

4TH SUNDAY IN LENT

HEBREWS 8:7-13 THE NEW COVENANT

⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸ But God found fault with the people and said:

“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

¹³ *By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.*

True change can only come from within. Every teacher, coach and parent knows that all the external discipline in the world will not at the end of the day assure that an individual will achieve his or her total potential. The student, athlete or child, if there is no internal transformation, will be little more than a shadow of what he could or should be. The driving force cannot be the desire to avoid being caught not doing what they have been taught to do, but rather the desire to do the best possible job of whatever it is they are called to do.

God wants us to live to his glory (to make his true nature known) because we love him, not because we are worried about being caught doing otherwise. In our fallen nature this is not natural to us, so like David, we need to petition God to *create a new heart within us* (Psalm 51).

The great news is that he not only has he promised to do so (Jeremiah 31:31 - 34), but he has offered to send his Holy Spirit to live within us. This is the best of all circumstances; a transformed heart and an eternal internal coach.

Truly create in me a new heart, O God, so that I might come to both know you and love you better. Thank you for the gift of your Spirit and the hope that you have given me through your promise. Help me to depend on your gracious loving kindness for instruction on living every day. Amen.