed at night. Am I right or wrong? What to do with them, because they're powerful.

And they're not innocent. When I was a kid, I one time heard a preacher, who was making good points, but he wasn't helping anybody, because he was preaching while he was angry. He was an angry preacher.

And then you can talk to people, who are so sad and depressed, that every time you're with them, you almost dread if they're gonna talk to you. Am I right or wrong here? Did I get a witness? You wanna help them, but you have to battle yourself to stay out of the basement. Feelings.

Why are you so down, Cass, oh my soul? Why? Well, first of all, and this won't be long today, because I wanna sing, and I wanna address this problem. It's some good directives from scripture. This is very practical now.

You gotta start, we all have to start to talk to ourselves. You cannot accept what you're feeling. You have to, through Jesus Christ, talk to your feelings, talk to your soul, and start asking appropriate questions, like the psalmist did.

Soul, what is up with you? Why are you so down, Cass? Why are you so discouraged? Put your hope in God. For I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Now, some of us are more susceptible to mood swings, and I'm not some brilliant person who can tell you where all these feelings emanate from and all of that.

I think it's a mystery, many times. It could be something you ate. You have a bad roti, and you'll feel all kinds of things.

But I've counseled too many people, just so sad. And then what God can do to overcome feelings. So let's just get this practical advice out.

Then I wanna show you someone. I think, I hope she's here in the front somewhere, so I can show you someone who just popped in my office. She'd be a good testimony to you.

First of all, the very act of talking to your soul and talking to your feelings has a tremendous benefit. I have found out that 50% of the battle is just not to accept it, but to talk to them. It's amazing if you start talking to your soul.

What a benefit that is. Just don't accept it and say, that's the way I am today. Because you don't have to be that way.

Most feelings, most feelings come from what you're thinking about. Our thought life has a great effect on what we feel. Somebody thinks and broods over what someone said to them or did to them five years ago, 50 years ago, five days ago.

You dwell on that nasty thing, and you're gonna have accompanying feelings. You're gonna have feelings that are gonna come from that, of resentment and bitterness. This is why you meet people who have an edge.

They have an angry edge. But if you could only get into their head and what they watch at night on their video screen in their mind, you would know why they're angry. You would know why they're angry.

They're thinking angry thoughts. Well, what else would they be thinking? And then feeling as a result. So by talking and questioning, you divert your attention from just accepting the feelings to like, where did you come from and why are you there? Why do I feel this way today? That's what the psalmist did.

Why are you so downcast, oh my soul? Why so distraught and down? Although I wanna talk and mention anger and resentment and fear and all of that, I wanna talk especially about just this cloud of gloom that can come over us because that's what the psalmist was going through. And it was exacerbated because he kept thinking now, I'm not only on the run probably, but I'm thinking about the good old days. This is why a lot of depression comes at Christmastime.

Suicide rises, why? Because people think back to a simpler, often better time in their life and that produces emotion, feelings. And then the feelings can give way to drinking or drug abuse. And then people can take their lives.

This poor girl who took her life somewhere in this country because of the hounding she was getting from her peers and knowing what everyone was saying, she couldn't take it. Young girl took her life, just overwhelmed. And the parents said it was because they just hounded her and said such nasty things through the internet and all of that that she just gave into it.

Why are you so downcast, oh my soul? So I just wanna give you these three things, okay? Number one, whenever you're feeling something that you know is not from God and counterproductive and not gonna be good for you, I want you to ask this question to your feelings, to your soul. Feelings, soul, why are you so downcast? Doesn't God love me and has any promise to help me? I wanna say to all of you today, doesn't God love you? Has any promise to help you? I need an answer here from somebody. I'm asking, doesn't God love us and has any promise to help us? Say that to your soul.

Say that to your soul when you're feeling being pulled down because the first thing we learn about this is the moment you think about God, it has an effect on your feelings which are not based on God. The moment I bring God into it, this is what he's saying to his soul. Hey, soul, don't be so down.

Remember God, you've forgotten God and if you take God out of the equation and just go by what you read in the newspaper and what's happening around you, you can get really sad. Am I right or wrong? But when you think about God and you bring God into the equation, why are you so downcast, oh my soul? God loves you, God loves me and he's promised to help us. Look at me, he already sent his son for you.

I don't care where you are today. I don't care what you believe or don't believe. I don't care where you are spiritually.

