

Not Just



Another Story


What is the Kindgom of God?

Luke 17:20-21

²⁰Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

There was no more burning question, especially to the Pharisees, than that concerning the time when the kingdom of God would be called into being by the Messiah. It is, therefore, quite natural that Pharisees, on a day when they were possibly under the impression that Jesus possessed prophetic gifts, should ask Him when, in His opinion, the Messiah would come to establish the kingdom.

The Saviour, however, replies that the sovereign dominion of God does not come in such a manner that one will be able to determine, through accurate observation of signs, the exact time of its coming...



There is a twofold reason for this; in the first place the sovereign dominion of God *has already come* on earth in the person of Jesus as a saving and judging force in the life of the Jewish people – saving in the cases where He is recognised and obeyed as the Messiah, but judging in the lives of those who reject Him. In the second place the final coming of the kingdom will take place so suddenly and unexpectedly that no one will be able to prophesy with any degree of accuracy when the day of His second coming will arrive.

~ Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), 440.

What is the Kingdom of God?



The Kingdom of God
is the rule and reign of
God through the Glad
Submission of the Human
Heart to Jesus Christ

What is the Kingdom of God?



The Kingdom of God
Has an “ALREADY”
component to it

What is the Kingdom of God?



The Kingdom of God
AND, has a “NOT YET”
component

~ S. Paul Treichler

Somewhere, sometime during hockey season

The Son of Man in his day

Luke 17:22-25

²²Then he said to his disciples, “The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³People will tell you, ‘There he is!’ or ‘Here he is!’ Do not go running off after them. ²⁴For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.”






The Surprise of Jesus' "Days"

Luke 17:26-29

²⁶“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.”

Jesus compares the nature of the messianic judgment to the flood in the days of Noah (Gen. 7) and to the days of Lot at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), two great periods of judgment against humanity. Just as they did then, people will engage in the affairs of life with little attention to God. In that day people will eat, drink, marry, and be given in marriage, just as they did up to the day Noah got into the ark and the Flood came. That was the end; life stopped. Similarly in the days of Lot, there was eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building.



But when Lot left Sodom, judgment came, and nothing of the formerly vibrant city was left. Both comparisons picture the absolute finality of God's judgment. The days of the Son of Man will be like those ancient days of judgment. The idea that there is a second chance on the judgment day is a myth as far as the Bible is concerned.

Remember Lot's Wife

Luke 17:30-35

³⁰“It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.

³²Remember Lot's wife! ³³Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. ³⁴I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.”



Romans 1:25

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie,
and worshiped and served created things
rather than the Creator
who is forever praised. Amen.

Where will this happen?

Luke 17:37

³⁷ “Where, Lord?” they asked.

