

“So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. “How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father. He replied, “Since he was a little boy.” Mark 9:20-21 NLT

## lectio // Mark 9:14-29

Ever since I heard Darren Rouanzoin at the garden church talk about this passage, I’ve been more and more curious. Most folks look at the “why the demon don’t come out by disciples” and are fixated on that drama. Darren asked more about the boy, the bravery of admittance from his father and the community responsibility to protect children. It starts with a profound, unsettling question. How does a demon gain entrance into a child? Mark does not tell us that, but there’s a whole lot of attention given to the father and the surrounding neighbors. It makes sense that everyone would stand around trying to figure out why their theology of demon possession appears to have some holes, while the child continues to suffer right in front of them! That is until Jesus arrives and starts asking questions, “what is everyone arguing about?” I’m sure there was silence, then sharp glances between the disciples who felt inadequate and maybe embarrassed. And in this very public show of “demonic manifestation,” discussion about responsibility and very tired father who speaks up, there is a young boy. And Jesus continues to ask questions. But as the boy is brought closer to Jesus, the evil spirit, a spiritual terrorist, begins acting out violently. What a terrifying scene! Then Jesus asks another penetrating question, “How long?” The painful and shameful response - “since he was little.” This father, along with his family and closest friends are now ready to face the truth. Who let the monster in? How did an evil spirit get access to an innocent child? Answer, an adult or adults weren’t doing their job of protecting him! But that day Jesus did MORE than kick out a demon. He also restored a father, a community to being responsible for the well being of this child and possibly many others. So I pause more often when I see the behaviors of a child and ask myself, “who’s not been tending the door to this little one’s heart?” Who has abandoned their post or worse, used the child for their own evil purposes or selfish pleasures? If you are a father reading this and you have allowed evil to get past you to your child or you have used them for your own gain, for their sake, REPENT and ask God to overcome your doubts and disorders to heal your child!

Dad,

Help us as fathers and mothers to be protectors of our children and the children whose parents have thoughtlessly or purposely let down their guard.

Please raise up mothers and fathers to fill in the gap for the thousands and thousands of parents and the children bereft of love, care and guidance.