I'm talking about something higher than that. I'm talking about the fact that God loves you and you can take that to the bank. God loves you, he gave his son for us.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God says over and over again in this book, call upon me in the day of trouble and I will help you. I'll give you peace that the world will never be able to touch.

I'll give you joy unspeakable and full of glory. Just look to me, don't turn your back to me. Look to me and trust me and call upon me and I'll show you things that you can't even imagine.

Let's put our hands together and celebrate that fact. When you're gloomy, when you're gloomy and feeling bad for yourself and you're despondent, you have to talk, you and I have to talk to our souls and start reminding ourselves God loves me. But pastor, I'm not what I used to be.

I'm not what I should be. None of us are what we should be. His love is not based on your behavior.

His love is based on his own character. He is love. Come on, can we say he is love as we clap our hands? God is love and the dawning of his love into the darkness of that gloom brings tremendous changes.

If you're down today, if you're fighting that downward pull and you're dressed up in a nice suit or a dress, but the secret is that we've all gone through, hey, the secret is you can look good on the outside and be in torment inside from emotions. Are you kidding me? You can be in torment. For those of you visiting many years ago, our oldest girl Chrissy got away from us as a teenager and then away from God, away from God first and then away from us.

She wasn't at home. I tried everything. Talk about emotion? Talk about crying? My nerves got so bad that if the phone rang, I would start to cry.

If the phone rang. The same time my wife had a hysterectomy. Her estrogen level was nil.

Nobody addressed that. And she started having attacks of negative emotions. We're to the point of talking about suicidal thoughts.

So I'm trying to pastor here and preach here. I'm trying to get in a car and come here and do what I'm supposed to do and make you the subject because I don't want to be the object or the subject. It's about you.

I'm here to serve you, preach to you. I'm not here to feel sorry for myself, but it was a battle because I'm married to a woman that I don't know. She's talking about things that are crazy.

My daughter's away. My nerves are shot. Don't tell me emotions aren't powerful.

Emotions can wipe you out. They take you out to sea. One day my father-in-law, late father-in-law had to get on the phone early on a Sunday morning and said, you will go to church.

You will preach. You will do that. I can't.

No, you will. In the name of the Lord, you will. Emotions are powerful.

But while you're in that state, you're not thinking that God loves you. You're not thinking that he has a plan for your life. You're not conscious that he's just a prayer away.

He's as close as the mention of his name. So I wanna declare to all of you today, let's not give in to those emotions. Let's speak to them and say, you ain't that bad.

You're not that bad. You're not that strong. You're strong, but my God is greater than what this feeling is.

Can we say amen to that? My God is greater. His love for me. He has a plan for me.

I'm not gonna give in to you. I know you're there, but I'm not giving in to you because God loves me and he said he would help me. So whatever you're in today, God will help you.

But you gotta get out of that or it'll bury you. What happens when we become overcome by that, we just give up and do some really crazy things and think crazy thoughts. So the first thing is, when you feel that, why are you so downcast, oh my soul? You say, wait a minute.

Hey soul, God loves me. God loves me and he promised he would help me. I don't care what you're going through today.

If you turn to God, he will help you. Will he not? If he won't, then let's throw away this book and I don't know why we're wasting time in here today. No, God will help us.

That's what the Bible says. Ask and you shall receive. Knock and it shall be open.

Seek and you'll find. So God loves me and he's gonna help me. That's what you gotta tell your soul through Christ Jesus.

Number two, the psalmist says, my savior and my God. He doesn't say, God is savior and God is God. He says, no, he's my savior.

He's my God. I wanna remind us all and I wanna remind your emotions today if they're troubling you. I wanna remind all of them that we have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and our father is our father.

He's not just creator. He is my father. When you become a Christian, you're able to say, I'm a father.

I have a father. He's not just God creator and he's the creator of all people, black people, white people, and he created the clouds and the sun and that. No, in a special relationship, we have God as our father.

Now, what father, if we look to him, what father would let his child go down the drain? No father. God would never let that happen. No matter how lonely you feel today, you gotta fight that off and say, no, God

is my father.

God is my father. No matter how deep I go, he'll come underneath me and lift me up. He's my father.

He's my father. Jesus said, when you pray, pray this way, our father which art in heaven. I don't have some far away God, I have a father.

Oh, to be held in my father's arms. That'll make those feelings start to really dissipate. Yo, soul, why are you so downcast? Why so distraught and down within me? God loves me and he said he would help me and he's my father on top of that.