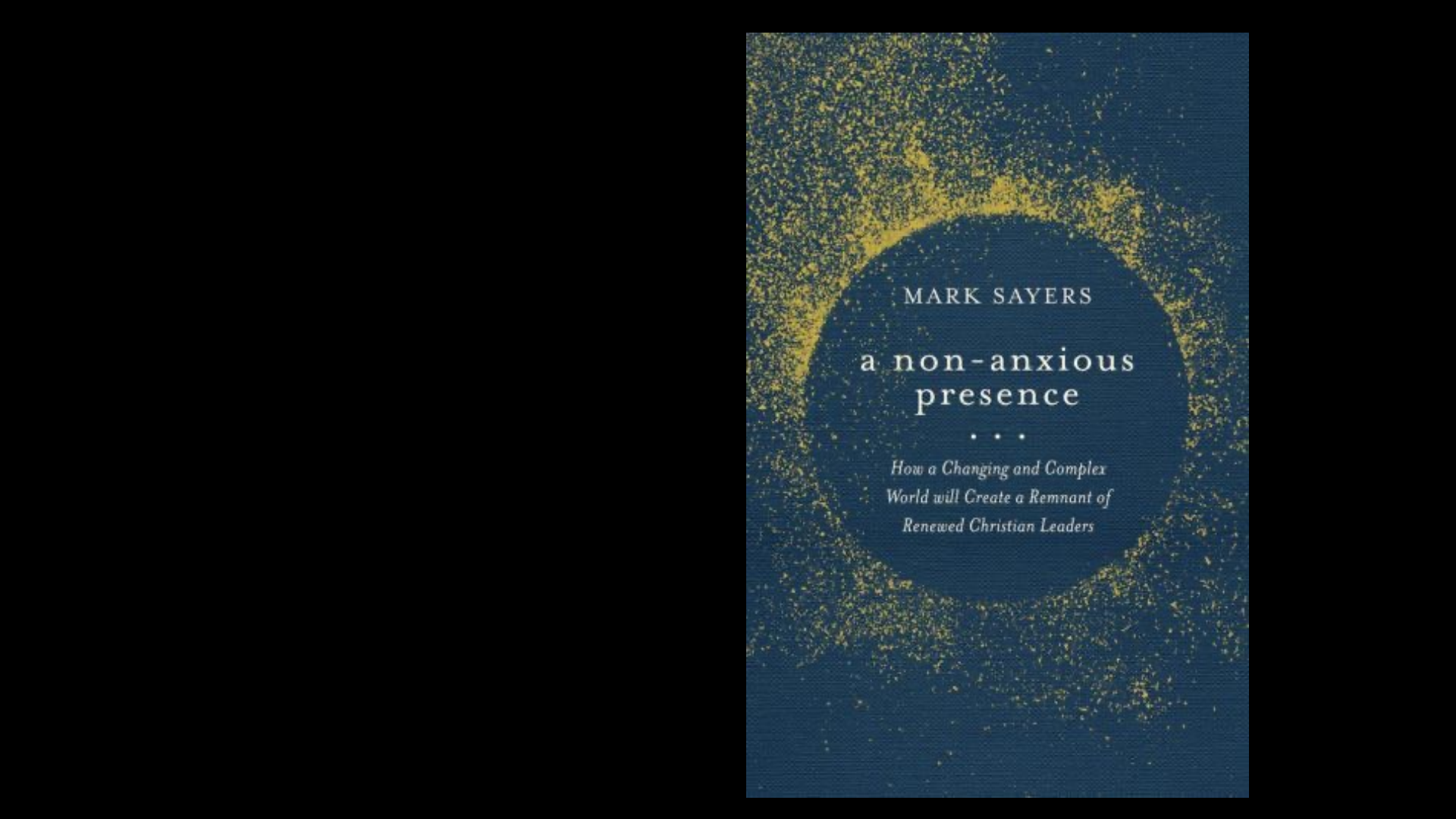
He replied, “Where there is a dead body,
there the vultures will gather.”

Just as the Pharisees had inquired, “When?” so now the disciples inquire, “Where?” — this in spite of Jesus’ instructions in vv 22–24. There he had informed them that the question of venue would be moot since the revelation of the Son of Man at the end will be a manifestly public affair, seen everywhere and by everyone. Jesus’ proverbial reply may be redundant, but, in light of the disciples’ slowness to understand, apparently it is necessarily so. Just as the presence of carrion is indicated by circling vultures, so will his presence at the end be clearly evident.



**If you cling to
your life, you
will lose it, and
if you let your
life go, you will
save it.**

- Luke 17:31-33 NLT -



MARK SAYERS

a non-anxious
presence

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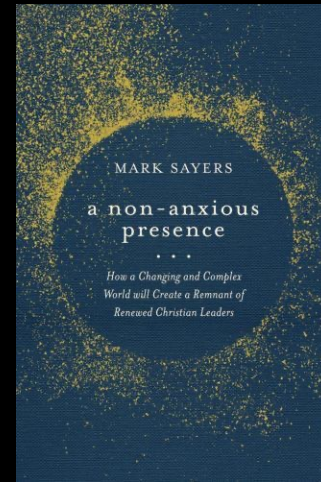
*How a Changing and Complex
World will Create a Remnant of
Renewed Christian Leaders*

THE PASSING ERA

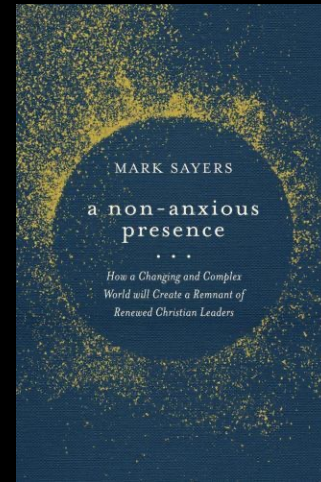
GRAY
ZONE

THE COMING ERA

When anxious and concerned about our safety, stability, and security, we create strongholds. In the ancient world, nomads would band together in tribal groups, gaining protection in numbers. As agriculture brought greater stability and security, settlements eventually grew into cities. Cities enabled the storing of seeds and crops – their walls insurance against the unpredictability of nature.

