

Why Am I Feeling So Low?

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confronting and managing our emotions, putting our hope in God, and praising Him even when we don't feel like it.

Duration: 26:13

Scripture: Psalm 42:5-43, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Discouragement"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker announces the upcoming funeral service for his mother and shares details about the event. He mentions that they will be singing his mother's favorite hymn, 'The Old Rugged Cross.' The speaker then encourages the congregation to trust in God and reminds them of the countless times God has come through for them in the past. He emphasizes the importance of putting hope in God and not allowing emotions or self-indulgence to dictate their actions. The speaker concludes by urging the congregation to confront themselves, preach to themselves, and prophesy to themselves, declaring that they will praise God in the future despite their current difficulties.

Transcript

I want to talk to you briefly about something that we can pray together, and that is, have you ever wondered why when you wake up some mornings you feel like you're in the dumps? No one. Isn't that an odd thing, the way we're made? But have you ever wondered that just in life you find yourself agitated inside or anxious or troubled and you don't know why? And you check your calendar and you look at your life and you say, why am I agitated? Or have you ever just feel heavy and sorrowful and like just down and you don't know why? That just is a universal condition, and it's very mysterious. I said some can be attributed to things happening in our life, and you always check if you've sinned against God or there's something developing your life sinful against his word, then you've got to bring a confession to the Lord and confess it, let him cleanse you so that you can get back in that sunlight again, a fellowship with him.

But a lot of times you don't know why. Or there could be some melancholy, just you wake up like a number of weeks ago. I just got up one day, and it was it actually lasted like two days.

It was like a cloud. Anybody have clouds over you sometimes? Like what is that about? You know, I want to point out an important verse because that's a very, very bad thing to let go on in your life. Mood swings and giving into your emotional swings, where the emotions are governing you rather than us governing our emotions.

You know, when God created us, he did not create us that we would be led about by our physical appetites like animals or by our emotional fluctuations. That's very troubling. Haven't you ever experienced that? Like I have.

No, not just in yourself, but you ever see that in other people and how annoying that can be and troubling and disconcerting and breaks up good fellowship when someone has a mood but they let you know they're in the mood. How many have ever had one of those, right? And if you say something to them, they're like, something bothering you? No, no, is anything bothering you? And you can't prove a mood. But it just throws everything off, throws everything off.

People who are on emotional benders like that going all over the place, they can't be a blessing to anybody hardly. It sounds no matter how many verses they know, it means they're spiritually immature because they're not acting like Christ. What if every time we went to Christ or to God in prayer, God was in a different mood? And we go, God, I need your help.

Get out of here. Not now. I've had enough today.

Oh, you people. Read how steady Jesus was in the gospels. Disciples knew they could go to him.

Whether you were a pauper, a rich person or someone with leprosy, it wouldn't matter. Jesus was Jesus. You know, we tell the choir when they come in the choir, I have the last meeting with them after they've gone through the process.

And we tell them, now, one of the things when you minister, you have a different, we have a double standard in the church. Of course, there's a double standard. There's the folks who sit out there and they can dress the way they want or someone can walk in.

I have no control over that. They could dress sensually and appropriately, but you're not going to dress that way because you draw attention to yourself. And now people are thinking about Jesus or they're thinking about all the bling you have or the hat that goes up that high.

So there's a code that we have. And you can, one of the things we tell them is that to minister, you can't be in a mood. You can't be in a mood.

How are you going to help people in a mood if you're in a mood? What if I got up here and said, I've had a bad week, everything broke down, had a terrible week. In fact, I got nothing to say to you folks. I haven't opened the Bible the whole week because everything just went wrong.

And then you'd say, no, you can't say that, Pastor Simba. You can't be in a mood. We came here because we're in a mood.

We wanted you to lift us out of our mood. How in the world could you be in a mood? Am I right? Watch the pastors, watch these deacons. They're not in a mood.

