

The Neverending Story: Mark's Discipleship Catechism
(A Close Reading of Mark 8:22-10:52 Following Ched Myers)

I. All roads in Mark lead everywhere: his themes are tightly woven together so pay attention to the details (assume everything is there for a reason)

II. Road Map for Walking the Way of the Cross/Seeing the Cost of Discipleship

- 8:22-26 Blind man healed in 2 stages: sees people, they look like trees
- 8:27-9:1 Peter's Confession/Peter's Confusion (1st Passion Prediction)
- 9:2-29 Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain/the disciples' impotence
- 9:30-37 Disciples discuss who is the greatest (2nd Passion Prediction)
- 9:38-50 Who owns the exorcism franchise? How can Satan cast out Satan?
- 10:1-16 Teachings about the cost of discipleship: marriage, children
- 10:17-31 Story of non-discipleship and comment "how hard it will be..."
- 10:32-45 James and John ask a favor of Jesus (3rd Passion Prediction)
- 10:46-52 Blind Bartimaeus is healed (at once) and follows him "on the way"

III. The Way of the Cross as a Way of Life (Restructuring of Social Power)

- A. Radical reversal of the world as we know it
- B. Call to concrete practice of reversal in a world that punishes dissent
- C. Jesus shows the way: Jerusalem is where we are going

IV. The Transfiguration Story: Learning to "listen to him!" (9:7)

- A. Pay attention to geographical detail: going up and down the mountain
- B. Peter, James and John (the inside circle of the disciples)
- C. Moses and Elijah: prophetic critique of the institutional church
- D. "The Church of the Holy Rebuke?"
- E. Elijah does come first: the good news and the bad news
- F. "Your ad says you do exorcisms but when I brought my son..."
- G. "How long?" (9:19 and 9:21) the disciples linked to the demonic again
- H. The embarrassed disciples ask in private -- "only by prayer"
- I. Markan Irony at Work: "We forbade him because he was not following us"
- J. How literally do we read the text? 9:42ff

V. The Neverending Story: Is the Bible a "magic book" like Bastian's?

- A. Mark's Gospel calls us by name and holds us accountable for the ending
- B. The movement from spectator to actor is conversion (discipleship)
- C. The story of the Cross either transforms us or passes us by entirely
- D. Is Jesus the answer to our questions or the question to our answers?
- E. We can understand this story only by walking the way of the Cross
- F. The Gospel as mirror: Where am I possessed?
- G. The church as accountability structure to keep us from running away?

Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*
Myers, Dennis, et al., *Say to this Mountain*
Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*

Mark's "theological geography"