**Post Tenebras Lux- Follow Christ Even in Suffering.**

**Sermon Notes**

**December 10, 2017**

**Review:**

* Moving into the light of the Word—the need to “know” in order to live.
* Justification by faith alone, not by indulgences or human effort.
* Our faith is in the sufficient work of grace found at the Cross.
* Each of us has direct access to Jesus Christ as our intercessor—priesthood of the believer.
* We must each discover a personal faith in Christ while on this earth as the Bible clearly teaches that salvation cannot be paid for by another on our behalf—purgatory is not a biblical concept.
* The Word of God is our authority and it is our daily guide to knowing the truth and the manner by which we live out that truth.

**Catholic Church Today.**

* The 2nd Vatican Council of 1962-1965 was a game changer.
	+ Mass was allowed to be taught in the common language of the people—which led to Catholic scriptures being more vastly distributed in the common language.
	+ The priest began to face the congregation as he spoke the liturgy.
	+ Opened a direct door to the Protestant Church and acknowledged the Protestant Church as part of the Christian family.
	+ Sought pardon from Protestants for creating separation in the church.
	+ Acknowledged that the Jews were no more responsible for the death of Christ than Christians.
	+ The purpose of Vatican II was to renew the church, re-discover the nature of the church, identify the role of the bishop, and to restore Christian unity.
	+ The desire was to see doctrine be “more penetrating” in it’s effect on mankind.
* Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.
	+ In 1999 the Lutheran Church along with the Catholic Church came together to form and sign a declaration concerning justification by faith.
	+ The key statement is that the churches now share *“a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ.”*
* The Catholic Church today IS a significant voice on behalf of the unborn child.
* The Catholic Church’s teachings on marriage are more steadfast and consistent than much of the Protestant Church.

**Our Relationship to the Catholic Church**.

* We can partner with them in regards to advancing the gospel.
* We do have significant differences by how we teach and participate in a direct relationship with Jesus Christ.
* Things are changing within the Catholic Church as the Word is now being studied in the hands of Catholic parishioners
	+ St. James our local Catholic Church has led Beth Moore Bible Studies and hosted the Alpha Course, both are practices of LEFC.
	+ The youth ministry at St. James had OIKOS as their theme for the 2016-2017 school year.
	+ Their youth pastor leads worship utilizing the same songs we sing.
* God is at work in the Catholic Church as he is among us as Evangelicals. We need to pray for God to continue this transformation in them and us!
* If we want a fresh wind of God’s Spirit in this region that produces a great harvest then we need to pray that the Catholic Church is at the tip of the spear along with those Churches who are crying out to God for such an awakening!

**Persevere Church!**

*#94 “Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death, and hell.”*

*#95 “And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (****Acts 14:22****).”*

**Luther pays the price in isolation! He saw it coming for himself and others.**

**The Cost of Following Jesus. 1 Peter 4:12-16**

* If you put on the name of Christ expect suffering. (12)
* Celebrate that you have suffered for Jesus. (13)
	+ Proud to bear that name! **Acts 5:41**
	+ Excited that you are walking in the steps of Christ.
* Being insulted for Jesus’ name brings blessing. (14)
* Suffering due to mistakes are not to be celebrated. (15)
* If we suffer for his Name, praise God not yourself! (16)
* Paul actually invites Timothy to join him in suffering for Jesus.

**2 Timothy 1:8** *“So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.”*

* Suffering is even seen as a calling for us as a follower of Jesus.

**Philippians 1:29** *“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him…”*

**Prayer for CHURCH.**

1. Pray that the Church will walk according to his Name and to his glory.
2. Pray that the Church will not shrink back from the face of suffering.
	* For the Word to be the authority, even in the face of social rejection.
	* For our spirit to be one of gentleness in respect to those who insult us.
	* For our suffering to bring glory to God by changing lives.
3. Pray for those who are suffering around the world for the name of Jesus.
	* For their perseverance.
	* For their suffering to produce fruit in the lives of those who harm them and are watching their testimony of faith.
4. Pray that the Church will flourish in this region and a harvest will happen!