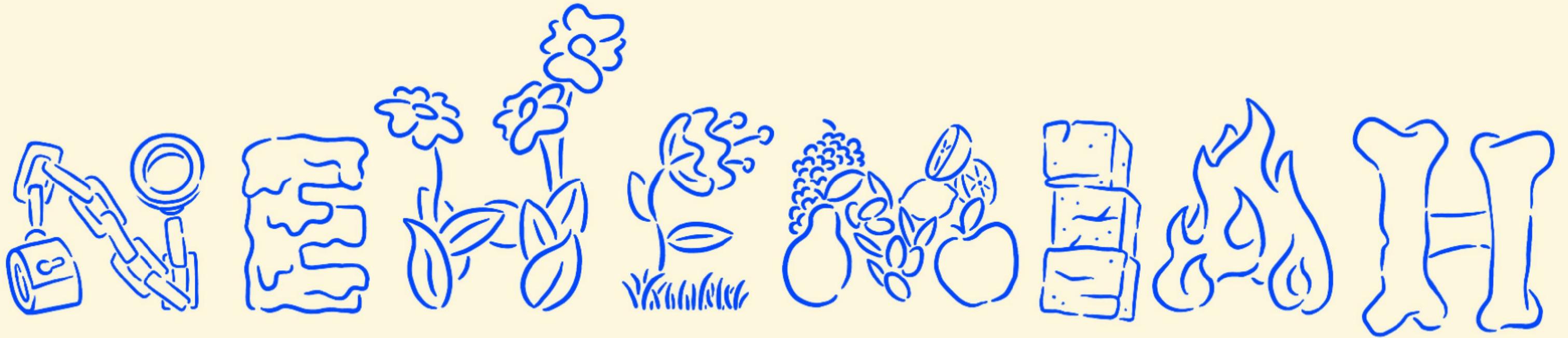
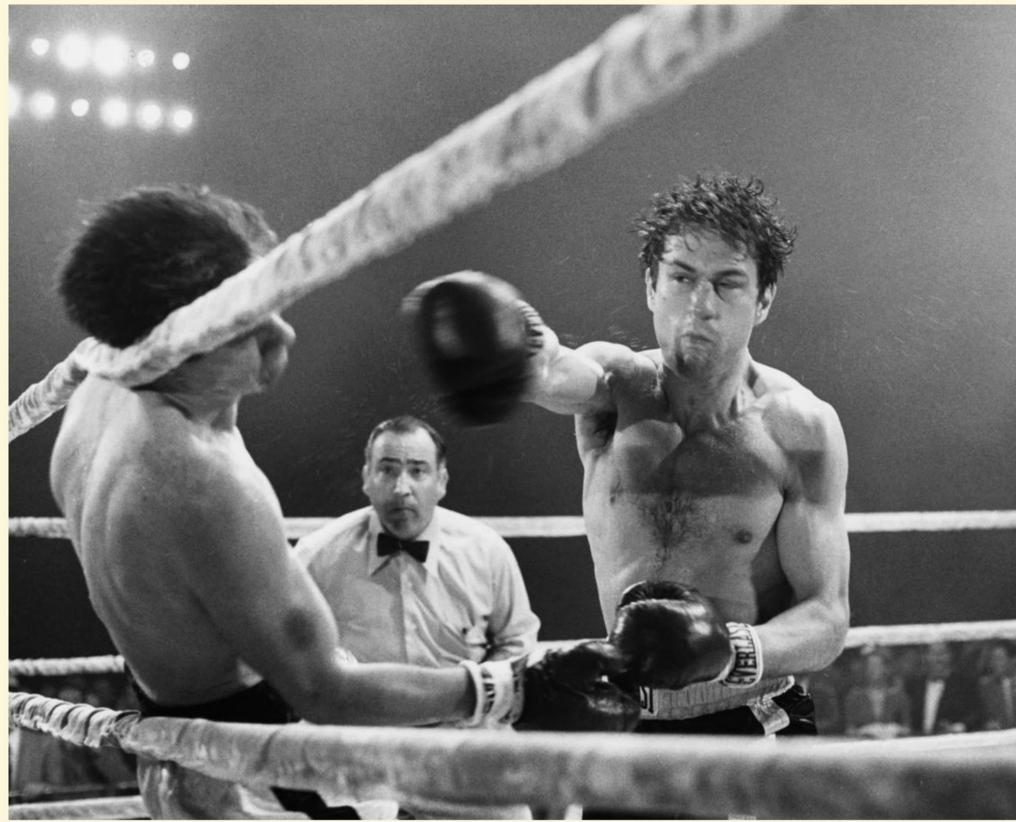




FLOURISHING IN THE MIDST OF OPPOSITION



Scripture Reading
9:36 – 10:1, 10:28 – 39



God gives contractual commitments in formative institutions to make human devotion permanent.