He's not just some God, he's my personal father. Maybe you had a good father, maybe you had a bad father. We deal with a lot of young people here who have no father.

You can't teach them the Lord's Prayer because if you say our father, they'll stop you as they have me and say, what does father mean? What does father mean? They don't know about protection and identity and supply and direction from a father. But I wanna tell everybody here today, you have a father. I don't care what anybody did to you.

I don't care who said what about you. You have a father and he's on your side and he's gonna take care of business for you. Come on, can we say amen to that? He's gonna take care.

God loves me, God's gonna help me and God is my father. You gotta tell your feelings that all the time. Whether they're fear, whether they're angry, whether you have resentment against someone.

What are you gonna do if you hold that resentment, that emotion of resentment? It's gonna eat you up, you're not hurting anybody. No, I'll never forgive that person. You think that will hurt them? It's gonna hurt you.

Emotions are playing a game on us. And notice Satan is just waiting for these moments of emotion. And don't tell me it can't happen to good men.

Elijah, as we learned a few weeks ago, stood down the prophets of Baal and then Jezebel says, before the sun goes down, I'm gonna kill you. And he runs off into the desert and sits under a tree and says to God, let me die. He's one of the mightiest prophets in the Old Testament, but you see, we're all susceptible to this.

And on one day you can have strength to resist and then another day your feelings can just overwhelm you. And we have to be on guard against that. Am I right or wrong here? You gotta stand against it and talk to your soul.

Say no, no, no, you're not gonna have your way today. Uh-uh. No, but this is the real you.

It is not, it's just an emotion I have. It's have some feelings I have. But feelings come and feelings go.

And I'm not gonna give in to them. I'm gonna speak to them and remind them that God loves me and he said he would help me and he is my father. But lastly, I love what the psalmist says when he said, for I will yet praise God.

In other words, this is not the end. This is not the end. It's not the end for Karen.

Karen's been through her trials. See Esther here? Esther, have you been through some things in your life? If you knew the stories of just the two ladies behind me, I don't know Brandon that well, but if you just knew the stories of the two ladies behind me, you would go, whoa. Whoa.

But you see, they got through it. They didn't die, they lived. And that's what you gotta remind yourself because when feelings come, there's a sense of hopelessness.

It's like this is the end. It's not. How many of you here, by uplifted hand, you've been really through some deep waters in your life, but God brought you through? Just hold your hand up.

And are you dead today or are you alive? Have you committed suicide or are you praising God today? Well, guess what? Whatever you're, wait, whatever you're going through today, you gotta address it and not give in to that feeling of hopelessness. You gotta say no. Tears might be for the night, but joy is coming in the morning.

I know I'm gonna get through this. It's not good right now, but God's gonna see me through. Come on, let's put our hands together.

God's gonna see us through. A couple years ago, there's this serial rapist going wild in Queens. It's in the newspaper.

They gave him a name. And I get the phone call. He's jumped one of our workers who helps in BT Kids, signing in the children and working with the children who are being educated right now.

He jumped her, just as she was putting the key in the door in her place in Queens. If she would have totally opened the door, he would have pushed her in with the door and it would have been all over. But she didn't open the door, so he couldn't push her in.

And now they're out in the alleyway. And he starts beating her up and trying to pull off her clothes. And he breaks her nose, okay? But because of some neighbors and some other stuff, he ends up running away and just half killing her and breaking her nose, but not doing what he wanted to do.

So my daughter goes to the hospital and they work on her nose. And then in a day or two, they bring her into my office. And here's this utterly, utterly messed up, distraught, depressed, fearful, couldn't go back to the house, wouldn't even go back to the house, okay? I sat there.

I tried to make eye contact with her. She wouldn't make eye contact with me, okay? So now I'm trying to talk to her. But the emotions were too strong.

Emotions were too strong. Trying to encourage her. She can't see it.

She can't receive it. But God spared you. God kept you from worse problems.

God spared your life. The nose will heal. But she's so down.

And I met with her, I don't know how many times after that. Brothers and sisters, she was hurting emotionally. Lost her job, couldn't go to her job where she worked because of her condition.

And just one thing to another. And month after month, just so down. You talk about, why are you cast down on my soul? Why so distraught within me? So after a while, I realized my words weren't getting

through although I did plant some good ones that were based on God's truth.

I just prayed with her every time I was with her. But one time I told her something. I said, she couldn't receive it then.

