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[0:00] You know, as believers, we shouldn't have to be talked into rejoicing, should we? It should be something that is naturally a part of our lives, something that just naturally comes out of us because we have so much to rejoice about, don't we?

Don't we? Thank you. Because that's a truth. It's not really, I shouldn't ask it as a question. It's a statement. We have a lot to rejoice about. I know we have difficulties. You may have financial difficulties.

You may have physical difficulties. You may have family difficulties. You may have all kinds of difficulties in your life. That does not change the fact or have an impact on the fact that you have a lot to rejoice about.

You have the most important things to rejoice about. If you have Jesus Christ in your heart, think of the blessings that come because of that. The blessing of being part of a family, a part of God's family, the blessing of forgiven sins, a blessing of the promise of eternal life in heaven, the blessings of strength and hope and peace and joy and God's presence, the blessing that you'll never be alone, that nothing can separate you from the love of Christ.

I could go on and on. It's a lot of blessings, isn't it? And that is what we have to rejoice about and all those other little blessings that God allows us to have. So I pray as believers that we are just ready to rejoice always.

[1:20] So if you have your Bibles with you this morning, that is not the message, but that is a good message. Take your Bibles out. And we are going to be, once again, we are going through the book of Ephesians.

And so we are in Ephesians chapter 3 this morning. And we are continuing to focus on something that I think God so often would have us to focus on, and that is family.

Not talking about our physical family, although that is a tremendous blessing to have a physical family. Children and siblings and parents and grandparents and cousins, all those things are a tremendous blessing.

But what we are talking about is our spiritual family, the family of God, and what that means in our lives, and the blessing that that is and should be.

And I know Ephesians is a great book because it really, although it doesn't always mention family a lot, it is really all about that spiritual family that God has put us in. So in Ephesians 1, we just talked about the fact that we are a family.

[2:18] And then last week in Ephesians 2, it used one word a lot, and that word was together. Understanding that as a family, we are in this together, that we have shared experiences, that we have a lot in common.

The fact that we were all sinners, and if you have Christ in your heart, guess what? Now you have forgiveness. We have that in common, and that is the most important thing. Now we're going to look in Ephesians chapter 3.

So if you found that, I'm going to ask if you're able, if you would stand as we read God's word together this morning. Ephesians chapter 3, beginning in the first verse.

Ephesians chapter 3, beginning in the first verse.

Jude 7, ending in the first verse. that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel, whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effectual working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent

that now the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church and manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. Wherefore, I desire that you faint not at my tribulations for you which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knee to the

[4 : 26] Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Let's bow our heads as we pray. Lord God, thank You again for this morning that You've given us this opportunity. We are in Your house, we are in Your presence. Lord, there's no doubt of those two things.

Those things are not the question. The question is whether we're going to give You our attention. The question is whether we're going to focus on You and think about our life in You, to think about our relationship with You, to think about the message that You have to share with us from Your Word. And Lord, whenever Your Word is shared, You have a message for us. The question is only if we are ready to receive it and to hear it. And I pray, Lord, that on this day that each one of us has hearts that are tuned into You, that we have a desire to hear Your Word, to focus on it, to allow it into our hearts and minds, and to allow it to change us. So Lord, just work through Your Word in our hearts on this day.

And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. You can be seated this morning. You know, there's a word at the beginning, towards the beginning of this chapter that's used a couple times that I think is important for us, especially if you've accepted Christ, if you're a believer.

It's found, first of all, in verse 3. It says, how that by revelation, that word revelation, revelation. And then it uses it on down again. He talks about, in verse 5, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles.

[6 : 56] What does it mean to have something revealed to you? You're shown something? Made known? Is it something you already knew? You know, for something to be revealed to you, it's something new, something you didn't know before. And Paul, as he's sharing here, is he's saying that God has revealed something to me and also to the other apostles. You know, when I think of a, when you think of that word reveal, in our day and age, there's a couple circumstances or situations that come to mind where you may hear that word. In today's society, it's popular if you're having a baby to do a what?

A gender reveal. What is it? What's that? It's showing whether you're having a boy or girl, a gender reveal. You're having a baby, the parents find out that, hey, it's going to be a boy or it's going to be a girl, and then they reveal that to everybody else at the gender reveal. They're not choosing their gender.

