STEP OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE
(Some adapted content from various sources)

Is your Christian life TOO COMFORTABLE?

Here’s how you can tell IF YOUR CHRISTIANITY IS TOO COMFORTABLE...

- You don’t attend church with a high level of EXPECTANCY. You EXPECT maybe the preacher will shut up eventually, the final song will be sung, and you will be able to go home.

- You don’t seem CONCERNED about the SPIRITUAL CONDITION of neighbours, family members, or people who you know.

- You haven’t had a spiritual CONVERSATION with a non-Christian in a long time. Some of YOUR FRIENDS don’t even know you GO TO CHURCH.

- The BIBLE seems lifeless to you. You treat God’s word as something you just pick out THE EASY BITS from, THE NICE BITS about God’s love and forgiveness, and IGNORE EVERYTHING about, Sin, Judgment, Holy Living and obeying God’s will and the Leading of the Holy Spirit.

- Your HAPPINESS at a Sunday Service is more important than WHAT IT TAKES to REACH THE UNSAVED. As long as you get the seat you like, and hear the music you like, everything’s fine.

- THE NEEDS OF OTHERS don’t CONCERN you or MOVE you. You do not GIVE to God regularly - He just gets your spare change – after you have done all the things you want to do.

- Your PRAYERS don’t seem to make it past the ceiling. You don’t wait on God.
AND...

- You don’t believe God could do something incredible and amazing and radical in YOUR LIFE at any moment today.

(Adapted)

If that’s true for you, then maybe YOUR CHRISTIANITY IS TOO COMFORTABLE...

I encourage you to STEP OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE.

Don’t be afraid TO DO WHAT’S HARD.

TO DO WHAT’S RIGHT.

Don’t be afraid to do what’s UNCOMFORTABLE.

Be willing to DO THE HARD THING, because it’s THE RIGHT THING to do.

Fear not.
Stand with the right.

Even when it hurts.
Even when everyone else caves in.

Stand with the right.

My message to you is:
Step out of the comfort zone.

Do what’s UNCOMFORTABLE.

Step over the line.
And DO WHAT’S RIGHT.

Get out of THE COMFORT ZONE.

MOSES did that. He stepped out of the comfort zone.
Hebrews 11:24-26  By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

(25) Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

(26) Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

By faith, Moses stepped out of the comfort zone.

He knew it was going to be hard.

He could have stayed back in the comfort of Pharaoh’s house... But he put his faith in the Saviour.

Moses valued doing God’s will more than the comforts of Egypt.

Moses stepped out of the comfort zone.

By faith Moses... He stepped out into the Red sea, and his feet walked across, on dry ground.

Will you be one who steps out of the comfort zone? By faith.

In this church...
There’s a man who the nursing homes ring up at all early hours or late hours of the day. They call him to stand by the bedside of a dying man or woman, and pray.

And he takes the time there to see them through, till they take their journey to another world.

That’s stepping outside of the comfort zone.

I want to urge you to action.

My prayer is that we as a church will get mobilised. That each of us will step out...

I urge you, to make a decision.

To say:

I’m going to revaluate where I’m at. To make a decision.

To say...

- I’m NOT going to fall for the world.
- I’m going to BE A DISCIPLE.
- I’m going to STAND FOR CHRIST.
- I’m going to DECIDE TO DO WHAT’S HARD.
- I’m going to ENDURE HARDNESS as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- I’m going to FIND WAYS TO SERVE God that stretch me.

I was looking lately for someone to run an errand for me to help transport an ageing mum to be able to go and visit her sick daughter in hospital.

Someone who was willing to put themselves out, and give of their time, unselfishly, to help a stranger.

I was glad when some said they would help. They said: I can help.
Someone was willing to step outside of the comfort zone.

There’s women here today who step outside of the comfort zone, every week, as they GIVE OF THEIR TIME, to teach English as a Second Language.

It’s something that is new for them to do.

They have been telling me that it’s been challenging for them to do this.

Now God is using them to reach and bless others – because they are stepping out in faith.

As a preacher, also, I myself need to make sure that I am not staying in the comfort zone.

Now, more than ever, we need faithful, authoritative preaching that stands strong against falsehoods.