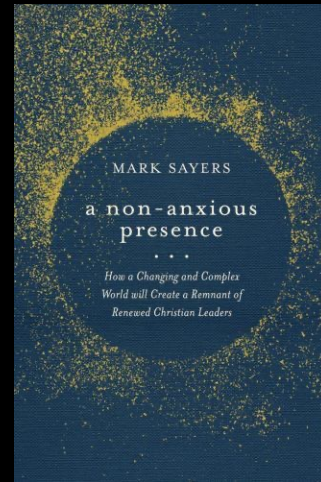


The concentration of people in cities enabled the concentration of knowledge and birthed schools and guilds, which facilitated the development of expertise and technical advancements. The wealth that cities could generate through trade and taxation could raise armies and fund armaments. A city was a zone that humans could control, its walls designed to keep out chaos and evil. The city expanded the possibilities of human power. Cities would band together to form confederations, kingdoms, states, and nations. Each grouping was incrementally increasing the power of humans.



The stronghold is a biblical metaphor. A stronghold is a fortified area with strengthened walls. It can be reinforced by the natural defensive properties of geography, such as hills and high places, that keep the enemy and the evil out. Psalm 18:45 speaks of people trembling with fear as they leave the safety of their strongholds.

~ Mark Sayers, *A Non-Anxious Presence: How a Changing and Complex World Will Create a Remnant of Renewed Christian Leaders* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2022), page 57-59.

