

# Invasion!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone, and good morning to those, or afternoon to those online, whenever you're watching. It's good to have everyone with us as we open God's Word together and hear from Him.

What a great, great thing that we get to commune with the Lord of the universe and connect with heaven as we open the Word of God together. Invasion is a frequent newspaper headline in times of war, because in war there are many invasions.

Most wars actually start with one big invasion. The definition of an invasion is an unwelcome intrusion into another's domain.

An unwelcome intrusion into another's domain. That's the definition of what an invasion is. And therefore, because any invasion is an unwelcome intrusion, it will cause conflict.

Nobody wants to be invaded, right? And so it's always going to cause conflict when there's an unwelcome intrusion into another's domain. Now, this morning we're reading through Mark.

[ 1 : 09 ] We're continuing our series in Mark. And I want you to know and realize and understand that when we read Mark, we are reading about an invasion. Jesus' arrival on earth is an unwelcome intrusion into another's domain.

It is unwelcome by the forces of evil, and it is unwelcome by many human institutions who don't like the power and the agenda that Jesus brings.

And so, because it's an invasion, an unwelcome intrusion, it's going to cause significant conflict.

And it does. The arrival of Jesus on earth has caused, for the past 2,000 years, significant conflict in many realms.

In the spiritual realm, in the political realm, in the religious realm. And in this passage, that's exactly what we see. And we see how this invasion is taking place and how it continues actually in every generation, this invasion of heaven to earth.

And also we see, as we look at this passage this morning, how to make sure that you and I are on the right side of that invasion and not among those who resist it and are crushed by it.

[ 2 : 20 ] And that's what we're going to see this morning. So keep your Bible open at Mark 3, and we're going to look together at how Jesus invades the world. How Jesus invades the world.

Now, we need to understand this is not an unfriendly invasion, the one I'm talking about, but it is an invasion come to liberate the people on earth who are under tyranny.

There are two types of invasions in wars. There's an invasion which brings a tyrannical rule to people who don't want it, and then there's an invasion that brings liberation to people who want that liberation.

So, in fact, in the last hundred years, in war, we've seen the most famous examples of those invasions both happened in World War II. If you history buffs, you'll know what I'm talking about. The first invasion was when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. And that was an invasion which was definitely unwelcome by the free country of Poland because it brought Hitler's tyrannical rule into that country.

[ 3 : 24 ] That was the bad type of invasion. But then, five years later, there was another famous invasion, the invasion of the Allies in Normandy beaches in D-Day in 1944.

And that was an invasion that was welcomed because it brought liberation to the people who were under the tyrannical rule of Germany. So, World War II really was summarized by those two invasions.

You know what? We can understand the entire story of the Bible as the story of two invasions as well. Think about it. The first invasion happened at the beginning of the Old Testament.

In Genesis chapter 3, it was when the tyrannical rule of evil and death entered our world through sin. When we as humans turned our back on God, when we thought we could run our lives our own way, that opened the door for the invasion of evil into our world.

And death. And it comes through sin. That was the first horrible invasion. It was the bad invasion of our world. It's why we live in a broken world.

[ 4 : 33 ] All because of that invasion that we read about at the beginning of the Old Testament. But there's another invasion in the Bible that happens at the beginning of the New Testament. And that is the invasion of heaven to earth to liberate its people from the tyrannical rule of evil and death.

And that is the invasion we're reading about here in Mark. Here in this passage, Jesus himself describes it as the plundering of the strong man's house.

That's how he himself describes this invasion he is bringing to earth. The strong man being Satan, the ruler of the evil spiritual forces of the world. Jesus, in verse 27, describes his invasion as the plundering of Satan's house.

And as we read on, we see how Jesus gets this invasion going. Now, we've seen when we've looked already in the story of Mark, we've already seen his liberating power in the lives of particular people.

We've seen that he's already started to liberate people from the effects of evil. So the miracles that he's been performing were essentially opening salvos of this invasion that he's bringing, the miracles of healing crippled people, driving out demons, taking away people's sicknesses, because all these things are particular symptoms of us living under the tyrannical rule of sin and death.

[ 5 : 55 ] And so Jesus fires these opening shots and he shows in no uncertain terms the forces of evil in the world that someone more powerful is now here.

And they are petrified because they've had the run of the place for generations, for thousands of years until now. And so at this point, because of these opening salvos of liberating invasion that Jesus is bringing from heaven to earth, you see the reactions at the beginning of our passage, chapter 3, verse 7 and 8.

Firstly, the reactions from people. So there's just massive crowds by now because of this undoubted power that this man brings to earth that's never been seen before.