Can't be in a mood. That's a sign of immaturity, sign of lack of faith, sign of being a baby. And we indulge a lot of that stuff.

What's bad about that is it makes everybody now walk on eggs around you because you've let everybody know you're in a mood. You ever go to a diner or a restaurant in New York and the person who serves you, they let you know from the get-go. They are in a mood and you're lucky they're even serving you,

right? Am I correct or not? And you pick it up and it ruins your meal.

It ruins my meal. Sometimes I'll even say something. Can I help or pray about something? No, you can't pray about anything.

I'm fine. That's great. Yeah, you really seem fine.

Also, if you have children, if I may just add this, it's very bad kids to grow up in that environment of these mood swings. It's all over the place. Not as Christians.

You're supposed to be mature. Now, I'm going to give you a three-step thing, how to fight the blues. How many want to be blueless for the rest of your life, right? Fight the blues.

And it happens to all of us. And look, I've read books on spiritual depression, on all kinds of things. Nobody really understands why certain days, I know certain people, they don't need anyone to talk to them or anything wrong to go in their life.

They will agitate themselves into a different mood. A lot of that is memory bank. That's why the Bible says, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever good report, think on these things.

People who think nasty stuff end up in a mood. They induce their own mood and own fluctuations. And it's a real sign of selfishness because it's like, I don't care.

I don't care about you. I'm going to indulge my mood. We tell the choir also, look, when you go to practice, no body language that you're tired, nothing like that.

You want to say something, say it. So I say to them sometimes, look, if Carol has a long practice and you're going through something, they're recording a new CD, you can't roll your eyes. Because if just 10 of you roll your eyes and you each have two eyes, that's 20 eyes all being rolled at once.

And my wife, just like you, you all are very smart and sensitive. My wife will pick that up. So now she's distracted from doing God's work because people are using, you know, I'd rather have Jesus more than anything.

God wants us free of that. And it's not good for us. It just messes up your crankcase and gets all junk in you.

And oddly, many times, as we're going to see here, you have to get yourself out of your mood. No preacher can help you. You have to turn into a preacher.

And this is one of the rare times in the Psalms where the psalmist is not talking vertically to God or horizontally to us, like, clap your hands, O ye people, bless the Lord with me. See, that's to us. Blessed be, hallelujah, O God, for you are from beginning, from before, from all eternity.

That's to God. This one verse has him talking to himself. If you talk too much to yourself in New York, little white trucks come and get you and take you to the G building over in Kings County.

But this is good talking to yourself. Listen in on this man of God talking to himself, because it encourages all of us. Look what he says to himself.

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. I looked up yesterday. I spent a little time researching the Hebrew of that verse.

Listen to some of the other words. These are rich Hebrew words. Why so full of heaviness? That's the word for downcast.

Another translation says, why are you moaning? Why are you so despondent? Why are you so discouraged? And then, why so disturbed within me? Why are you so disquieted? Why are you so agitated? In other words, he's talking to himself. What does that mean? It means his higher spiritual self, in one way, is talking to his lower physical emotional self. The voice of faith is talking to the voice of unbelief.

The spiritual side is talking to the fleshly side. But he's talking to himself. There's no pastor around, no preacher around, so he has to talk to himself.

And I want you to notice how he ministers to himself. You got to learn to minister to yourself. This is in the Bible for a reason.

There's three places in the Psalms where this verse is repeated. At the end of verse Psalm 43, Psalm 42 and Psalm 43, by most experts, they believe it was part of one Psalm. So it's said twice.

Psalm 42, then again Psalm 43. And another Psalm it said. Same thing.

What's going on with you? Notice what he's saying. He, first of all, he confronts himself. We don't do that enough.

We pamper ourselves. We baby ourselves. We put up with ourselves.

That's just the way I feel. Like, so the rule of life is how you feel on any given moment. You don't like people to be that way with you.