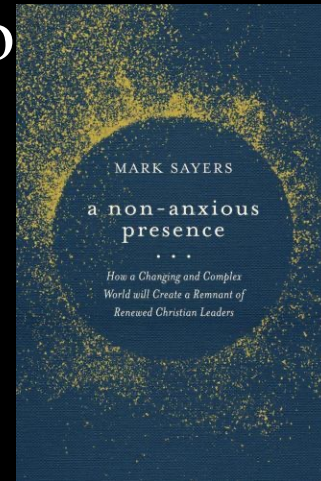


CITY
STRONGHOLD
REFUGE

WILDERNESS
GRAY ZONE
ANXIETY

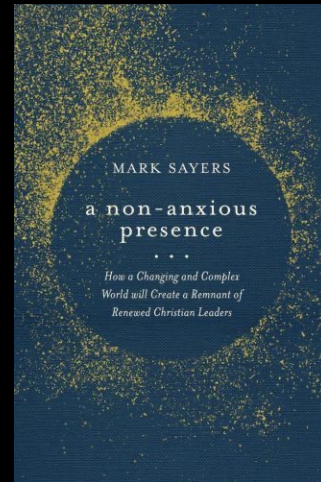
CITY
STRONGHOLD
REFUGE

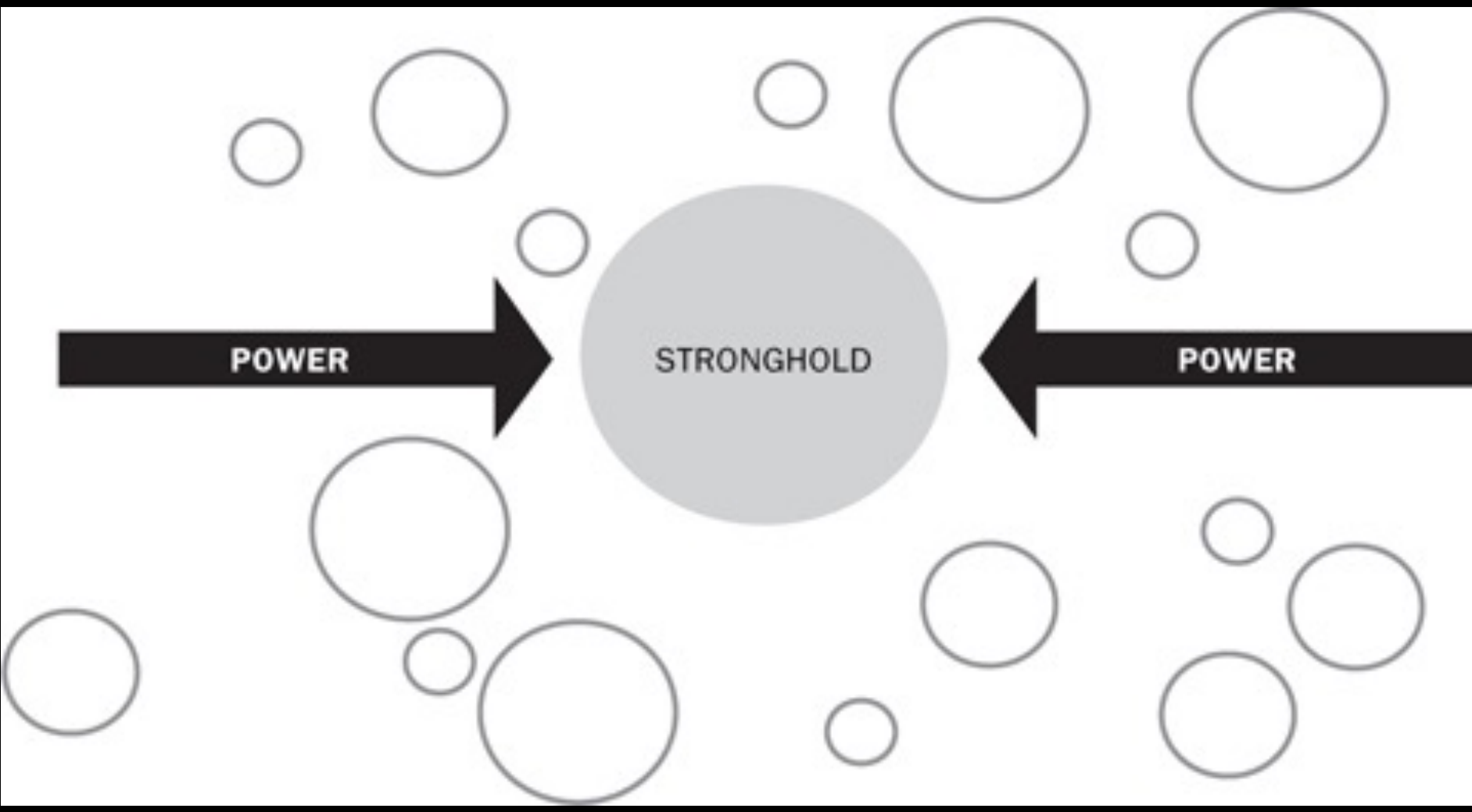
We can trace back to Eden our desire to seek strongholds outside the will of God. The sin of Adam and Eve in the garden was to reject God's way, choosing instead to build their own order. One thing that differentiates humans from God is power. God possesses more power than a human. The serpent's temptation was for Adam and Eve to grow into gaining



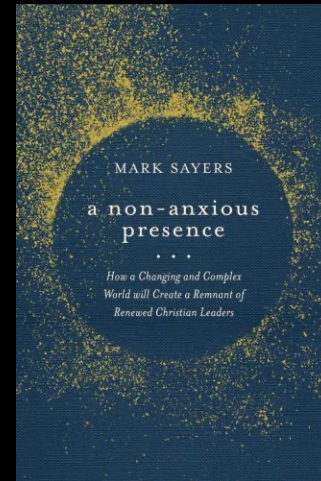
power apart from God. It was, of course, an impossible project. Divine power only flows from God. Yet this temptation remains, hovering before all people, to grow in power apart from God. Thus the wilderness, the in-between places of danger, creates a fear in us beyond the immediate physical fear of being harmed.


~ Mark Sayers, *A Non-Anxious Presence: How a Changing and Complex World Will Create a Remnant of Renewed Christian Leaders* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2022), page 58.



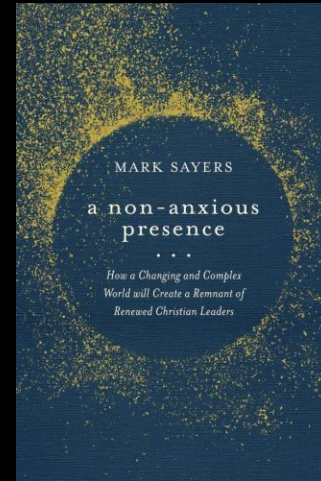


The American century is the unexamined cultural foundation upon which much of our leadership frameworks, strategic assumptions, and measurements of success rest. However, the dream of the American century was interrupted by a series of shocks, beginning with the attacks of 9/11. Next came the global financial crisis, which led to the Arab Spring, and a new kind of global protest movement of dissent against established mainstream powers. This reaction against the elite class of the globalized world reached the West in the rise of the antiestablishment and populist political backlash, epitomized by Brexit






and the election of Donald Trump. The downside of social media and the internet became more apparent. Fake news, misinformation, and trolling became planetary problems. Power was diffusing and decentralizing, moving away from the central strongholds that had shaped culture.