You just see how sensational it's becoming from verse 7. Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea and a large crowd followed from Galilee and a large crowd followed him from Judea, Jerusalem, Edomia, beyond the Jordan, around Tyre.

The large crowd came to him because they heard about everything he was doing. So Mark's trying to stress, this is masses of people. This is headline news. But not only is there a big reaction from people, there is a big reaction from spiritual forces.

[ 7 : 12 ] They are freaking out with this invasion because they realize someone stronger has come. Verse 11, check what they do. Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him.

The word literally is they prostrated themselves before and they were petrified and they cried out, you are the son of God. They didn't know what to do. Up until now, they've been able to do their jobs pretty well as evil spirits.

But no more. Someone more powerful has arrived to plunder Satan's house. And so when we, as we now get to this point in the story of Mark, we see there's already a lot of reaction to Jesus' invasion of earth.

But we also realize this is only the beginning of his invasion. He ain't seen nothing yet because here he steps up his game and he does something very important. He recruits other people to join in his invasion.

He essentially starts forming a resistance movement within the occupied territory itself that he is invading. Have a look from verse 13. Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those he wanted and they came to him.

[ 8 : 23 ] He appointed 12, whom he also named apostles, to be with him to send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. Here Jesus is raising a resistance movement from the local population.

Kind of like the, again, going to World War II because it's probably one of the biggest conflicts of our last century. The French resistance. You know the story of the French resistance in the Second World War?

So just before the Allies came to invade Europe, to liberate it from Nazi rule, they also started to communicate with and equip a resistance movement within France that they were aiming to invade. Who they would equip and they would then start to fight the Germans from within and prepare France for invasion and then help that invasion along. And in the same way, that's what Jesus is essentially doing here.

He's raising a resistance movement from within the population of people who have been for thousands of years under the tyrannical rule of sin.

[ 9 : 31 ] That is what Christian disciples are. They are the resistance movement Jesus is calling to join him against the tyranny of sin and death in our world.

And they were given special equipment to do that. They weren't left to do it by themselves. Look at verse 14 and 15 again. To be with him.

And he sent them out and appointed them to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. And so this is the special weapons that he is equipping this resistance movement to fight the tyrannical rule of sin and death.

He gives them authority to actually drive out demons, to actually do things in the spiritual realm that humans could never do before. But do you notice the biggest weapon he gives them?

He gives them authority to preach. You see that? Because it turns out teaching God's truth is the main weapon Jesus uses on this earth to plunder Satan's house.

[ 10 : 37 ] Do you remember back in chapter 1 when his disciples were looking for him? And they couldn't find him? And there were so many people that needed to be healed and were waiting for healing.

And they found him up in a desolate place praying. Do you remember what he said to them? Well, you can look back in, it's a page back in 1 verse 38. He said to them, Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too.

This is why I've come. You see, to Jesus, the main weapon that he uses to plunder Satan's house is teaching. Because the reason is because Satan, this tyrannical ruler, keeps people under his tyrannical rule and his control with lies.

That's his main weapon. Today still, confusion, deception, lies is how Satan keeps people under the rule of sin. And so, it stands to reason that preaching of God's truth and the Holy Spirit working to make that truth take hold in people's lives is the only thing that can truly liberate people from evil's power on this earth.

And that's why Jesus makes a priority of it. And that's why he equips his resistance movement of disciples more than anything else to preach. Jesus did it.

[ 12 : 02 ] But he chooses that his work of liberation through teaching continue through his disciples right up until today through his church.

That is why he has set up this church. Not just this church in St. Mark's, but the church around the world. He has set up his church as the continuing resistance movement against the tyrannical rule of sin and death in the world and in people's lives.

Today, the church is the only institution that is specially equipped to engage in this invasion, to continue the liberating invasion of truth into communities and into homes and into lives.

Not against human powers of evil like the military are. The military are good armies and navies and stuff. They're equipped to engage with human forces and to overpower those human forces.

The church, though, is equipped and able more than anyone else, more than the military or more than anyone else. In fact, it's the only institution that can do this. It is able to engage in the domain of spiritual forces.

[ 13 : 15 ] No army can do that. But the church can. You and I can. We're able to engage in the spiritual realm and engage and fight against the domain of spiritual forces that animate all the evil human forces in the world.

Isn't that amazing? If you think about it. Wow. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 10. Just keep your finger in Mark. But look at how Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 10 because he gets it.

He gets that he, as a disciple of Christ, has been called to this epic resistance struggle on earth to engage with the spiritual realm.

And he says it like this. 2 Corinthians 10 from verse 3. Look at these words. 2 Corinthians 10. 3-6. For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. Since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds, we

demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

[ 14 : 29 ] This is the resistance movement at work. And we are equipped with supernatural weapons through the seemingly ordinary work of the church.