That's a whole other thing. They're saying whether they're having a boy or a girl. Is it exciting for people? Yes. Because it's something they didn't know, right? Would it be exciting if you already knew it? Well, maybe, but not as exciting. When you reveal something, I think of something that's covered up. I like watching sometimes car shows where they restore these old vehicles or the house shows where they remodel a house for people and they don't know what it's going to look like and they have a semi parked in front of it. I forget what show that was. And then they pull the semi away so they can see it.

That's revealing something, right? All of a sudden, they can see something that they didn't know what it was going to be like or they didn't know before. That is having something revealed to you. Do you think God reveals things to you and I today? Absolutely. God's desire is to reveal things to us.

As we read God's Word, God reveals things to us. We can be reading God's Word and sometimes we'll come across the Scripture, oh, I didn't really realize that. I didn't know that. Or sometimes we're in a Bible study, I appreciate this, and somebody will have a comment and you know what? It

can reveal something to me. I can say, oh, I never thought of it that way before. That's new to me. That's having something revealed. And folks, I hope we understand God is in the business of revealing. He wants to reveal His Word to you and I. Do you think God wants us to understand His Word? Yes. So He reveals things to us.

[9 : 40] There's really two R words for Christians that we need to understand. God either reveals things to us or He reminds us of things. Those are the two things that God has a desire to do. Because once something is revealed to us, you know what can happen? We can forget, can't we? In my life, it gets to be a joke because I forget things all the time. This morning, I'm walking around talking with people and I don't know, it's a couple minutes before the service is supposed to start and I happen to glance over there at Chris and Dan in the sound booth and he's like waving my microphone.

And I'm like, oh yeah, I got to put that on. I've only done this for 20, 30 years. I would have forgotten and walked up here without it. I am capable of forgetting everything. Anybody else like that? Do you think God understands that? As us humans, for all of us, we are capable of forgetting things. You know, the simple story that Madison shared, building your house either on the sand or on the rock, that's a simple principle, isn't it? And we may not forget the story, but we may forget that principle in our lives that we need to make sure we're building on Jesus Christ. So God either reveals or He reminds us of things. So anytime you're in church, God has a desire to do one of those two things in your life and they are both important. But Paul, as he's talking here, he says God has revealed something. And what He has revealed, what Paul is talking about is a wonderful thing.

It's found in verse 6. This is what God revealed. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. This is what God revealed. That the Gentiles should be what? Fellow heirs. What does that mean? Fellow heirs of what? Of who? The kingdom of what God has for us. That Gentiles now become a part of it. If you are an heir, that means you're part of that family, right? You're going to receive an inheritance. That's what an heir is. And He's saying Gentiles are now part of this. Do you understand when God first revealed that, how earth-shattering that was? Up to that point, who were God's chosen people? All through the Old Testament, who were God's chosen people? The Jewish people. Who's God's chosen people now? Who's God's family now? Anyone who calls upon the name of Jesus Christ can become part of that family. We better be glad about this. I don't know if any of you are Jewish or not. I don't think so. You can correct me afterwards if you are. But that means all of us are Gentiles. So is this verse important to us? Yes. We become part of fellow heirs, part of the family, and of the same what? Body.

Again, we've been talking in Ephesians about family, and isn't that what this is talking about? We can become part of that one family. That is what Paul was saying was revealed to him.

[13 : 08] Anyone who calls on the name of Jesus Christ can become part of that family, and that means we're family. Who does that include? All of us. Anybody. Everybody. Even people we have a difficult time getting along with? None of you have anybody like that in your life, right?

Are you lying? You know, as we think about the body of Christ, as we think about the fact that we're all part of the same family, we need reminded of that because we are also called to love our family, aren't we? To love the body of Christ. And that means all of it. You know, I think back to the Old Testament where sometimes that was hard for some people. You think of the story, another story that we learned when we're kids, and we've heard a million times the story of Jonah, right? He was a prophet.

God called Jonah, and He wanted him to go where? Give you a little quiz this morning. To Nineveh. To the Ninevites. To tell them to do what? Repent.

