You are aware of the atrocities inflicted on Christians in the Middle East. Christians are being forced to renounce their faith or die. Men are being beheaded, burned and forced to watch as their women and children become sex slaves. Christian churches are being destroyed in order to remove the abomination of belief in Christ from sight. Entire towns are being purged of Christians; their homes and property seized. Where is the outcry from any part of civilized society?  Why is the world so silent about this outright attack on Christians? It’s not just ISIS and it’s not just a local issue that doesn’t affect us. It’s happening to our brothers and sisters who profess faith in Christ.

We know that here in the United States organizations like the ACLU and the Freedom from Religion foundation are constantly filing law suits to remove religious symbols from public places, prohibit prayer in public gatherings and are constantly on the attack to push Christianity from the public domain. We have companies that are forcing their employees to have no expressions of their faith visible at their work places or on themselves. No visible crosses, bibles, posters with scriptural passages, pictures of anything that involves faith or one’s belief. Unlike our brothers and sisters in the Middle East, we’re not dying for our faith but our expressions of faith are being killed every day. Unlike those in the Middle East who refuse to renounce their faith in Jesus, we do deny Him by our complying with those who tell us to be silent**. I am the good shepherd – my sheep hear my voice.**  How well do we hear the voice of God speaking to us?  If we listen to Christ and hear Him speak to our hearts we know that we’re called to a particular life style. It’s to be a life that’s always centered on Christ and salvation. We can never allow ourselves to get caught up in watering down what we know as truth. We’re to proclaim like Joshua “…as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”  We’re to be like Peter and boldly proclaim that Christ is “the cornerstone” who is being rejected.” We’re to confront those who reject Christ and are forcing us who believe to confine our faith to the inside of a church. Our faith isn’t lived out in churches; it’s lived on the streets where we live and work. It lives in the places we entertain ourselves. It’s lived by serving others and sharing our lives with others. Yet by mandate of law we’re being forced to abandon any open display or from performing any act that is a sign of our faith in Jesus. This is so far from the country our founding fathers sought to build. Their documents show freedom of religion was to be one of the hallmarks of this new country. Not freedom from religion which has become the “separation of church and state” canon. Where we find ourselves in today’s America, is that any expression of faith will be silenced by those who consider Christianity the opium of the mind.

Peter boldly tells unbelievers that “there is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any name under heaven given to us by whom we are to be saved.”  Who is going to tell this simple truth to those outside the walls of our church if we don’t tell them? My sheep hear my voice and follow me Jesus says. What Jesus tells us to do goes beyond our own personal relationship with God. It’s a call to do what He did. We know from scripture and from the teaching of our Church that we’re to love God with all our being– the totality of our being is to be so in love with God it shows. Like young lovers we’re to be so focused on Christ that we don’t care what the world thinks of us. We must begin to push back against those who are pushing a God neutral society. Our response is to let our light shine before all and to support those who are out front in this battle for religious freedom. We’re called to be doers of the word not just believers. We’re called to make disciples of all. We’re gifted to build the Body of Christ into an active and vibrant body that lifts up the name of Jesus. Let’s make sure we acknowledge to all around us “Who we are following.”