You don't like emotional swings around you, do you? Here the psalmist is talking to himself and he confronts himself like, hey, what's up with this? Why are you so down? Why are you moaning like an animal? That's what the word actually is used, that Hebrew word in the Old Testament. Why are you moaning? Why are you groaning? After all God has done for you, what are you walking around like, you know, you got five minutes to live? What's wrong with you? See, we don't do that. We pamper ourselves.

We're egocentric. Whatever we do or feel, we worship that. That's the rule of our life, how I feel.

But he doesn't do that. So he's talking to himself. So what's with you? Hey Jim, what's with you? Why are you so down? Why are you so heavy? Why are you so agitated? What are you nervous about? Didn't God say he would never leave you nor forsake you? Hasn't he got you out of 10,000 vines? Hasn't he delivered you from the mouth of the lion? When you went through the valley, wasn't he in the valley with you? When you went over the mountain, didn't he help you and lead and show the way? Didn't he do all those things? Then why are you so down? See, that's strange talk to us because we think that we have to follow our feelings wherever they lead us instead of giving them a kick once in a while in the backside and saying, what's with you? What's with you? Do that this week if you feel one of those things coming on you.

Talk to yourself. Why are you so down? What are you moaning for? What, God hasn't been faithful? This is a good advertisement for a Christian to walk around like that, to be flying off the handle at people, being

all agitated. Why are you so agitated? Someone says, I don't know.

I'm just agitated. You don't know how I grew up, and then you play the victim card, justifying everything that you're going through. Not this psalmist, not this man of God.

He says, what's wrong with you? He confronts himself. God help us to have that kind of boldness, to not put up with nonsense from ourselves. I never said that before in my life.

Let's not put up with nonsense from ourselves. Can't be fluctuating and going all over the place. Some of us are just like children in that way, aren't we? I was telling the church earlier today, I have a three-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter named Charlotte.

She's a piece of work. She's very, very bright, but very diva-like and dramatic, and everything with her is emotions, and she's flipping back and forth like a switch. So her 19-year-old sister, that's a wide gap.

She's three-and-a-half, going to be four in May, so she's more than three-and-a-half. And she says to Claire, her older sister, one day, two weeks ago, so Claire, she calls her sissy, so sissy, let's eat breakfast together and plan a sissy lunch one day, and let's make plans of what we'll buy, and we'll have balloons, and it'll be best sissy meal, a meal together, just for us, sissy. So Claire goes, yeah, Charlotte, we could do that.

Let's talk about it. So they're talking about what she wants to get, and whatever. So then Claire noticed, you got to get to work.

So she says, I got to get to work. I got to go. No, you can't go.

I want you to get me a napkin. So Claire goes, no, Charlotte, I got to go. And you know where the napkins are.

You get the napkin. No, you get the napkin. You can't go.

No, I got to go to work. Yeah, I'll never talk to you again as long as I live. From sissy party to never talking again as long as they live.

So Claire got to get to work. So she leaves. She hears her crying in the background.

She looks back as she gathers her stuff, walks out, looks back at the front door, and there through the glass is Charlotte going, bye, bye, love you, bye. I don't want to be like that. Anybody here with me say amen.

I don't want to put that on people. I don't want to put that on you. And I want to be more like Jesus.

So notice now as I close, he confronted himself. And then number two, look at the verse. He now preaches to himself, put your hope in God.

Say that with me. Put your hope in God. Who's he saying that to? You? No, himself.

Preaching to himself. Like what's up with this? Put your hope in God. Hope always means future.

Put your hope in God. He's going to see you through this thing. It seems like in the context of this psalm, there was a little melancholy going on.

The psalmist was pulled away from the temple where he used to go and worship in Jerusalem with his fellow worshipers. And whatever was going on, it made him melancholy and down. But now he says to his soul, hey, put your hope in God.

God's not done with you. God's going to bring you back. God's not done.

Tears are for the night. Joy is going to come in the morning. Put your hope in God.

