Is 'Comfortable Christianity' an Oxymoron?

I saw this phrase somewhere and it really intrigued me. What does it mean? In particular, what does it mean for *me*?

An *oxymoron* is a figure of speech that contains two contradictory things. For example: "My daughter's bedroom was always an _organized mess_", or "That exam was _pretty ugly_", or my favourite: "_virtual reality_".

What is "comfortable Christianity"? And if it's an oxymoron, what exactly does that imply?

If it really is an oxymoron, the phrase "comfortable Christianity" suggests that if we are truly Christian, then we should be uncomfortable. Is this true?

I don't think the originator of the phrase meant to imply that *what* we believe should be uncomfortable, or that whatever doctrines our own particular church subscribes to should make us uneasy. I think there's a much deeper meaning, and it relates to many of the things I've written about before.

I also don't think it refers to 'casual Christians', whose attitudes reflect their beliefs only on Sundays, and who act however they want the rest of the week. That's a whole other issue.

Here's what I think it really means. If you're a 'comfortable Christian', you have no worries. Your day-to-day relationship with God is satisfying to you, and you are happy with your spiritual life. Nothing about it upsets you.

Shouldn't this accurately describe where we're at, as Christians? Shouldn't we be happy that we *can* describe ourselves this way?

I don't think so.

First of all, I believe that we should never be complacent about how we appear in the eyes of God. Not a day goes by that I don't stumble and fall, or fail God in some small way. This makes me unhappy (as it should), but I know that when I ask God to forgive me for messing up, He will.

I am never comfortable. I'm always asking myself if what I am doing would be pleasing to Him, and am often dismayed to discover that it isn't always. Since none of us is perfect, *how can we be comfortable*? We should be constantly aware of what we say, what we do, and how we appear to others, and ask for forgiveness when necessary.

As Christians, we always need to be looking for ways to shine our own light, to help others to see how important it is to love Jesus. If we are doing this, then how can we possibly be 'comfortable'? There are a lot of things going on in the world around us, in

our day-to-day lives, that should upset us. We need to constantly be asking ourselves what we can do to change things, even in small ways.

Perhaps it's just making sure that our lives can serve as examples for others. But maybe there are occasions when we can do more. We can tell people that their behaviour or language is inexcusable. We can talk to non-Christian friends about what we believe. We can invite them to church. We can help people who are having problems. We can look for worthy charities or causes to support. We can speak out about issues that are important, like abortion.

There are so many places and people in the world that *need* our light ... how can we possibly be *comfortable*?

Sometimes there are dark corners in this world that we need to avoid. Places we shouldn't be, or people we shouldn't associate with, or activities we shouldn't attend, or movies we shouldn't watch ... *because the temptation to do things that are displeasing to God might be too great*. We might feel that we need to 'fit in', and so do things or say things that we hope God won't notice. So, we do the right thing and stay away from those places or people.

That can definitely be upsetting. I know what I shouldn't be doing, and what I shouldn't be saying, and what I shouldn't be overlooking. But it can be hard to resist temptation, especially when you find yourself with friends or acquaintances who are doing the wrong things. That always makes me uncomfortable.

So, I guess "comfortable Christianity" really is an oxymoron. If I'm too comfortable day-to-day with my Christianity, I think it means that I'm not doing a very good job. If everything I do is to be pleasing to God, I should be uncomfortable a lot, *because there's so much to do*.

I can't adequately express how much I enjoy writing these articles. The research I do, including looking very closely at what I believe, is incredibly satisfying, and reminds me a lot of how much I enjoyed some of my college courses. But I do it for a much more important reason now ... the more I examine my own beliefs, the more I understand them, and the more I struggle to write about them coherently, the closer I feel to God. It's my own way of growing, and it works for me. I also sometimes learn a lot from the messages I get from the people who regularly respond. I wish there were more of you.