I need to deliver what people DON’T want to hear, in faith, and in love, with courage.

It’s not always comfortable for me.

Not always easy...

What about us?

Do we care more about what others think than about pleasing God?

The Lord takes us, at times, into hard and painful places.

Let us watch unto prayer.

I urge you, to move out of the comfort zone... And... instead... Move into THE CROSS ZONE.

We are in good company, there. The king of the universe is there.

His old rugged cross is there.
And our Saviour calls us there...

He calls you to your cross...

Luke 9:23  And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

He’s saying: Make a SACRIFICE.
- Be willing to take some weight.
- Be willing to identify with Christ, no matter the cost.

Let’s not get comfortable, in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong crowd.

LEAVE THE COMFORT ZONE, and ENTER THE CROSS ZONE.

Don’t be afraid to TAKE UP YOUR CROSS.
- It won’t be comfortable.
- But blessing is there.

The Lord Jesus, Himself, stepped out of the comfort zone.

Think of this...

He left THE DAZZLING WONDERS OF HEAVEN. He laid down HIS RICH, ROYAL ROBE on HIS GLORIOUS THRONE ON HIGH.

And He stepped down, to become a man...

Philippians 2:6-8  Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
(7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

All this He bore willingly, freely, for us. He took the place of a servant for God’s plan and purpose...

He stepped out of glory.
And into human skin.
He wrapped up himself in flesh.

He stepped down from the royal throne of His majesty.

He was willing to surrender His life here in this world so that we could know His saving love...

If our Lord was willing to go through all of this for US, what should we be willing to do for Him?

Jesus didn’t take THE EASY ROUTE.

Jesus did not set out TO WIN A POPULARITY CONTEST.

(8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He was betrayed, forsaken, and He suffered abuse, and hurt.

His body was wracked, with excruciating pain. He was spat upon, and harshly beaten by wicked men.
He stood up to the false teachers of His day. He cleared the temple.

He held the religious leaders of His day accountable for their actions.

He shook the establishment of His day...

"This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Our Lord left the comforts, and He took the cross.

He set His face as a flint, towards Jerusalem, knowing what was waiting for Him there.

Our Lord Jesus reached out to people who society rejected.

He was willing to touch people with terrible diseases, to reach the sinful.

The Lord Jesus went the way that was not easy...

There was a time He took the road less travelled.

It says, **John 4:4 And he must needs go through Samaria.**

The Samaritans were hated. People would go out of their way to avoid them. But Jesus went out of His way to reach them.

He chose THE ROAD THROUGH SAMARIA...

- He had a mission in mind
- He was willing to go where no one else would
- People there needed His message.

Our Lord was willing to go out of the comfort zone, to minister to a woman who was in desperate need of new life.
The woman at the well.
And she found new life in Christ.

Many times WE don’t like to step out of THE COMFORT ZONE...
- We make excuses
- We avoid it at all costs.

Will we be willing and available?

I was asking last week if someone could help me find a place for a woman and her two children who were in crisis. And a woman from this church said, I can help. She was willing to step outside of her comfort zone.

There was a time back someone in our church had an impossible financial need. Someone reached into their pocket and gave them a generous gift. They did something that was uncomfortable. They wanted to be a blessing.

We can stay where we are, all nice and comfortable, and we can miss out on God’s blessing.

It may be uncomfortable.

In the Bible God asked some people to move.

**ABRAM** was told: Go to a land I will show you.

God moved Adam and Bethany from the US to this land. It would have been uncomfortable. But God has used them to bless many already in this land.

Another Bible example is **PHILIP**... In Acts 8. The Spirit of God took Philip out to the desert place.
Philip was doing just fine, and God was blessing him where he was.

But God moved him on.

God took Philip to a place that he may not have chosen for himself.

God took Philip out to a desert place... to an Ethiopian eunuch, riding in a chariot.

Philip sensed the Spirit tell him to run up to this chariot. It ended up that Philip shared Christ with the man, and he came to faith in Christ.

Sometimes God calls us to walk the desert road...

A road which is unfamiliar, something challenging, maybe even hostile?

Our Lord said we should expect trouble for being Christians. Yet He has promised us, He will never leave us or forsake us.

