

Sermon Series: *Flourishing Fellowship with God: A Study in First John*

Sermon Title: Flourishing fellowship maximizes joy by walking in the light.

Today's Scripture: 1 John 1:1–2:2

Opening: A cloudy day in the Great Smokey Mountains

Need: Walking in the truth leading to love.

Subject: Flourishing fellowship with God

Biblical Idea: John confidently called the church into the joy of fellowship in God's life and light.

Outline:

They testified concerning God's life (1:1-4).

- Author(s) of the Testimony (1:1a–1e, 2b, 3–4)
 - Readers notice right away the use of the first-person plural pronoun “we” in the first four verses, which raises the question about whom is writing this letter. By the year 399, we have three known manuscripts of 1 John: Papyrus 9, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus. Papyrus 9 is a small fragment with text from 1 John 4:11–12, 4–17. Both codices contain a title: (1) in Codex Sinaiticus the title at the beginning is “An Epistle of John A.” At the end of the book, we find “Of/From John A.” In Codex Vaticanus, the title at the beginning and the end is “Of/From John A.” In both cases, the *alpha* (“A”) represents “first.”
 - Since the apostle John is believed to have died by the end of the first century AD (200–300 years before these manuscripts that identify him as the author), how can we be sure that he was the author? And again, why does he write use

the first-person plural “we”? I believe there are strong internal parallels of themes and style between the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John. Therefore, I believe we can say that we are dealing with the same writer in each of these works.

- Karen Jobes has written about the tradition behind authorship of the letters attributed to John: “The earliest ascription of authorship to John comes from Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (d. AD 156), and from Papias, a contemporary of Polycarp, whose writings survive only as quotations in the later writings of Irenaeus and Eusebius. Both Polycarp and Papias lived in the greater vicinity of Ephesus in western Asia Minor, the location to which the apostle John is said to have fled at about the time when the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem (AD 70), taking Mary the mother of Jesus with him. There he presumably lived for the rest of his long life, on into the reign of Trajan, the Roman emperor who ruled the empire from AD 98 to 117. Irenaeus (AD 175-195), bishop of Lyon, was born in Asia Minor and as a child personally knew Polycarp, who is said to have been appointed bishop of Smyrna by eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus. Irenaeus says that John, the disciple of the Lord who was with Jesus in the upper room, wrote the gospel while living in Ephesus (Haer. 3.1.2). Even though such sources are subject to the same historical scrutiny as

other ancient documents, this is a remarkable chain of historical witnesses enjoyed by no other NT book.”¹

- Therefore, the external, internal, and traditional evidence for Johannine authorship is quite strong. So, why does he use “we”? Commentators have suggested several options: (1) While he is the author, he is including the presence of his local companions in the “we,” as we see sometimes in Paul (e.g., Col. 1:3). (2) He could be using the “editorial plural.”² (2) He could be speaking on behalf of the “Twelve” or what we could describe as the apostolic testimony. This is called an “exclusive plural.”³ (2) He could employ “we” as encompassing believers in general or John’s audience specifically. This is called an “inclusive plural.”⁴ However, given the verbs of experience used in the first four verses, I believe that the apostolic testimony of the Twelve makes the most sense here; that is, the exclusive plural carries the weight of the apostolic eyewitness account and testimony of Jesus Christ.
- Another phrase that may contribute to this view is “that which was from the beginning” (1:1). The phrase most directly relates to the first advent of Jesus

¹ Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John* in the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 22.

² Herbert W. Bateman, IV and Aaron C. Peer, *John’s Letters: An Exegetical Guide for Preaching and Teaching* in the Big Greek Idea Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic), 65.

³ Bateman and Peer, *John’s Letters*, 65.

⁴ Bateman and Peer, *John’s Letters*, 65.