~ Mark Sayers, *A Non-Anxious Presence: How a Changing and Complex World Will Create a Remnant of Renewed Christian Leaders* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2022), page 64-65.



INTERNET

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GLOBALIZATION

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DECENTRALIZATION

AMERICAN-LED
GLOBAL ORDER

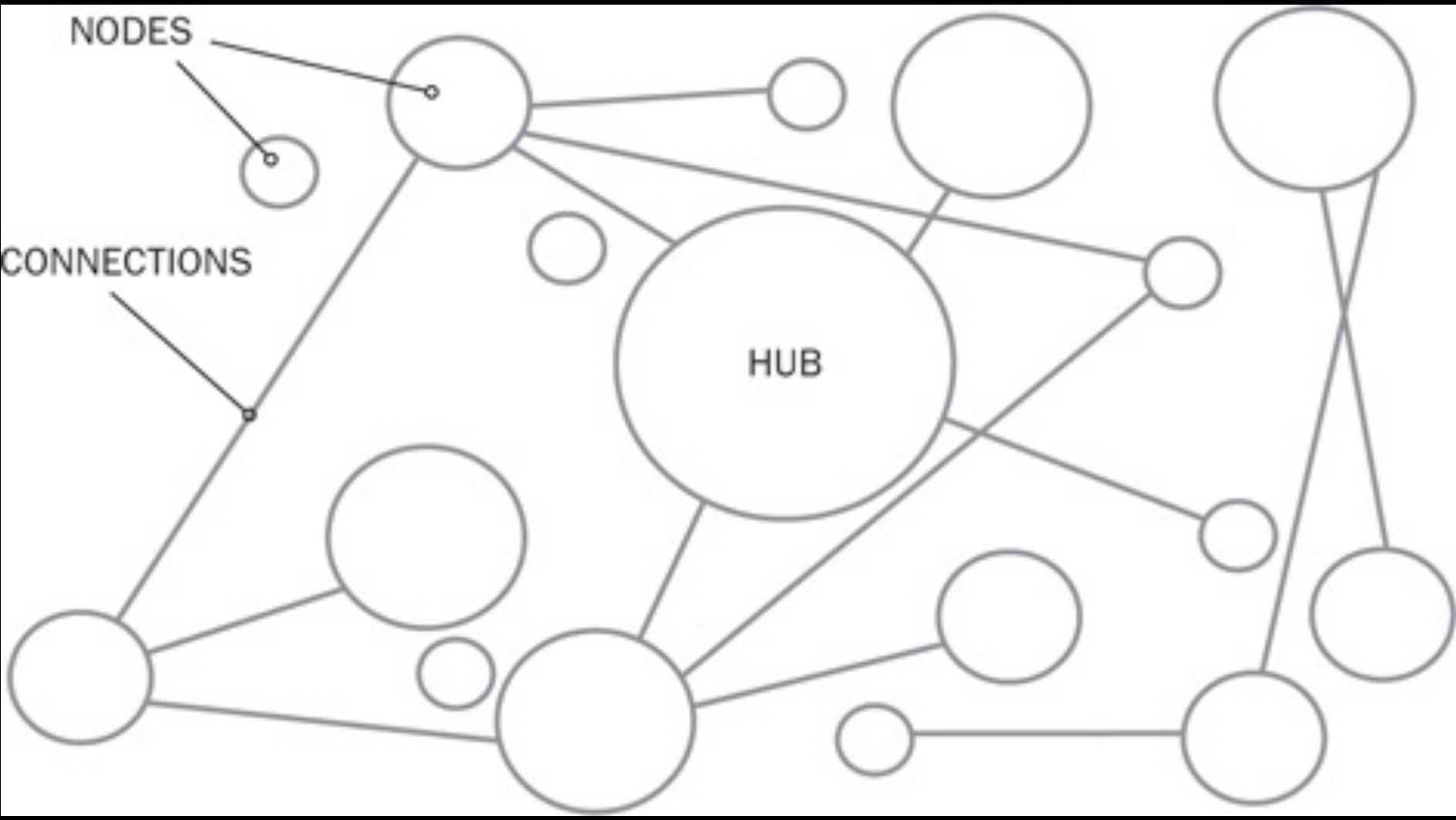
GRAY
ZONE

DECENTRALIZED
WORLD

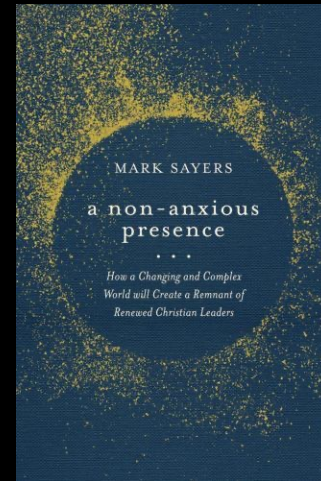
NODES

CONNECTIONS

HUB

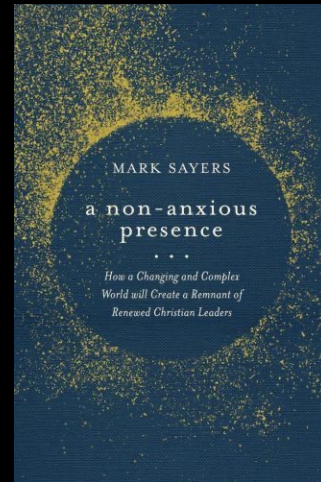


The fruit most valued by the contemporary stronghold of self is comfort. In the contemporary world, feeling good is the expected normative state of being. When one doesn't experience good feelings – if a task is unpleasant, if a relationship goes through a difficult period, if a job is tough – it is taken as a signal that something is wrong, or that something is wrong with you. The absence of good feelings becomes an amber warning light.




This drive to find a place of ease and good feelings is known as a comfort zone. We create a kind of stronghold based on feeling comfortable, at ease, and unchallenged by external distractions, disruptions, and intrusions. Success is maintaining the emotional balance of the comfort zone. However, this approach to life is built on a religious assumption that the stronghold can deliver a type of environment that facilitates a life that feasts on the fruit of comfort.