God sometimes leads us to the desert, because He has something for us to do there, someone to reach, some way we need to grow spiritually – and grow our character.

He takes us to where we need to trust God more.

God has a plan for us, even in our wilderness times.

God wants us to listen to Him, to be led by Him.

Follow the Spirit – even if God takes you to a desert road.

Be led by the Lord, as He prompts you to do something, to go somewhere, to talk to someone...
The workers are few.

We need to GET TO WORK...
- It might mean stepping outside the comfort zone
- It might mean TAKING A RISK.

To step out of the comfort zone means...
Step outside the walls.

Someone was saying this to me lately.

We have to get outside the walls.

He was sharing with me how it takes a certain courage to go witnessing, doorknocking, talking to people about Jesus. He’s right. It’s about leaving the comfort zone.

We have been sent here on a rescue mission.

It would be EASIER to STAY IN THE COMFORT ZONE.

But we have a mission to accomplish.

What IS the comfort zone?

Really, THE COMFORT ZONE is like...
A BIRD CAGE...

As one Christian writer has described it, "God who made the birds never made bird cages. It's men who make bird cages and after a while we become cramped and can do nothing but chirp and stand on one leg." --Oswald Chambers
Stepping outside of our comfort zone, as we step outside where it’s all comfy and familiar, and do something new and different. It can make us feel nervous.

But really, only then, when we leave the bird cage, are we truly free.

If we stay in the comfort zone it will keep us from learning and experiencing things that are good for us, from doing God’s will.

Staying in our comfort zone can hold us back from God’s best.

STEP OUT...
- It takes faith
- Step out of the comfort zone and serve God.

When the Lord Jesus stepped into people’s lives He challenged them to step out of the comfort zone.

He asked the disciples to leave everything behind, everything that had made them who they were up to that specific moment.

Peter and James and John...

Matthew 4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

It was a leap of faith.
To trust in God.

When Christ calls on us to step outside our comfort zone, He is asking us to trust Him.

Trust Him, and do something scary for the kingdom of God.
I was at a training class last week and we each had to give a talk. I challenged the group, we have to make a choice – either to receive or reject Jesus Christ. By virtue of not receiving Him we are rejecting Him. It was scary. It was outside of my comfort zone. It was hard. But it was the right thing to do.

Aim to be a witness to everyone in your circle of acquaintance. Your workmates.

Dedicate your Facebook page to the glory of God. So you won’t post anything questionable on it, but that it would all be to the glory of God.

Determine that you will do the hard thing if it is the right thing.

- Make it right if you owe someone money
- Make an apology
- Seek to give and receive forgiveness
- Love your enemies...

These are hard things to do, but the right things...

DO WHAT’S DIFFICULT...
- Reject the lies
- Speak the truth in love.

- Stand against false doctrine
- Speak up, against sin
- Speak up, be a witness, in faith
- Resist temptation.

DO WHAT’S DIFFICULT, because it is THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

I pray that we would be men and women of faith, who have stepped over the line.
Women, when you go the shop to choose a dress you will think about how modest the dress is. You will make your decisions about what you will wear based on giving the glory to God.

Men, you won’t go and buy that alcohol that is damaging you and hurts your family. You won’t waste your money on it.

Young person, you won’t hang around the crowd that is dragging you away from following God.

You will cross the line.

You will be unashamed to stand for the right.

You won’t be deterred. You WON’T HOLD BACK.

It takes faith, to step outside the comfort zone, as you...
- Maximise your life for God
- As you dedicate your every heartbeat to the glory of God.

And watch out you don’t slip back...

**Twelve spies were sent into Canaan land.**

This was the land God had promised His people...

Ten of the men said:
- There’s giants in the land.
- They live in fortified cities.
- The giants are everywhere.
- We are not able...

And most of the people responded in FEAR.

They feared that the giants were JUST TOO BIG for them to face.
Numbers 14:1-4  And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

(2) And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them,

Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

(3) And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

(4) And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.
(4) And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

If it had been a democracy Moses would have got the sack. His popularity rating was pretty low.

Let us return to Egypt, they said.