Christ. Bateman and Peer have written on this, “How are the first of four relative clauses in verse 1 to be understood? What or to whom is John referring? The referent could be ‘the word’ in the phrase ‘the word of life.’ If this were true, we would expect a masculine pronoun in order to agree with the masculine gender of the ‘the word,’ but each of these pronouns is neuter and not masculine. The reference could also be ‘life’ in the phrase ‘the word of life,’ but in that case we would expect a feminine pronoun for the same reason. It seems the relative clauses refer to the life and career of Jesus as a whole: his person, words, and deeds (cf. Bateman 1, Brown, 154-155). John tells his readers that he witnessed the incarnation and ministry of Jesus. Thus Jesus, who was from the beginning whom our author heard, saw with his own eyes, and even touched, is the one about whom John wants to proclaim.”⁵

- **Experiences** of the Testimony (1:1, 3)
 - ἀκηκόαμεν (1:1, 3)
 - First-person plural – “We have heard”
 - Perfect – John conveys a completed action in the past with a resultant state in the present, with an emphasis here on the completed action.⁶

⁵ Bateman and Peer, *John's Letters*, 64.

⁶ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 573, 77.

- Active – This is a simple active where the subject “performs or experiences the action.”⁷
- Indicative – The Greek mood of reality (not possibility or probability).
- ἐωράκαμεν (1:1, 2, 3)
 - First-person plural – “We have seen/witnessed”
 - Perfect – See above.
 - Active – See above.
 - Indicative – See above.
- ἐθεασάμεθα (1:1)
 - First-person plural – “We took in with our eyes/intently looked upon”
 - Aorist – This verb has a consummative aspect that focuses on the completion and cessation of an action.⁸ John and the Twelve looked upon Jesus Christ with their eyes. This came to an end at his ascension. John’s emphasis on his eyewitness experience established his authority, something that his opponents near the end of the first century could not match.
 - Middle – While in the middle form, the verb is deponent and functions like a simple active.
 - Indicative – See above.

⁷ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 411.

⁸ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 559–60.

- ἐψηλάφησαν (1:1)
 - First-person plural – “We touched/handled”
 - Aorist – This verb has a consummative aspect that focuses on the completion and cessation of an action. John and the Twelve quite literally touched and handled Jesus with their hands. This came to an end at his ascension. John’s emphasis on his eyewitness experience established his authority, something that his opponents near the end of the first century could not match.
 - Active – See above.
 - Indicative – See above.
- ἐφανερώθη (1:2, 2)
 - Third-person singular – “The life was revealed/appeared”
 - Aorist - This verb has a consummative aspect that focuses on the completion and cessation of an action. Jesus was made manifest to the Twelve, and then he ascended. Again, John’s opponents near the end of the first century could not match the revelation experienced by John and the Twelve.
 - Passive – Perhaps, a simple passive here, where the subject (“the life”) receives the action of the verb. It may be implied that there is an agent responsible for the action. In this case, we could understand “God” as revealing “the life,” specifically the Father revealing his Son.
 - Indicative – See above.

- μαρτυροῦμεν (1:2)
 - First-person plural – “We continually bear witness/testify”
 - Present – Bateman and Peer identify this and ἀπαγγέλλομεν as progressive present, which is correct.⁹ If more can be said about the aspect of the verb, then I would consider this a customary present; that is, an activity that is regular and in an ongoing state.
 - Active – See above.
 - Indicative – See above.
- ἀπαγγέλλομεν (1:2, 3)
 - First-person plural – “We continually proclaim/make known publicly/give an account”
 - Present – Like μαρτυροῦμεν, the aspect of the verb conveys something presently and continually in progress. If more can be said about the aspect of the verb, then I would consider this a customary present; that is, an activity that is regular and in an ongoing state.
 - Active – See above.
 - Indicative – See above.
- **Content** of the Testimony (1:1e–2)
 - “concerning the word, who is, life” – “Life” further explains what is meant by “the word.” The next sentence picks up “the life” as its subject.

⁹ Bateman and Peer, *John's Letters*, 69–70.