We get to engage in this epic cosmic struggle. You see, the work of the church, the work of churches like this one, even though it might not seem like much, it might seem quite mundane, we need to realize, we need to get this perspective and realize that the work of the church is the very way that the Son of Man is invading the dominion of evil in this world.

Why would you not want to be involved in that? Why not? I'm not talking to those who are involved in the work of the church.

And there's many ways that many people here are involved in the work of Christ's church, in giving of their resources, in prayer, in contributing their talents and their time.

I'm not talking to you right now, but I am talking to the many who are not involved in the church in any significant way. Why not? Why not? If it's, this is the most important work you could do, this is the most important thing you could do with your life, is be involved in this resistance struggle.

[ 15 : 48 ] What can get in the way of that, realistically? When the Allies invaded France and they raised the French resistance to help them, you didn't find the French resistance going, well, you know, I'm so tired when I get home from work.

I really can't be involved in an invasion. You know, I've got to look after my kids. I don't really have time. No French resistance did that because they realized what an important thing it was to get involved in this invasion which would liberate them and so they made that a priority.

If we have that same perspective as Christians, we will make the work of the church and getting involved in Christ's church a priority when we realize just what we're involved in here.

To be part of heaven's invasion against the tyranny of sin and death in this world is the most important thing you can do. Now, how do you do that?

Well, practically, you become a member of a local church. That's the first step. So if you're not yet a member of St. Mark's, we do have membership classes coming up and that's where you will learn what it means to be involved and how you can use the gifts that God has given you to be involved in His work on earth.

[ 17 : 00 ] And for those of you who are members, but maybe you've slipped from your actual active involvement in this church over COVID, talk to me, talk to Sylvia, talk to Dylan. There's actually a lot of opportunities. There's a lot of places we need help, a lot of things we need help with.

And so do talk to us to get involved. But that all starts with realizing just what the work of the church is. I think we've lost sight of that. And I think we need to recapture that this is an epic struggle against, this is plundering Satan's house, what we're doing now.

And it's the most important thing any of us can do. But I also want to warn you that getting involved in that work is not going to be easy. Because the second thing we see in this passage is that invading Satan's house causes trouble.

And so expect that. Because nobody wants to be invaded. Even a good invasion is going to upset the status quo.

And so it's going to cause conflict. The actions of Jesus here we see in the story not only upset the religious leaders of his day, but we see for the first time here in Mark 3 that they upset even his own family.

[ 18 : 13 ] Did you see that? Look at verse 21 again. Mark 3, 21. When his family heard this, when they heard all that he was doing and the confrontation he was having with the religious leaders, the well-respected religious leaders of society, what did they do?

They set out to restrain him because they said he's out of his mind. Now they know, they must know by now the waves that Jesus is making.

The conflict that he's having with the religious teachers from Jerusalem. You don't want to mess with these guys if you want to maintain your status in society. And so they need to stop him.

Because they want to prevent any further embarrassment for their family. And so they sent out from Nazareth to go and restrain him, to arrest him, to get him back home, to lock him inside until he comes to his senses.

And they put forward a plea of insanity. You know, in a court case, if someone does something wrong and the family or the lawyers want to protect him, often they'll just enter a plea of insanity.

[ 19 : 24 ] He was out of his mind. He didn't know what they're doing. That's what Jesus' family is doing here. They're entering a plea of insanity to try to get him out of trouble. And so they set out to stop him. This is now very interesting what Mark does.

Look in your Bibles, Mark chapter 3. So we read about his family setting out to stop him in verse 21. And then while they're on their way, Mark takes us back to Jesus.

While the family in the background is on their way to arrest him, to restrain him, to take him back home, Mark takes us to this conversation Jesus is having, this confrontation that he's having with the scribes from Jerusalem from verse 22 to 27.

Have a look at it. The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, he's possessed by Beelzebub and he drives out demons by the ruler of demons.

Beelzebub, by the way, was another way for Satan, for the prince of darkness, for the ruler of the evil spiritual realms, evil spiritual forces.

[ 20 : 26 ] And they were blaming, notice they weren't denying that Jesus was powerful. They couldn't. Not even his opponents could deny his power. So what they do is they try to redirect the origin of that power and make it look like he's working for Satan.

His response, verse 23, so he summoned them and spoke to them in parables. He said, how can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man, then he can plunder his house.

You see, what Jesus is saying here is he's warning the Pharisees and all those listening, or the scribes and all those listening, what a dangerous thing it is to oppose him.