Could not. She told me again today. She just walked in my office.

I wasn't planning to focus on her today. She just walked in my office about an hour ago. Touched base with me again.

And the guy got 14 months. It's just a great system we have here. Some of the women wouldn't testify and come forward and whatever.

You don't understand how that works. The dude is 14 months, gonna get out soon. But I told her one day, I said, he's the father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all of our trouble so we can comfort others with the same comfort that God gave us.

And I prophesied to her, if you will, from the scripture and said, you're gonna have situations come in your life where God is gonna bring you through this and then you're gonna help other people who feel they can't go on. And she just, I don't know, pastor, and just put her head down. I said, no, that's what God's word says.

No matter what you go through, he loves you. He will help you. And the way he helps you, you'll use that help to help others.

But for some reason, she wanted to just stop in and touch base today. And in comes this beautiful woman, smiling, radiant, the joy of the Lord. Are you kidding me? I hold this against her with full disclosure.

She wasn't even in my office in a minute and she said, yeah, I'm just thinking about the first time I came to this church and I saw this white dude in the front. And I have never been called a white dude in my office ever. No one has ever called me that.

But you know what she told me? She told me that God's opened doors now and she's going out helping to counsel other people who have been through so much. Come on, can we praise God? God is awesome. Come on, come on.

We give you praise, God. We give you praise. Well now look, she just went out and spoke up in New Hampshire and gave her testimony for the first time.

Thought she might need notes, but didn't even need it. Just got up and shared. She'll give her testimony here, all that God has brought her through one day soon.

What are you going through today that you're so distraught and down about? Remember, God loves you and he's your father. If he could bring her through that, how many of us have lived through that? A broken nose and that fear, that trauma? Talk about trauma, right? A split second away from God knows what? And now look at her. Composed, happy in the Lord, full of joy, full of peace.

And now she's preaching to me in my office. Here I tried to preach to her and she could hardly receive it. Am I right or wrong? Remember when I used to talk to you? She didn't believe anything.

She didn't believe anything. And now she's telling me things. God is so awesome, Pastor.

Pastor, God is so awesome. I just had to stop by and tell you that God is so awesome. This is the lady that wouldn't make eye contact with me.

So what are you going through today? Remember, don't give in to those little critters. Don't give in to those feelings. So they're your feelings.

That doesn't mean they're real. Doesn't mean they're real. Doesn't mean they're good.

Doesn't mean they're gonna help you. Speak to them today. Speak to your soul today in the name of Christ and say, what are you doing? What are you doing? This is not God's plan for my life to be captivated by you.

No, I'm not giving in to you. Everyone, eye closed. If you're here today, up in the balcony downstairs and the enemy's trying to pull you down through emotions, your emotions are just down, melancholy, depressed, fearful, don't wanna go on, discouraged.

Come on, we've all been there. I've done that. If you wanna sing that away by rejoicing in God and praising God, then just get out of your seat quickly and come here to the front.

Come on, we're gonna end here. We're gonna end early, but you're gonna leave here singing. If you're undergoing that kind of battle, admit it.

Admit it, we've all been there. Just get out of your seat, stand here looking at me and say, no, my soul, I will not give in to that. I will not give in to you.

No, you're not gonna run my life. You're not gonna run my life. No, no, no, fear, depression, sadness, melancholy, you will not run my life.

I belong to God, he's my father. He loves me. He said if I'll just ask him, he would help me.

Father God, I thank you for your word today that you have enjoined us to talk to our souls. To check our feelings and say, what are you doing? Why are you so downcast? Is there no God in heaven? Don't I have a heavenly father who loves me? Didn't he promise that he would never leave me nor forsake me? Didn't Jesus die for me when I didn't even know him? Didn't he promise me peace and joy no matter what's happening around me? Doesn't the blood of Jesus cleanse me from all sin? No, I'm not living in condemnation feelings. Not, because God is greater than you.

I don't know where you came from, but get out. Because the joy of the Lord is my strength. And he has promised me his shalom, his peace.

So God, I pray that this will be a practical word for us, but that tonight, tomorrow, for all of us, that we will fight off the tyranny of emotion. Because we're not to be led by emotion, we're to be led by your spirit. And everyone said, come on, can we say amen? I want all the ladies to hug about 10 ladies.

Some of you come up here and hug. All the men, hug about 10 men. Come on.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24902.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/talking-to-yourself/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**