

An Abundance of Lettuce

Ron Roberts

Years ago I heard a sermon on three rows of lettuce. The text for the lesson was Hebrews 10:22-24. The lettuce was actually "let us". Heb 10:22 **Let us** *draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* 23 **Let us** *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* 24 **And let us** *consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

Since then I have preached on the text and written articles on it as well. You may recognize the passage. It immediately precedes the verse that tells us not to forsake our assembling together. We can *draw near* to God with confidence of our salvation after baptism (*washed with pure water*). This *assurance* comes from our sincere obedience and His faithfulness to fulfill His promises. However, that promise can be lost if we do not *hold fast*. Thus we should be faithful ourselves and encourage (*provoke*) others to do the same. This is often done within the assembly and thus we are commanded to attend.

When I was looking through my files to prepare to teach on Hebrews I came across a lesson book written by John Henry (the preacher at St. Leon, not the steel driving railroad man). In the study John points out a number of phrases that are used repeatedly in the epistle. "Let us" is the first one. He showed that there is an abundance of lettuce and not just three rows.

We begin with four rows that are found in chapter 4. Verses 14 and 16 preview what comes later in chapter 10. We need to *hold fast*. We can *boldly* come to the throne with assurance of our acceptance. Heb 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

Heb 4:16 **Let us** *therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

The earlier verses in chapter 4 deal with the promise of rest. This promise cannot be obtained unless we fear (respect) God and labor in His service. Heb 4:1 **Let us** *therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

Heb 4:11 **Let us** *labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

The harvest is not yet complete. Chapter 5 ends with a call to mature in the faith. We have been in the church for a long enough time that we ought to be teachers. This requirement to grow in faith continues into chapter 6. Heb 6:1 *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*

The writer is not telling us to leave the truth (*principles of the doctrine of Christ*), but rather to mature beyond them. We should not need to be taught the basics again. They should be firmly committed in our minds so we can move on to deeper truths. We should become teachers instead of remaining students.

The next two rows come from chapter 12. The 11th chapter records the faithful acts of many Old Testament heroes. The 12th chapter begins by showing us the baton has been handed off to us in this marathon race. They did not quit the run, and we should not either. Heb 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

We need to cast off anything that would hinder us from running our best race. The race is long, and we are going to need patience to keep going.

The Hebrew epistle is written to Jewish Christians who were contemplating a return to Judaism. The letter shows that Jesus is a better priest, prophet, and sacrifice than what they had in the old system. They have a better covenant, a better tabernacle, and better promises through the Gospel. In 12:28 he references the better kingdom they have entered.

Heb 12:28 *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, **let us** have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:* The admonition is to keep on serving God as a citizen of the kingdom (church) and not to return to the ways of the past.

Finally the Holy Spirit draws a comparison to the Old Testament sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ. Both were done outside of the city. Heb 13:13 **Let us** *go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* As other Jews compelled them to return to the old law and persecuted them if they did not, the Spirit tells them to bear reproach with Jesus on the outside.

The final verse in our list is a great summation of all that has been said. We have a great high priest. Through His sacrifice and our obedience to the Gospel we have entered the kingdom that cannot be shaken. We can be assured of a home in heaven if we will hold fast to our profession. We cannot retreat to our former state whether it be Judaism, a denomination, or the sinful world. Having such a great Savior, a wonderful Father, a glorious Gospel, and an immovable kingdom; we should be inspired to continue in the faith and desire to worship Him.

Heb 13:15 *By him therefore **let us** offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*