Look, look at me. How many times have some of us here thought that the world was going to end? We face something, I can't endure this. But we did.

Didn't God bring us through? Come on, do I get an amen? Hey, aren't we all here today? Can we clap our hands? Aren't we all here? We're here. We're alive. We're praising God.

Put your hope in God. He's preaching to himself. You can't wait till somebody comes.

You got to grab this bull by its horns. What's wrong with you? Confront himself. And don't be a baby with yourself.

Be a man, be a woman with yourself. And then number two, preach to yourself. Put your hope in God.

Come on, have some faith in God. How must God feel when moping around like that? Do you like it if you have children and they mope around and half depressed all the time? No, no parent would like that. Why would God like that? No, God wants us to be rejoicing in the Lord always.

And again I say rejoice. So you can't be led about by feelings. You got to put your hope in God.

So let me just help you with that. You can't go by just what you see at a given moment because God has an answer out of the situation you're in. It's going to change.

Come on, do I get an amen? It's going to change. Hasn't everything changed? I was trying to minister to someone the other day who was ready to give up the ghost. And I said, wait a minute, hasn't God come through for you about 10,000 times? Yeah.

I said, no, 10,000 times. Tell me, don't go new. Yeah.

I said, tell me the truth. Yes, it's true. If God saw you through 10,000 times and he gave his son to die for you on the cross, is he going to let you now fall in a black hole and perish? Never.

Put your hope in God. Put your hope in God. Come on, one last affirmation of that.

Put your hope in God. But emotions are stubborn. Emotions and self-indulgence, they get very deep rooted.

They act like little babies. The psalmist didn't want to do that. Lastly, he began to prophesy to himself.

He confronted himself. He preached to himself. Look at the passage finally at the end.

For I will yet praise him. I will in the future yet praise him. God's not done with me.

See this test? It's going to make a testimony. I'm going to have a testimony through this mess. Oh, brothers and sisters, how many times have I learned that just pastoring this church and financial pressure

didn't know where to turn.

Then I learned, no, every test leads to a testimony. God is faithful. Come on, is he not faithful? How many have found him faithful in your own life? Come on, wave your hand if he's never failed you even once.

No, we failed him. He never fails us. He begins to prophesy.

You will praise him. Yes, you're going to praise him. Right now, it's a little difficult, but you're going to praise him.

Don't worry. You're going to give him a shout. Last thing I just want to tell you, praising God is so important.

There was a message, I think, from the Spirit here this morning at nine o'clock telling us how important praise is to God, how precious it is. You and I have to learn to praise God when you feel zero. A lot of us, because we're all emotional creatures, and a lot of us grew up in emotionally oriented churches, and everything was working up emotion, and when emotion died, everything died.

God loves when we praise him when we feel nothing. We praise him because he's worthy to be praised. We praise him by faith even though we don't see anything, feel anything.

No, you're worthy to be praised. You're not worthy to be praised when I feel you're worthy to be praised. You're worthy to be praised 24-7, 365.

So what you have to learn how to do, listen, I'm doing it more and more. You just start praising God cold turkey, just nothing. You don't feel anything.

You might even have a tear that you have to wipe away. You praise God because if we don't do it that way, it's like we decide when God is worthy to be praised. No, God is worthy to be praised all the time.

You know, right now, everybody lift up your hands, open your, close your eyes, open your mouth, and begin to praise God. I don't care what you're feeling, just praise him out loud. Tell him I praise you.

I exalt you. I lift you up for you are worthy. You were there all the time, God.

You were watching out for me when I didn't even know you were there. You were there, God. I praise you.

I exalt you. You got to remember, look at me. You got to remember, God nowhere says in his word, I want you to feel a certain way.

Never. He said, trust me. Worship me.

Doesn't say feel a certain way. It's our will that he's after, that we can trust him and worship him and stay out of these embankments, these ditches, terrible things. I don't want that in my life.

And when they come, I might not even understand why they come. I want to rebuke that thing like the Psalmist did. Sometimes you don't have to rebuke demons.

You got to rebuke yourself and say, what's up with you? What in the world's come over you? Oh no, this is your feelings speaking to you. Get in touch with your feelings. No, I'm not getting in touch with you at all.

How about that? I'm getting in touch with God. I'm going to worship God. I'm going to praise God.

Come on, one last time. Maybe you're here today and going through something. God's going to see you through it.

Yesterday, my mother went to be with the Lord. I went to see her at 1130, 12 with my wife. We spent a nice hour plus with her, but she was right on the edge.

I told you a few weeks ago, her time of departure was coming, but she was right on the edge. I spoke into her ears. She seemed comatose, but there were some reactions in her hands.

I told her how much I loved her. What can I say? God gave me a mom for 104 years and three months. Wait.

And my son-in-law Brian figured this out before she went to be with the Lord, that her heart had beat 4 trillion, 4 billion plus times. She was born in 1914. And when I was with her yesterday, her blood pressure was totally normal.

No pain. Someone from hospice came and said, Ooh, there's peace here. So what can I say after 104 years? What can I say to God? Yesterday, it hit me.

I was okay when I learned of it or I got through it, but last night it hit me and I got emotional. But that's my mom. That's my mom.

But what can I say? God, you gave her to me for 104 years. I bet nobody here can say that. I have a testimony that none of you have.

God gave me the best mom, 104 years. And I know where she is. And I'm going to be there soon.

As I prayed with her, with some ladies taking care of our godly women and my wife, I said, Lord, was that a premonition? It was that day. Please just take her gently. Don't let her go through any pain.

Because to see my mom, she went through so much pain in life with an alcoholic husband for 22 years and the Lord took her gently. And I'll have my moments. I'm sure I had some more today, but I'm not going to live in the dumps because I know where she is.

I didn't lose my mother. You only lose someone when you don't know where they are. She's with the Lord.

Every eye close, every eye close. If you're here today and say, Pastor, I needed to hear that. I'm going through something right now.

It's just hard. But you know what? I'm not going to live in the dumps. I'm not living in the blues.

I'm living in the light. I'm going to praise Jesus. My emotions are not going to control me.

The spirit of God is going to control me. The word of God is going to control me. Jesus is going to control me.

I'm not going to be flying around like a leaf in the wind. No, I know in whom I have believed. And I'm persuaded that he's able to keep everything that I commit to him against that day.

If you'd like to just assert that to God, affirm it in his presence. You just stand wherever you are. I'm going through something, but I am standing on God's word right now because I know he's with me.

You just stand where you are. Thank you, Lord, for your word that we can confront ourselves. Why are you cast down? Why so heavy? Why so sad? After all God has done for you, soul, what's wrong with you? And we can preach to ourselves.

Put your hope in God. He's always come through. Do it again.

He'll do it again for he is faithful. And thank you that we can prophesy to ourselves. I will yet praise God in the land of the living.

Looks bad right now, but he's going to bring me through into a wide and blessed place. And I'll sing his praises. Thank you for your word to all of us today.

Now by your spirit, help us to put it in practice. For we ask this in Jesus name. Everybody stay.

Oh, wait, wait, wait. One last thing. Stay right where you are like that.

Not tomorrow, but a week from tomorrow, March 4th, not tomorrow, a week from Monday, March 4th, from three o'clock to seven o'clock. My mom will be here, her body to be viewed. Then at seven o'clock on March 4th that night, we're going to have a service.

My brother's coming in from the West Coast and my sister and the immediate family and some grandchildren. And we're going to sing my mom's favorite songs and the singers will sing. You know what her favorite hymn was? The old rugged cross.

We're going to sing the old rugged. How many like the old rugged cross? I love that song. So now stand.

I now pronounce you man and wife by the authority vested in me. Hug somebody. Give someone a handshake and hug them.

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