- “the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life” – Here, “the life” is the subject of the first clause, the object of the second and third clause, and finally, further described as the object of the fourth clause—“the eternal life.”
- “which was with the Father and was made manifest to us” – Here, we certainly hear echoes of the beginning of John’s Gospel. Further, the next time the Father is mentioned in verse 3, so is his Son, Jesus Christ.
- Jobes has written, “On the other hand, 1 John is concerned with the topic of the assurance of eternal life (5:13; see *The Theology of John's Letters*). While John's gospel states that the Word became incarnate, 1 John 1:2 says that the Life appeared, the Life that had been with the Father. What was seen, and heard, and touched is ‘about the Word’ (περί τοῦ λόγου), but then the genitive ‘of Life’ (τῆς ζωῆς) becomes the subject of the next statement, ‘the Life appeared,’ an apparent reference to the incarnation (v. 2). This suggests that the phrase ‘Word of Life’ is a transition intended to bridge the Word of John's prologue with the Life of 1 John, and it can be taken as epexegetical, meaning the “Word who is Life:” This reading echoes Jesus' statement in John's Gospel, ‘I am ... the life’ (John 11:25; 14:6). While some interpreters would cite this difference between the gospel and 1 John as evidence that two authors are at work, using similar terms but meaning something different by them, it is more likely that because of his emphasis on the assurance of eternal life, John wishes

to point to the Word who is eternal Life as the grounds for assurance about eternal life.”¹⁰

- **Purpose** of the Testimony (1:3b–c)

- “so that you too may have fellowship with us” – Fellowship refers a close sharing in life together. A close association and relationship are implied in which there is an attitude of grace and goodness toward those in the fellowship. There are shared interests and beliefs implied. A particular kind of participation is expected from those in the fellowship. I think of fellowship as a progressive deepening of an existing relationship(s). Fellowship is the purpose of John apostolic testimony in his first letter.
- “and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” – Those who receive John’s apostolic and authoritative testimony not only enter a sharing of life with the Twelve eyewitnesses to Jesus Christ but also with the Lord Jesus Christ himself and his Father. The purpose of John’s writing is that readers may enter the fellowship of life with God in Jesus Christ and with the believing community, the church.

- **Goal** of the Testimony (1:4)

- “And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete” – John also made known the clear goal of this fellowship. The result of this fellowship is fulfilled joy. Those who share in this life with the Twelve, with the saints, with

¹⁰ Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 51.

God the Father in his Son Jesus Christ find the key to a joy already available and destined for completion. Compare Philippians 2:2; John 3:29; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 2 John 12. In many of these cases, the verb meaning “to fulfill/complete” is found either as a complementary participle, complementing a verb in the subjunctive mood (e.g., John 16:24; 17:13; 2 John 1:12; 1 John 1:4) , or as a verb in one of the moods of potential or possibility (e.g., Philippians 2:2; John 15:11). In John’s writings, only John the Baptist used the word in an indicative mood (the mood of reality).

- Therefore, the goal of completed joy in 1 John 1:4 is not yet realized by the first readers. It is potential and possible, but it depends upon their reception of John’s message.

They proclaimed the message about God’s light (1:5-2:2).

- The Message of Life in God’s Light (1:5)
 - Other Johannine references to “light”: John 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19, 20, 21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9, 10; 12:35, 36, 46.
 - In sum, John uses light and darkness to create a duality, two ways or two paths of living, which was a common practice in Jewish teaching (see Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 28; “put off/put on” language of Paul in Ephesians 4; *The Didache*, etc). In the verse references above, John refers to light as (1) something in Jesus yet distinguishable from him (1:4), (2) opposite of darkness and more powerful (1:5; 3:19–21; 11:9–10; 12:35–36), (3) something humans can testify to (1:7–8), (4) sometimes indistinguishable from Jesus himself (1:9;

3:19–21; 9:5; 12:46), (5) something that can be given to humans as children or bearers of light (1:9; 5:35), and (6) a special dispensation of time or a kind of space created by Jesus’ advent in the world (11:9–10; 12:35–36).