Let’s go back to where it was more comfortable. We’d rather be slaves for Pharaoh...

BUT Joshua and Caleb brought a good report.

They said, Don’t be afraid of them!

They urged the people to follow God, to trust God and step outside of their comfort zone.

Yes, there ARE giants out there! Yes, we all face GIANTS.

Giants of unbelief.

There are people in our lives who will not turn to God.

There are problems way bigger than we are.

The people felt defeated – before they had even started.

Sure, Joshua and Caleb knew that there were some pretty fierce giants to face, if they obeyed God and crossed the Jordan River.

But they had their eyes on God rather than on their problems.

They knew surely they could trust the Lord to be faithful to His Word.
Numbers 13:30  And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said,

Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

The two faithful spies looked at what lay ahead from the perspective of who God was.

Their God was the one who had triumphed over Egypt, over Pharaoh, and over their false gods...

Joshua and Caleb knew that God was calling them out of the comfort zone and had prepared the way for them. God is calling you out of your comfort zone, to come and follow Him.

We are called by God to step outside our comfort zone, to leave some things. He calls us to take on some new assignments.

He has work for us to do.

If we are in the will of God, the Lord will be with us, to guide our steps.

The Lord Jesus calls us to step outside our comfort zone, to bring our fears, our hurts, and our sins before Him.

Some people want to go back to the comfort zone... To return to Egypt... It’s a recurring theme... It has a magnetic pull.

It’s real easy to settle for a Christianity that doesn’t make too many demands, that keeps you warm and comfy.

Some people like just coasting along.

They are just cool and casual.
They like their Christianity lite. Just light and breezy.

They don’t want to take the hard road. They want the easy road.

They want to turn back to Egypt...

They are like the murmurers in Moses’ camp, when they found the way too hard going...

Numbers 21:4-5 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

(5) And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

The Israelites grumbled against God. They missed the comfort zone of Egypt.

They got hungry for the garlic of Egypt. They hungered after the Pharaoh’s herbs and spices.
They hankered after the smell, the flavours of Egypt.

A lot of people are like that.

They are stuck in the comfort zone.

When the going gets tough, they get going, backwards.

**I say to you, take the hard road.**

STEP OVER THE LINE…

- Be led by the Spirit
- Rely on God
- Get going for God
- Get busy for God.

**STRETCH YOURSELF, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**

- Determine to be full-on for God
- Pull out all the stops

- No half measures.

Leave the comfort zone – and get mobilised.

A young girl talked with her pastor.

"I cannot stick it out any longer. I am the only Christian in the factory where I work. I get nothing but taunts and sneers. It is more than I can stand. I am going to resign."

"Will you tell me," asked the preacher, "where lights are placed?"

"What has that to do with it?" the young Christian asked him rather bluntly.

"Never mind," the preacher replied.
"Answer my question: ‘Where are lights placed?’"

"I suppose in dark places," she replied.

"Yes, and that is why you have been put in that factory where there is such spiritual darkness and where there is no other Christian to shine for the Lord."

The young Christian realised for the first time the opportunity that was hers. She felt she could not fail God by allowing her light to go out.

She went back to the factory with renewed determination to let her light shine in that dark corner.

Before long, she was the means of leading nine other girls to the Light.

Many believers today find it very UNCOMFORTABLE to step out for God and witness!

Just the thought of talking about sharing their faith with their neighbour makes some people uncomfortable.

Let’s move out of our comfort zone and share the Gospel.

- We need to be willing to GO TO PLACES that are uncomfortable for us.

- We need to be willing to TALK TO PEOPLE that make us uncomfortable.

- We need to be willing to DO THINGS that make us uncomfortable.

We sometimes need to simply trust God, and do what is uncomfortable.
▪ We need to be willing to SAY THINGS that make us uncomfortable.

But when we are willing to come out of our comfort zones and be used by the Holy Spirit, souls are saved, lives are changed, and eternity's are altered.

NEHEMIAH was in his comfort zone.

He had a great job – some would have seen it as the best job in the kingdom short of being the king.

Nehemiah was the king’s cup bearer.

He had access to the king and he was in the king’s court all the time.

Things were quite comfortable for him.

But GOD CALLED HIM OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE.