God gives baptism and membership in the church to harness honest spiritual passion.



2 structures of permanence:

1. We make a monument in our mind that is an institution in our hearts.
2. We join an external institution where we can be formed and cooperate.

Culturally, we do not do these, value these and we are opposed to embracing them.



1. Leaders must lead and people respond

**Nehemiah
9:38 – 10:27**

There is no "flat" organization of humans that are going somewhere and doing something constructive. Hierarchy can be reformed and minimized, but not eliminated. We need leaders of integrity and virtuous followers.



2. Everyone must take an oath to godliness



Every serious person must pledge to 100% obedience, especially in the hardest cases.



Nehemiah 10:28 – 29

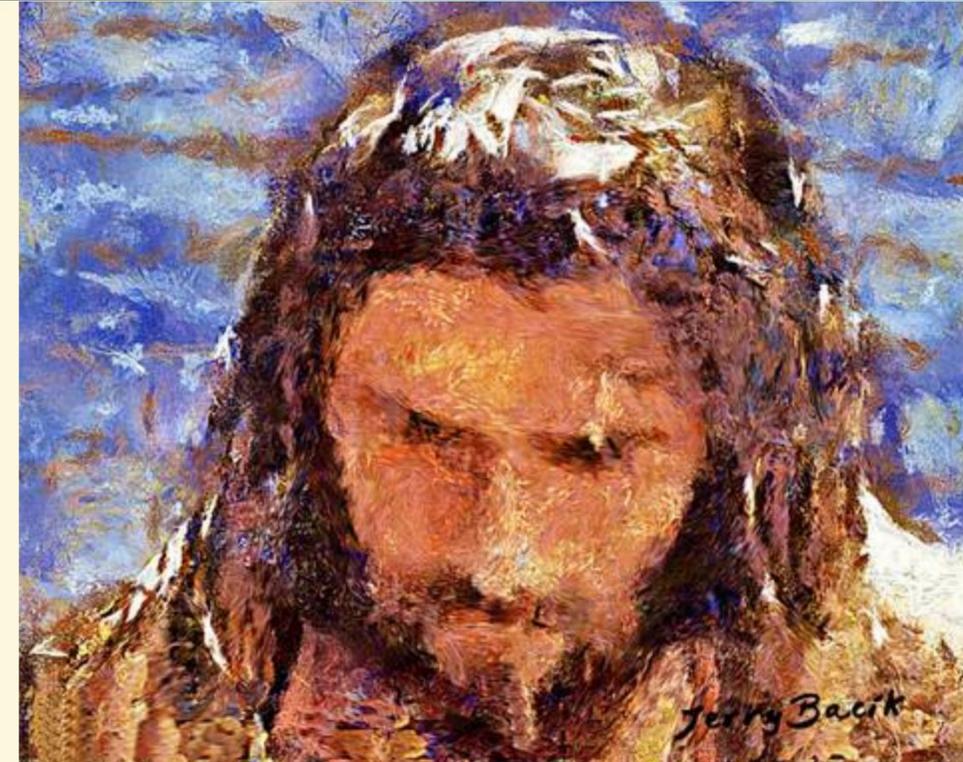
The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand—all these now join their brothers the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord.



Baptism is that present oath

1 Peter 3:21 – 22

...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the *pledge of a good conscience toward God*. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.



Oath in the hard places

Nehemiah 10:30 – 31

We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons. When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts.



Aren't all oaths bad?