He's doing it in a nice way with parables, but at the end of the day that's what he's saying. He's saying, you don't mess with me because of the work I'm doing. And then he explains what he's doing.

[ 21 : 38 ] So after being accused of working for Satan, he says, think about it guys, I'm liberating people from Satan's power. I'm destroying Satan's power over people and over lives and so this cannot originate from Satan, which means, therefore, it must originate from God.

But notice here, when he's answering the Pharisees, the scribes in this way, what's going on? When you step back and you remember his family heading to arrest him and he has this conversation with the scribes.

Jesus saying he is invading Satan's household and he has come to bind Satan while Jesus' own household are on their way to bind him. Do you see the tension now that's being risen in the story? His own family is setting out to oppose him and he's just said to the scribes what a dangerous thing that is. And that's when he drops the bomb in verse 28 and 29 and really shows us what a dangerous thing it is to oppose his work.

Look at what he says. These are some of the most sobering words in Scripture actually. Verse 28 and 29. Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter.

[ 23 : 00 ] But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin. This is often misunderstood and very vital concept Jesus talks about not only here this idea of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit but we see in the context and when we look at he's actually referring to when we look we can do in our Bible studies in the week look at the Old Testament references to grieving the Holy Spirit blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

it basically means to fight against the work of God's Spirit in the world. That's all it means. To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to resist to actively recognize the work of God's Spirit and then be one of those who resist it.

Now what is the work of God's Spirit in the world? Well we know from later in the New Testament from John chapter 15 verse 26 Jesus says when the counselor comes the one I will send to you from the Father the Holy Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father he will testify about me.

That's what Jesus says the primary work of the Holy Spirit is testifying about Jesus. Testifying that God is revealing himself through this person in history.

It's hard to believe it's hard to believe that the God of the universe chooses to reveal himself through a man who walked our planet 2000 years ago and reveals all of himself through this man.

[ 24 : 40 ] It's hard to believe but that's why the Holy Spirit causes us to believe it. Many of most of you here believe that. Why do you believe it? Because of the power of the Holy Spirit has convinced

you to believe not because you worked it out but because of the heavenly power of the Holy Spirit on earth causing people to know and recognize God is revealing himself through Jesus.

To blaspheme that Holy Spirit is to refuse to believe what God reveals in Jesus Christ and it is unforgivable because only through faith in Christ can you be forgiven and so if you refuse to believe in Christ you cut off any hope of forgiveness because Jesus we've already seen is the only one on earth who has power to forgive sins and he made that power possible through his death his atoning death and resurrection and therefore to reject him is to cut off your only chance for forgiveness in this earth of all your sins and that is why to blaspheme the Holy Spirit to reject what God is revealing to you in your life through Christ when you come to church and when you hear this to hear it and then to realize it's true but then to turn around and turn away and ignore it that is that is playing with your eternity it is deadly serious it is it is rejecting what God is doing to reveal himself to you through the Holy Spirit but I do want to also comfort you if you're a Christian and you may be wondering have I blasphemed the Holy Spirit

I want to tell you if you're if you're really a Christian that's impossible because the fact that you believe in Christ proves that you have not committed the unforgivable sin of rejecting him and failing to believe in him and refusing to believe in him because you're a Christian and a Christian is defined as one who has faith in Christ so you couldn't have if you believe now if you truly believe not just say you believe but truly if you examine your own heart and you know that you believe that Christ is the Messiah come from God died for sins rose again coming back then you couldn't have you couldn't have blasphemed the Holy Spirit because only the Holy Spirit can make that known to you what if you're not a Christian though and you're listening here or watching online have you blasphemed the Holy Spirit I don't think so because you're here aren't you you're listening why what brought you here why are you listening you're on a journey towards knowing and believing in Christ so you haven't turned your back on it yet just don't but even though we can know as Christians that we haven't blasphemed the Holy Spirit we must still beware of a more subtle form of this that we see in this passage and it's what

Jesus' family were about to do that's I think the warning that this story is here to give us what were Jesus' family about to do they were about to restrain him they were about to keep him quiet Jesus' family in the story were trying to make him acceptable to society so that he doesn't offend people and that is a slippery slope that ends up often in blaspheming the Holy Spirit and turning your back on what you know about Christ and rejecting him and refusing to believe in him it starts though it starts subtly it starts by being ashamed to talk about the more offensive teachings of Jesus at the workplace and at school and at university like the teachings of sin and judgment oof yeah that people don't like to hear that I'm just I'm going to avoid that and I'm just going to talk about Jesus' love all the time I'm going to avoid some of the more offensive teachings of Jesus that I'm actually secretly ashamed of it starts that way but then you know where that ends up it ends up being ashamed to be associated with Jesus at all that's where it typically will end up and that is a sure path to blaspheming the Holy Spirit and that is why turn a few pages in Mark chapter 8 we're jumping ahead here but