God gave Nehemiah a CONCERN for his people.

Nehemiah heard how the wall of Jerusalem had been torn down, and the gates had been destroyed by fire.

NEHEMIAH SAT DOWN AND WEPT...
▪ His community was in trouble.
▪ He knew that something must be done.
▪ And it had to start with him.

How is our spiritual progress?

There are things we need to be CONCERNED about.

We need to be concerned about our community; about the lost.

When the Lord gives us a genuine concern for people it leads us to step out of our comfort zone and do something.

Nehemiah SOUGHT GOD, and TOOK ACTION.
Nehemiah saw that something needed to be done and he decided to get up and do something about it.

Paul also stepped outside the comfort zone...

It was uncomfortable to be... shipwrecked, stoned, beaten, imprisoned, left for dead... Yet God has a purpose for Paul.

Paul was willing to serve God NO matter where it took him and no matter what it cost him...

God has NOT called us to be comfortable...

Let’s get out of our comfort zone.
- We have been called to serve as witnesses for the Lord Jesus in our daily lives.
- Called to serve as a witness at our job.
- Called to serve as a witness in our schools or our communities...

Many believers are NOT willing to be a witness...

God is calling you to step out and trust Him.

It is TIME TO LEAVE OUR COMFORT ZONE!

The blessings are there... outside of Your Comfort Zone...

As someone has said, "God places many of his blessings outside of our comfort zones, then asks us to come get them." --Kent Crockett.

Getting out of the comfort zone is like jumping into a Swimming Pool...
Whenever we first break through a comfort zone, we will probably feel uncomfortable at first.

But not long after we make the change, we experience a new-found freedom on the other side. And we wonder why we didn't break through sooner.

You have probably been to a swimming pool where people in the water are having a great time. Someone yells, "Come on in. The water's fine."

You put your toe in the pool, then shrink back, thinking the water is too cold. But as you stand by yourself, you notice how much fun the people are having. So you decide to join them and dive into the pool.

For a few seconds the water is cold, but then it quickly begins to feel refreshing. You spend the rest of the day in the swimming pool, not even thinking about the few uncomfortable seconds when you first jumped in.

You broke through a comfort zone. It was uncomfortable at first, but you found freedom and enjoyment on the other side. (Kent Crockett)

It is easy to get comfortable. And stay there.

- We can limit God.
- We can stay in the comfort zone, and fail to accomplish the whole mission the Lord has given us.
- We can get so wrapped up in our own good activities, church, family, sports, Bible studies, and useful things, and yet we can forget the mission, to make disciples, or to help others know and follow Jesus.

God’s mission is more important than our comfort.
Sometimes we need to get uncomfortable.

It’s easy to get soft and sloppy.

It’s easy to get at ease in Zion, and comfortable.

God wants to move us on, out of the comfort zone.

Sometimes to serve God means TAKING A RISK.

It means stepping outside of what is comfortable. Putting yourself out.

Be willing to pay the price.

YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MISS if never LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE.

We must LEAVE THE EASY WAY, the easy road.

Don’t be deterred, though the new road is a challenge.

Satan does not want you to come out of your comfort zone and obey God and reach others for Christ.

Satan wants you to just go through the motions of living the Christian life.

He delights when Christians get STUCK, STAGNANT AND STATIC.

We can get stuck and be FRUITLESS.

Rather, may we BE SENSITIVE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What is the Spirit leading you to do?

May we cry out, like ISAIAH, Here am I send me.
FIND GOD’S WILL. TRUST HIM.

GOD IS CALLING US TO ACTION...
- How can we be Christ’s hands reaching out to a hurting world?
- We have to move out of the comfort zone.

May we see what needs to be done, like Nehemiah did, and be concerned, and be moved to ACTION.

STEP OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE...
- Be willing to be a witness for Christ
- Be unashamed to witness for Christ
- Join in prayer
- Give of your time to study God’s word and grow spiritually
- Step out and be willing to serve God.

THIS IS A CALL TO ACTION.

We must get out of our comfort zone and get to work for the Kingdom of God.

Is the Holy Spirit speaking to you today?
Surrender to His authority in your life!

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord?