



## **When Doubts Lead to Despair** Psalm 42-43

**Have** you ever noticed how disruptive a smoke alarm is?

**Our** souls need an alarm like that. Here's what we all know: like gravity, our thoughts tend to spiral downward when life is hard. But what if there was an alarm that could stop us and enable us to reassess reality?

**Psalm 42-43** tells the story of someone whose thoughts are spiraling downward. But then something happens. As he spirals deeper, he interrupts the spiral. The alarm sounds. He doesn't deny his feelings but refuses to let them have the final word! Instead, he grounds himself in the truth of God's character—a truth ultimately revealed in Jesus Christ. That's what these psalms teach us to do.

**Three** times, the psalmist interrupts spiraling thoughts. We can learn to:

**Interrupt the spiral when God feels distant.**

<sup>42:1</sup> As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.

<sup>3</sup> they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"

**Interrupt the spiral when God seems to have forgotten you.**

<sup>42:6b</sup> My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

<sup>9a</sup> I say to God, my rock: “Why have you forgotten me?”

## **Interrupt the spiral when you fear God has rejected you.**

<sup>43:2</sup> For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me?

*Every home needs a smoke alarm. Not because we enjoy hearing it, but because we need something to interrupt us when danger comes. God has given us a smoke alarm for the soul. Three times in these psalms it sounds: "Why are you cast down, O my soul?... Hope in God." This week, when your thoughts begin to spiral, let the alarm sound. Interrupt the spiral with truth of Jesus! Let Christ have the final word! Because faith doesn't always stop the spiral; faith interrupts it!*