James 5:12

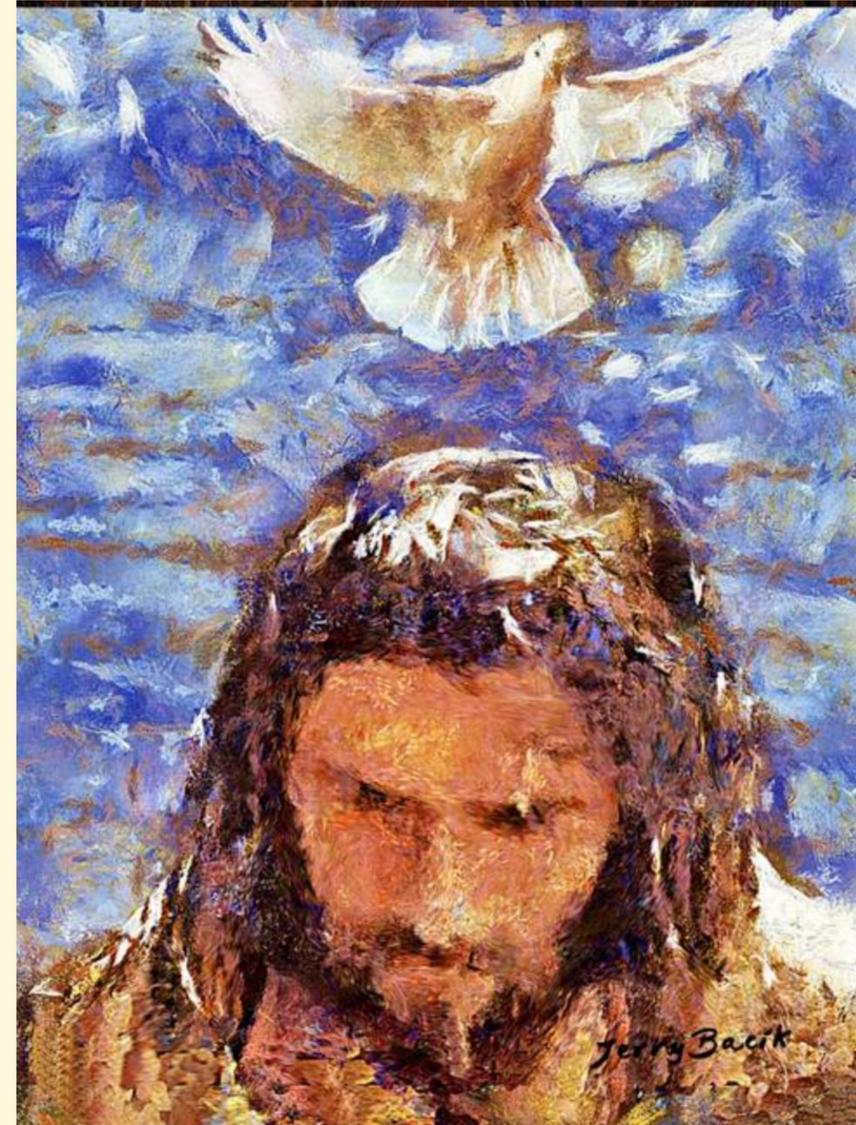
Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.



God's oath is better than ours

Hebrews 7:18 – 28

The Priest
promised to us by
an oath



3. Everyone covenants to make God's institution great

Humans are joined at rallying points and shaped in formational institutions.



Nehemiah 10:32

"We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel each year for the service of the house of our God..."

Nehemiah 10:39d

"We will not neglect the house of our God."



“Let us suppose we are confronted with a desperate thing – say Pimlico. If we think what is really best for Pimlico we shall find the thread of thought leads to the throne of the mystic and the arbitrary. It is not enough for a man to disapprove of Pimlico; in that case he will merely cut his throat or move to Chelsea. Nor, certainly, is it enough for a man to approve of Pimlico; for then it will remain Pimlico, which would be awful. The only way out of it seems to be for somebody to love Pimlico; to love it with a transcendental tie and without any earthly reason. If there arose a man who loved Pimlico, then Pimlico would rise into ivory towers and golden pinnacles... If men loved Pimlico as mothers love children, arbitrarily, because it is theirs, Pimlico in a year or two might be fairer than Florence. Some readers will say that this is mere fantasy. I answer that this is the actual history of mankind. This, as a fact, is how cities did grow great. Go back to the darkest roots of civilization and you will find them knotted round some sacred stone or encircling some sacred well. People first paid honour to a spot and afterwards gained glory for it. Men did not love Rome because she was great. She was great because they had loved her.” - GK Chesterton, Orthodoxy



What is this now?

**A committment to the greatness of the
concrete local church.**

Church Membership—or something very like it.



So what?

Application Primer



Jesus is the great incorruptable leader, oath and priest.

Embrace being human.

You need the oath and institution of Jesus.

Give yourself to make her great.





FLOURISHING IN THE MIDST OF OPPOSITION