

## FIRST LESSON DEUTERONOMY 6:4-12 (THE MSG)

Attention, Israel! God, our God! God the one and only! Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates. When God, your God, ushers you into the land he promised through your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you, you're going to walk into large, bustling cities you didn't build, well-furnished houses you didn't buy, come upon wells you didn't dig, vineyards and olive orchards you didn't plant. When you take it all in and settle down, pleased and content, make sure you don't forget how you got there—God brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

**"WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE" ALL: *Thanks be to God!***

## PSALM 133

(SING RESPONSE TO CANTOR)

HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEAS- | ANT IT IS,  
WHEN KINDRED LIVE TOGETH- | ER IN UNITY!

*It is like fine oil upon the head,  
flowing down up- | on the beard,  
upon the beard of Aaron,  
flowing down upon the collar | of his robe.*

IT IS LIKE THE DEW OF HERMON FLOWING DOWN  
UPON THE | HILLS OF ZION.  
FOR THERE THE LORD HAS COMMANDED  
THE BLESSING: LIFE FOR- | EVERMORE.

## SECOND LESSON EPHESIANS 2:7-222 (THE MSG)

Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing. But don't take any of this for granted. It was only yesterday that you outsiders to God's ways had no idea of any of this, didn't know the first thing about the way God works, hadn't the faintest idea of Christ. You knew nothing of that rich history of God's cov-

enants and promises in Israel, hadn't a clue about what God was doing in the world at large. Now because of Christ—dying that death, shedding that blood—you who were once out of it altogether are in on everything. The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody. Christ brought us together through his death on the cross. The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. Through him we both share the same Spirit and have equal access to the Father. That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home. "WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE"

**ALL: *Thanks be to God!***

## ◆ THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 17:20-23 (THE MSG)

**ALL: *Glory to you , O Lord.***

"I'm praying not only for them  
but also for those who will believe in me  
because of them and their witness about me.  
The goal is for all of them to become  
one heart and mind—  
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,  
So they might be one heart and mind with us.  
Then the world might believe that you,  
in fact, sent me.  
The same glory you gave me, I gave them,  
So they'll be as unified and together as we are—  
I in them and you in me.  
Then they'll be mature in this oneness,  
And give the godless world evidence  
that you've sent me and loved them  
in the same way you've loved me."

**"THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD"**

**ALL: *Praise to you, O Christ.***