Introduction
We are finishing up a series this week called “The End of Me: Where Real Life Begins.” We have been studying the beginning of Jesus’ sermon known as the Sermon on the Mount. Specifically, we’ve been studying the introduction to that sermon called “The Beatitudes” in which Jesus takes our assumptions about what it means to live a blessed life, and He turns them upside down. This week’s message is called “The End of My Comfort Zone.” Jesus challenges us to live in way that is uncomfortable because real life is found at the end of your comfort zone. At the end of The Beatitudes Jesus says in Matthew 5:10-11: “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Jesus describes a blessed life a little differently then we would. We tend to determine blessings and happiness by measuring our comfort level. But Jesus describes a blessed life as one where we are insulted, persecuted, and lied about because we are living for Him. Jesus says that when you take a risk and step out of your comfort zone, there is a blessing to be found.

When is that last time following Jesus produced fear in me?

- So how do you identify where your comfort zone is? Fear will let you know when you are getting close to the edge. There is something wrong if you are following Jesus in such a way that fear is never a factor and courage never is needed. If you study the Gospels, here’s what becomes clear: One way you know you are following Jesus is that He will always lead you out of your comfort zone.
- We want to follow Jesus without leaving our comfort zone, but that’s impossible. You can follow Jesus or you can stay in your comfort zone, but you can’t do both.
- In Luke 9 Jesus explains that if anyone would follow Him they must deny themselves, take up a cross and follow Him. Comfort tells us to spoil ourselves; Jesus tells us to deny ourselves. Comfort tells us to sit down and relax; Jesus tell us to take up a cross and follow.

Conclusion
The challenge today is for you to step outside of your comfort zone. During our time of worship, you’ll see stations set up around the sanctuary. At each station is a stack of sealed envelopes. Inside each envelope is a list of 5 different 6-month challenges. I hope everyone will take an envelope, and choose one of those 5 challenges. But here’s the catch—and this will make you uncomfortable: by taking an envelope, you are committing to accepting one of the 5 challenges. But I’m not going to tell you what they are. So take an envelope, and step outside of your comfort zone.