Here's the thing. What did Jonah think of the Ninevites? He didn't like them. He hated them. They were the enemy. And God said, no, I want you to go there and call them to repent.

Now, we all know the story. Jonah said, nah, I don't like that idea. I'm going the other way. So he went the other direction. God got his attention with a great fish. Spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. God got to him, didn't He? Changed his mind. So then Jonah goes to the Ninevites like he was supposed to do in the first place, like Madison talked about. He was not wise at the beginning, was he? Because he did not obey God. But in the end, he finally submitted and did. He went to the Ninevites. What was their reaction? They repented. Praise God. Isn't that wonderful? It is, isn't it? What did Jonah think? Jonah didn't like it. He didn't like the fact that they

repented because he didn't like them. Was he following the principles of what we're talking about with family? You know, when someone repents, when someone accepts Jesus Christ, that should erase any animosity we have towards them because they become part of that family that we're a part of. You know, it goes on to share. Look in verse 9, because Paul was talking about the job that God gave him, the mission that God gave him. He was to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. What is the fellowship? A fellowship is a group that comes together. And again, talking that concept of family, Paul said God wanted him to make who part of that? All men. Who does that include? Everybody. What about people that we don't like? Do we still have to share Jesus with them?

[16:15] What if we don't like them? What's that? Too bad Jesus likes them. And here's the concept that we have to come to grips with. I mean, the simple verse John 3.16. Again, I'm not teaching you probably anything new, but I'm reminding you.

For God so loved who? The world. Who does that include? All of them. That he gave his only begotten son, that he sent Jesus Christ to die for their sins. If God loved all the world enough to send Jesus, what should our reaction be to the world? To love it. As much as it may frustrate us, as much as they may... Does the world ever frustrate you? Does the world ever aggravate you? You ever get angry at people in the world?

Be honest. People that have different views than us, we are still called to love them. Do we understand that? What if they're living a life of sin? We're still called to love them?

Why did Jesus send Jonah to the Ninevites? Because they were good people? No, they were sinful. That's why they needed to repent. And God still sent Jonah to them. Folks, we are called to go out into the world, all the world, to share the message of Jesus Christ so that they can become part of the family. Bringing others into the family is part of our job too, isn't it?

You know, I love it when I see... You know, we think about our family here in Arthur. When I see our family grow, I love that. It's exciting. And we grow in a couple different ways. We see new people come in and that is wonderful. We also see people have babies. That's wonderful too. That's all the family growing, isn't it? Does that bring joy to us? It should. It truly should. And that's what this is talking about. Look down then in verses 14 and 15. Paul continues. He says, For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in other words, to God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. One of the things I want us to look at here, it says the whole family is named. Does it say all the individual families are named?

[18:35] It says the whole family. What does that mean? It means there's one family, right? God's family is one family. And I think sometimes we struggle with this because as human beings, we can be very...

I'm trying to think of the word I want to use. Tribal. I'll use that word. You know what that word means, tribal? We like getting in groups, don't we? And usually, what are those groups? What are they usually? Cliques? What kind of cliques do we get into? Are we ever into cliques? People you enjoy being around. What else, Zane? People with similar hobbies and interests. We're good at that. And even as believers, we can kind of get into that tribal mentality that there's us, there's our group, and then there's just these other groups that are out there. You know, we can see this so very clearly. How many denominations are there?

I don't know the answer to that question. You can tell me later if you look it up. I don't know. There's probably a list somewhere. But think about it. How many different denominations are there? There's a lot, aren't there? And I even think about our church here at Arthur. And it has always amazed me, and I praise God for this because we have people from all different backgrounds.

[20:02] I grew up in the Church of the Brethren. My parents grew up in the Church of God. Some of you may have grown up in the Nazarene Church, the Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church, the...what am I missing?

Catholic, Presbyterian, Apostolic, Method...oh, I'm missing a lot. Methodist? Any others? That's at least nine or ten right there. So these are all separate families of God, right?

What does it say here? The whole what? Family. That indicates to me that it's just one family, isn't it?

And I think we need to understand that. So who is a part of that family? What's the definition? How do they join that family? Anybody who does what? It's all about Jesus, isn't it? Jesus is the key, folks. The Bible says so very clearly. Look in Romans chapter 10, verse 9. You can turn there if you want, but it says, if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in your heart that

God raised Him from the dead, finish the verse, you shall be saved. That's the end of that verse, isn't it?

Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus. Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. You shall be saved. When you're saved, does that make you part of the family of God? Yes.

[21 : 40] So folks, here's the thing. Our family is big, isn't it? Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ, that is the key. And anyone who believes that God raised Him from the dead so that we could have forgiveness, folks, if they believe in that, they're part of our family. Are there other things that we may disagree with them on? Yes. Do you think you agree with me on everything in the Bible?

But I'm right. You ought to. If we went through all the Bible, do you think there's some things in here that we could find that we disagree on? That may go like this. And I may think I'm right. And what are you going to think? That you're right. So what do we do with that? Do we get upset with each other?

Do we decide we're not part of the same family? Here's the thing, folks. I believe there's a lot of room for some disagreement in some things that are in God's Word as long as we are part of the family.

And that comes by believing in Jesus Christ, putting your faith and trust in Him, and believing that He lived and died for your sins and rose again. That is the key. That is what makes you part of the family.

And we can disagree on a lot of other things. I know I was talking with someone about this just this week. You know, we can study the book of Revelations. Any of you got that all figured out? We can talk about the rapture and about tribulation and whether it's pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, post-tribulation. You got it all figured out?

[23 : 24] We can even talk about other things. And I've shared this many times. I have a brother-in-law who is a Baptist minister. And we had a lot of discussions on once saved, always saved. There can be disagreements on that, can't there? Folks, what we need to focus on is you need to be saved. That is the most important thing. You need to give your heart to Jesus and then live for Him. That is what it boils down to. And when we do that, we become part of this family of God that it is talking about.

And we are called to love our family. And it should remind us that God's family is far bigger than these four walls. This is a pretty tiny part of the world, isn't it? Isn't it? I mean, everybody would agree that Arthur is a pretty tiny part of the world. I would hope we can all understand that. But folks, the wonderful thing is we are part of something so much larger, God's family.

And I praise God for His family here, but boy, our family extends lots further than here. And I praise God for that. And I hope we understand what a wonderful blessing that is.

And we are to be, the way Paul closes out this chapter, look in verse 17, because again, talking about family, our big job is to love our family. Look in verse 17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that you being rooted and grounded in what? Love. His family is to be rooted and grounded in love. Think of that word rooted. What does that mean? Any of you ever grow anything?

Nobody has? What is important when you're growing something? Water. But where does the water go?

[25 : 23] How do the trees, plants, whatever you're growing, how do they get that water? Roots. The roots are what provides life for the plant, aren't they? Folks, he's saying that we are to be rooted and grounded in love, God's love towards us that we're to share with our family and with the world around us. That's what we're to be rooted in. That gives us life. And he also says not just rooted, but also grounded.

What does it mean to be grounded? You give somebody a compliment, they're a well-grounded person. What does that mean? None of you know? It's not that hard. It means they're steady. They're faithful. They're full of that. They're stable in their life. That's what it means to be well-grounded. And it says we are to be grounded in what? In love. And he's not done. So we're to be rooted and grounded. Look at verse 18.

And that we may be able to comprehend, that means understand, with all saints, with the rest of our family, what is the breadth and length and depth and height of what? What do we measure in here? And to know the love of Christ. We're talking about Christ's love. And it says that we should be able to comprehend or strive to comprehend the size of love. Isn't it what it's talking about?

You ever use a tape measure? Yeah. Use it to measure things, right? I redid our deck last week, and I was doing measurements to how long the boards I needed, the dimensions of it, how wide,

how long, all that kind of stuff, so it would come out right. Here he's talking about that we should comprehend the height, the depth, the breadth, the length of the love of Christ. Have you got that figured out? Takes a big tape measure, doesn't it? Doesn't it? How great is His love towards us? [27 : 35] Huge, isn't it? As we think about the size of the love of Christ, folks, it's massive. You don't have a tape measure big enough to measure. That's the love that Christ has for us.

So what kind of love do you think we're supposed to have for each other, for His family? Same kind of love, isn't it? And then he goes on in verse 19, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. To know it. When you know something, that means you're experiencing it. To experience the love of Christ. I know when you walk in the doors every Sunday or whenever you come through, you'll see some words on the wall out there. Anybody know what it says or do you just put it out of your mind? I think it's still on our bulletin, too. Yeah, it is. All right.