- “Darkness” in John is descriptive of the world system, of evil, of sin, of unrighteousness, and idolatry. Darkness is passing away because the true light is already shining (1 John 2:8). Like light, darkness is also either a special dispensation of time or a kind of space in which people can walk and live in (2:11). In the light and darkness dualism used by John in his first epistle, one can’t help but think back not only to John 1 but also to Genesis 1, where we read, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day” (Genesis 1:1–5).
- In this verse, John established the dualism that will serve as the frame for his entire epistle. There is a way of light, and there is a way of darkness. Because of his approach, very rarely will he ever speak in ways that admit some kind of gray space. That is not to say that there are not gray spaces in the Christian life and faith (e.g., Acts 15; Romans 14:1–15:13; 1 Corinthians 7–8). However, most of Christian faith and living are matters of light and darkness. John wants

his readers to connect the joy of Christian fellowship with true life, which is found in the light, which he will connect to the truth about Christology, and will verify by a defined Christian love that looks like the cross of our Lord.

- The **Way** of Life in God's Light (1:6–2:2)
 - Trust in Jesus' **cleansing** instead of spiritual duplicity (1:6–7).
 - Notice the structure that repeats three times: “If ... then. (But) if ... then.”
 - Duplicity about the relationship between sin and truth harms the fellowship, but those who walk in the light have Jesus' blood to cleanse them for flourishing fellowship (1:6–7).
 - Trust in Jesus' **character** instead of spiritual deception (1:8–9).
 - Deception about our sinful condition harms fellowship, but those who trust Jesus' character confess sin leading to cleansing for flourishing fellowship (1:8–9).
 - Trust in Jesus' **help** instead of spiritual dishonesty (1:10–2:2).
 - Dishonesty about our sinful behavior harms fellowship, but Jesus' righteousness and **help** cleanses us for flourishing fellowship (1:10–2:2).
 - Key Words:
 - Propitiation (ἱλασμός) carries the ideas of propitiation and expiation; that is, the word can mean to satisfy or appease an angry deity (propitiate). It can also carry the sense of removing

the long train of obstacles preventing relationship and fellowship with the deity. In the Greek Old Testament, the word was used for the mercy seat, the place where blood made atonement for sins. I can refer to that which atones (the blood) and the place where atonement is made (the mercy seat). It is a fascinating and dynamic term that English struggles to communicate. Jesus IS the *ἱλασμός*.

- Advocate (*παράκλητος*) comes from a term only used by John in the NT: John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1. In his Gospel, the term is only applied to the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:1 is the only use of it in reference to Jesus. In its most basic sense, I believe it conveys the idea of a helper, specifically, one called to come alongside and help. The context will determine the kind of help that the helper has been called upon to provide. For example, in John 14:26, the kind of help that the Holy Spirit provides is one of instruction and remembrance. In John 15:26, the Holy Spirit helps bear witness to Jesus Christ after his ascension. However, in 1 John 2:1, where the term is used of Jesus by John, the sense of the help provided does not seem to be related to teaching, remembrance, or witness. Rather, Jesus' role as a *παράκλητος* is related in context to the sin of those in the fellowship. It is also important he is righteous. Also in context, John wrote that it is

Jesus' blood that cleanses believers from all sin and all unrighteousness. Therefore, the kind of help that Jesus provides for those in the fellowship is first that his blood sufficiently helps our sinful condition and behavior, second that he helps in the presence of the Father, and third that he is a righteous helper. Many see legal or lawcourt overtones here, which are conveyed in the translation "advocate." A related term, *παράκλησις*, means "encouragement." Some see this meaning in *παράκλητος* too and have translated it as "comforter" or "counselor." It is important, however, to pay attention to contextual clues to discern the kind of help being given. For John, Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). It is probably most appropriate in 1 John 2:1 to see Jesus' help as both the Lamb and the High Priest of the saints involved in the work of *ἱλασμός* regarding our sins.

- But to whom does this help apply? John wrote, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." Does this mean that all will be saved and that John taught universal salvation for all? John certainly expected some to enter judgment (cf. John 3:19; 5:22, 24, 27, 29; 1 John 4:17; Rev. 14:7; 16:7; 18:10; 19:2). Therefore, he cannot here have meant readers should expect Christ's role as Lamb and High Priest to extend to a universal

salvation for all. We need some vocabulary to help us in a discussion about atonement: universal, unlimited, defined, and limited are a sampling of key words. The real problem is between unlimited and limited atonement.

- Universal means exactly what you'd expect—the atonement of Christ and his blood applied to all people, everywhere, for all time. No one finally and fully enters eternal judgment. Universalists may use a text like Philippians 2:9–11 to make a claim of universal salvation: “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” However, they conveniently abandon context (e.g., Does this also mean that the devil and fallen angels will be redeemed?) and ignore clear texts that speak of eternal judgment, not only for the devil but also for those who reject Christ (cf., 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10).
- Unlimited does not mean universal. “Unlimited” refers to the sufficiency of Christ's blood for the sins of the world. However, in this view, the application and effectiveness of Christ's blood is limited to those who believe. The problem with this view is that Jesus often referred to the Father giving to him an elect people,

chosen beforehand, for whom he would die and make atonement, losing none and keeping all (cf., John 10; 17).

- Definite atonement means that those for whom Christ died are certainly secure.
 - Limited differs from unlimited atonement in that Christ's blood is sufficient and effective for a limited group, those whom the Bible refers to as elect or chosen. Therefore, in this view, there is no gap between sufficiency and effectiveness.
 - As you can imagine, a conversation about the human condition also correlates to this! What is the state of the human will? What effect did the fall have on the will of a human being? Depending upon how one discerns Scripture's answer to this question, may determine how one understands the remedy for the human condition and therefore the nature of the atonement.
- Sample of Commentators:
 - John Wesley on 1 John 2:2: "*And he is the propitiation—The atoning sacrifice by which the wrath of God is appeased. For our sins—Who believe. And not for ours only, but also for the sins*

of the whole world?—Just as wide as sin extends, the propitiation extends also.”¹¹

- John Calvin on 1 John 2:2: “*And not for ours only*. He added this for the sake of amplifying, in order that the faithful might be assured that the expiation made by Christ, extends to all who by faith embrace the gospel. Here a question may be raised, how have the sins of the whole world been expiated? I pass by the dotages of the fanatics, who under this pretense extend salvation to all the reprobate, and therefore to Satan himself. Such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation. They who seek to avoid this absurdity, have said that Christ⁵ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect. This solution has commonly prevailed in the schools. Though then I allow that what has been said is true, yet I deny that it is suitable to this passage; for the design of John was no other than to make this benefit common to the whole Church. Then under the word *all* or *whole*, he does not include the reprobate, but designates those who should believe as well as those who were then scattered through various parts of the world. For then is really made

¹¹John Wesley, [*Wesley's Notes on the Bible*](#), Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1997), paragraph 20564.

evident, as it is meet, the grace of Christ, when it is declared to be the only true salvation of the world.”¹²

- John Phillips on 1 John 2:2: “John adds a further note about the sufficiency of Christ's finished work. The propitiation that is efficient to wipe out all the believer's sins is sufficient to do the same for all: Calvary took care of ‘the sins of the whole world.’ Paul affirms that Christ ‘died for all’ (2 Cor. 5:14-15), that He died for all men without distinction and for all men without exception. Adequate provision has been made at Calvary to cancel all the sins of all the people in all the ages of time. But while the sacrifice of Christ is commensurate with the need of all mankind, it is only effective for the individual when it is accepted by faith.”¹³
- Karen Jobes on 1 John 2:2: “John's further statement that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice, not only for "our" sins, but also for those of the whole "world" (κόσμος), is sometimes used to support the idea of universalism - that is, that everyone in the world will be

¹²John Calvin, [*Calvin's Commentaries \(Complete\)*](#), trans. John King, Accordance electronic ed. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), paragraph 98340.

