

MARK 1:23-28

DIVINE DEMONSTRATION

²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ²⁴ "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" ²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. ²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

When I was in high school I taught swimming at the local YMCA. To be successful I had to do more than proclaim that knowing how to swim could save their lives, and teaching that to be able to swim you had to pull your way through the water with your arms while keeping yourself afloat on the water. As necessary as the proclamation and teaching were, they had to be reinforced by my getting into the water and demonstrating what it is to swim.

In the Gospel story, Jesus is inviting us into some pretty deep and dangerous water. As compelling as his message is, and no matter how sure he is of his message, the proof of the truth of the proclamation and his apparent authority is found in the demonstration of divine power. *He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.* If he is who he says he is, and he does that which is consistent with what he says, then his message can be believed.

For us, this is a reminder of how important it is for us to have integrity in word and action. How you live your life is the validation of what you profess to believe. If you want someone to hear the message of your talk, you must be willing to walk the walk.

O Lord, when you came and taught among the people, you demonstrated your authority by mighty acts. As I claim that you have authority over my life, help me demonstrate your authority by living my life in obedience to your will. Amen.