Look at the first page of your bulletin. You know, where the service, order of the service that we sometimes follow is. It has the date up there, right? June 1st. What does it say under that? Knowing and what? Showing Christ's love. That's what this verse is talking about.

That we may be able to know the love of Christ. To know it means we're going to experience it. And if we know it, we're also going to know we're supposed to show it to others, aren't we? It's not something that's meant to be kept to ourselves. Folks, this should be our reaction to our family, the family of God. That we experience Christ's love and then we have a desire to show it to each other. And you know what happens when all that goes the way God wants it to?

The end of verse 19. That you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Do you want to be filled with the fullness of God?

[29 : 28] Then you better think about love. The love that He has towards us and the love we need to show to each other. Because if we're not experiencing Christ's love and then showing it to others, we're not going to be filled with the fullness of God. The Bible says very clearly three words that are powerful. God is love. We want to understand God, we need to understand love. We want to understand God, we need to show that love to others. Folks, our family is a blessing. And I just hope we understand that we need to show each other that kind of love. And not just our family here, but our wider family that's all around us, those that call upon the name of Jesus.

That love should unite us, not divide us, shouldn't it? Amen. And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. My prayer this morning is that we know and show that love and that we are filled with the fullness of God. My prayer is that each week we walk out these doors filled with the fullness of God. And you know what? He'll keep filling us up over and over and over again. That is a wonderful thing about being a believer, about having God in your life. He is a God that has a desire to fill us up. Because sometimes we may start to run a little dry. That ever happen in your life?

You know, we got some beautiful flowers out here and we have some flowers I planted at home and I love looking at the flowers, but you know what you have to do to them once in a while? Water them. I get tired of watering sometimes. I'll fill the watering can, I'll go over and dump it out and what happens?

It gets empty and I have to do what? Fill it up again. That's our lives, isn't it? Here's the thing, we need to be emptying ourselves out. We need to be sharing that love with others.

And as we do that, you know what? God's going to continually fill us up. His supply is unending. Folks, appreciate the spiritual family God has given you and love it the way that God wants us to.

[31 : 48] Let's pray together. Lord God, I thank you again for your word. And Lord, I just pray that in our lives we would strive to live out your word. That we would be reminded that your family is so much bigger than just within the walls here at this church. And Lord, we can have some disagreements on some things in your word, but what is most crucial is that we believe and accept and know that Jesus Christ, that you sent him, that he's a son of God, that he lived life on this earth for us, that he died for us, that he rose for us. And Lord, when we put our trust and faith in that, we can have forgiveness of sins. And Lord, that makes us part of your family. I pray, Lord, that you'd remind us of that and help us to show the love to our family, that you would have a desire that we show each and every day.

So Lord, just continue to work in our hearts. And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. This morning as we close, know that God loves you. Maybe there's some people in your life that you have a hard time loving. Maybe you just don't feel loved. Come and talk to God about it.

Whatever your need, the altar's open this morning. I believe God can do all things. You know, we do practice anointing here in the church. It says in the book of James that if any is sick or if we have physical things going on in our lives, it says call for the elders of the church and anoint them and pray for them and put it in God's hands. And Aubrey has surgery coming up on June 10th, right, Rob? So I just encourage you to be praying for her and her surgery.

And she can know that she has a whole family that's praying for her. So this morning, let's bow our heads as we close in prayer. Lord God, thank you again for your presence in this place. I thank you for the things that you reveal to us, to the things that you remind us of. And Lord, I pray that you just remind us that we have a family around us, a spiritual family that you have blessed us with. And Lord, that we can lean on each other, that we can pray for each other, that we can encourage each other. And Lord, I pray that we would do all those things, but most of all, that we would love each other. So Lord, again, we just thank you for your presence in this place and in our lives. And we thank you for the love that you show towards us. Watch over us as we leave here. And we ask and pray all of these things in the name of Jesus Christ and all God's family together said, Amen. God bless you and have a wonderful week. Don't forget our picnic is next Sunday and I hope you plan on staying after church for it.