¹³ John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 43.

saved by Christ's atoning sacrifice, apparently whether they know it or not. But such a thought ignores both the historical context of the book and the particular use of kosmos in the Johannine corpus (cf. John 3:16, which presupposes the death of Jesus and consequent forgiveness of sins). One response to claims of universalism is to argue that Christ's death is sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world, even if only those who actually come to faith in him are saved from their sin. While that may be true, as John Calvin acknowledges, it is not what John is saying here. If here it is a reference to the whole planet, consideration of the historical context in which John wrote makes a more likely interpretation to be the universal scope of Christ's sacrifice in the sense that no one's race, nationality, or any other trait will keep that person from receiving the full benefit of Christ's sacrifice if and when they come to faith. In the ancient world, the gods were parochial and had geographically limited jurisdictions. In the mountains, one sought the favor of the mountain gods; on the sea, of the sea gods. Ancient warfare was waged in the belief that the gods of the opposing nations were fighting as well, and the outcome would be determined by whose god was strongest. Against that kind of pagan mentality, John asserts that the efficacy of Jesus Christ's sacrifice is valid

everywhere, for people everywhere, that is, 'the whole world.'

The Christian gospel knows no geographic, racial, ethnic, national, or cultural boundaries. But "world" in John's writings is often used to refer not to the planet or all its inhabitants, but to the system of fallen human culture, with its values, morals, and ethics as a whole. Lieu explains it as that which is totally opposed to God and all that belongs to him. It is almost always associated with the side of darkness in the Johannine duality, and people are characterized in John's writings as being either "of God" or "of the world" (John 8:23; 15:19; 17:6, 14, 16; 18:36; 1 John 2:16; 4:5). Those who have been born of God are taken out of that spiritual sphere, though not out of the geographical place or physical population that is concurrent with it (John 13:1; 17:15; see "In Depth: The 'World' in John's Letters., at 2:16). Rather than teaching universalism, John here instead announces the exclusivity of the Christian gospel. Since Christ's atonement is efficacious for the "whole world," there is no other form of atonement available to other peoples, cultures, and religions apart from Jesus Christ. As Calvin comments: "Therefore, under the word "all" he does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe and those who were scattered through various regions of the earth. For, as is meet, the grace of Christ is really

made clear when it is declared to be the only salvation of the world.”¹⁴

- Conclusion: We are dealing with the meaning of what John wrote in 1 John 2:2, “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world,” especially the last bit. I think that Jobes helpfully reframes the historical conundrum of what is meant by “the whole world” to arrive in agreement with Calvin’s position. Christ’s work is the exclusive gospel for every person, in every place, for all times who would ever believe. It doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile. This is the only gospel that effects salvation. Jesus is the one and only Savior. This puts Christianity at odds with every other religion, and in John’s day, it put him at odds with his opponents at the turn of the first into the second century. I think it is important to say that while I view limited atonement as the most consistent view encompassing all of what Scripture has to say about the matter, I have many brothers and sisters who would disagree with me and make strong cases for unlimited atonement. The limited or unlimited nature of the atonement is something that Christians have disagreed about for centuries; whereas, universalism has consistently been condemned from the earliest days. For this reason, I personally consider one’s position on the limited or

¹⁴ Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 80.

unlimited nature of the atonement as a secondary issue, largely identified with one's church community or denominational affiliation, which to me means that I can have Christian fellowship with others who hold a different view. There are many questions that surface along with this discussion about missions and evangelism, but we will have to defer those things to another day.

Theological Tension: Sin is always deceptively dark.

Theological Truth: God is light and in him there is no darkness.

Theological Purpose: To enjoy fellowship in God's life.

Make It Personal: Step into the light to experience flourishing fellowship using a M.A.P.

- Make the connection between flourishing fellowship, life, light, joy, and truth.
- Agree with God about the truth of your sinful condition and sinful behaviors.
- Practice your faith in the perfection of Christ's cleansing work and advocacy for you and your salvation.

Closing: Light breaking through the clouds at the top of Clingman's Dome