I want you to see what Jesus warns right in the middle of this book of Mark Mark 8 verse 38 you should underline this put an exclamation mark next to it Mark 8 verse 38 for whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with his holy angels that is Jesus warns against being ashamed of him he's warning against the very thing his family are trying to do in this story and shut him up and try to make him acceptable to society that is a slippery slope and this is a warning especially to all of us in today's world that is less and less tolerant of these truths Satan's having a field day he's keeping people in the dark but the church is here so don't despair God has given us the equipment to resist and to keep the invasion going but the pressure is there the pressure is there to keep quiet the pressure is there to be ashamed of Jesus and his teachings especially those who I think are still at school the pressure is immense at university the pressure is immense and so if you are a school people if you are a university student you need to take this warning of Jesus seriously you cannot be ashamed of him because he is the one who has come to liberate this world but to try to shut him up ends up with you turning your back on him completely do not be ashamed of Jesus stand up for him even when no one wants you to that is a serious warning Jesus gives and so in the story go back to Mark 3 it's just as well

[ 30 : 45 ] Jesus' family never got a chance to do that they were saved from making that mistake they never got to restrain Jesus in the end do you notice that look at Mark 3 from verse 31 to 35 this is this is why they never got in his mother and his brothers came and standing outside they sent word to him and called him a crowd was sitting around him and told him look your mother your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you so now they are outside they can't get in but they are calling to Jesus and saying hey you better come with us and then they were going to restrain him and take him home but what does he do verse 33 he replied to them who are my mother and brothers looking at those sitting in a circle around him he said here are my mother and brothers whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother and then he continued teaching them now we need to appreciate what a major insult this was in ancient near eastern culture which was very family bound you do not offend your family you do not offend your elders and so this this was very socially unacceptable what Jesus was doing and it was totally against the culture of the day but he does and he must do it because one of the things

Jesus came to do here and we see it as well in this passage is that he came to redefine who the people of God really are he's been doing a lot of confronting the traditions of the Jews right in the last few passages we've been looking at and last week he redefined what it is to keep the law remember that what the Jewish law actually is and what it means to keep it this passage he's actually redefining who the Jews really are who Israel really is who the people of God really are look back at 3 verse 14 it's very interesting he calls his apostles the leaders of this resistance movement the new people and he calls how many of them 12 that's interesting why 12 well obviously it's a reference to the 12 tribes of Israel he stands on a mountain like Moses stood on the mountain when giving the law to the new nation of Israel in the Old Testament Jesus is quite clearly forming a new Israel here and this new Israel includes a whole lot of people from outside of the old Israel look at verse 8 the people gathering around him from Jerusalem

Edomia beyond the Jordan Edomia and beyond the Jordan more Gentiles lived there and then Tyre and Sidon they were completely Gentile territories people from outside of old Israel were being formed into the new Israel the lines were being completely redrawn as to who the people of God are and Jesus is showing here that the true people of God are not those who want Jesus to fit in with them but those who fit in with him and what he has come to do those are the true people of God on this earth those are the true resistance movement those who sign up and get on board with what he is doing in this world and use the equipment that he has given us to do it and that is not just sitting in church listening to sermons but verse 35 what is it doing the will of God whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother those are the true people of God those who actually sign up and get going and do the things that I have come here to do

Jesus says doing the will of God partnering with others who gather around Jesus no matter how different we might be no matter how much our society tells us don't hang out with people like that they are different to you that doesn't matter because the thing that defines us now is not our race or our nationality but that we are part of the movement of Jesus on earth we are part of the invasion of heaven to earth and we are together becoming actively involved in the work of the church that is the true people of God that is how the Messiah is continuing his invasion of evil's dominion over this world and laying the groundwork for the coming of his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven just like we prayed for him to do earlier are you going to sign up for the resistance let's pray Lord we we thank you that a second invasion has happened Lord we we suffer the effects of the first invasion of sin and darkness and death in this world we suffer it in so many different ways but we thank you that you reveal a second invasion that has happened and is continuing to happen in Christ and his church we pray Lord that you would liberate us continue to liberate us of the power of sin in our lives and Lord help us to be faithful resistance fighters who fight the good fight who use the resources you've given us in your word and in your spirit and who sign up for the fight help us Lord not to be casual observers but to realize that being involved in your work is the most important thing we can do and Lord we do pray may your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven in Jesus name Amen do ■■■■■■ by we're in heaven and others we are going to all in heaven to