~ Mark Sayers, *A Non-Anxious Presence: How a Changing and Complex World Will Create a Remnant of Renewed Christian Leaders* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2022), page 107.



Why am I anxious?



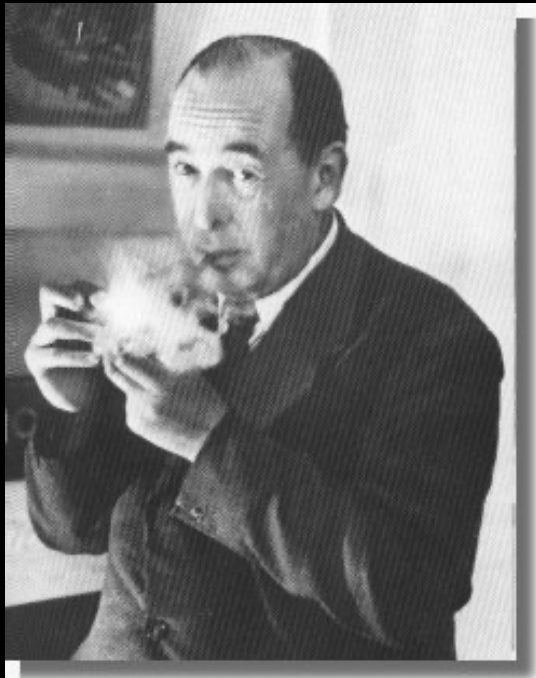
We remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self. Jesus himself entered into this furnace. There he was tempted with the three compulsions of the world: to be relevant ('turn stones into loaves'), to be spectacular ('throw yourself down'), and to be powerful ('I will give you all these kingdoms'). There he affirmed God as the only source of his identity ('You must worship the Lord your God and serve him alone').

~ Henry Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, (New York: Ballentine), pages 13-14.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end submit with ever fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.



— C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Gospel Application

Does following Jesus seem like a chore, or like life?

Is Jesus Christ your stronghold,
your comfort zone of all comfort zones?

