



Don't Get Caught

Pay attention to the warnings. They can save your life.

By Matt Garner

Walking back to our missionary apartment near the Alaskan seafont, I looked across a beautiful stretch of sandy beach and noticed a number of brightly colored warning signs stating “Danger! Do Not Step on Sand. Extreme Risk of Death.” Startled by the harsh warning regarding something that seemed so innocent, I asked my companion, who explained the hidden danger.

Along this coast, a number of rivers flow into the sea from the mountain peaks and valleys upstream. Along those mountain valleys, giant glaciers slowly travel their way toward the ocean. These ancient ice flows grind the rocks into an extremely fine, blue-gray silt that flows into the rivers and settles on the beaches. If you step on this silt, you sink very quickly. Pressure on the muddy silt causes the water to squeeze out and the sand instantly hardens around you with

as much strength as concrete. Once a person is caught in these mudflats, it is nearly impossible to escape without assistance. Along this particular beach, the ocean tides are among the strongest in the world. The water level fluctuates by as much as 30 feet every six hours. When the tide comes in, the water rises rapidly, completely submerging the beaches within a short period of time.

While each of these two factors is dangerous in itself, in combination they create a grave yet unobvious danger where unsuspecting victims can become quickly trapped and are unable to escape the rising tide.

Since then, I have reflected on the warning given by those grim signs. The signs were placed on the beach by those who recognized the unseen danger. Our loving Father in Heaven, likewise, has placed clear signs and boundaries to protect us from dangers we may not always recognize. When we cross over the Lord’s boundaries, we are often caught in a quicksand of sorts. The ways of the world are often dangerous and difficult to escape, yet are often enticing and appear from the outside to be harmless.

I am grateful for the wisdom of a loving Father in Heaven who protects us with clear boundaries. I am also grateful for the wise and inspired leadership of our latter-day prophets, who help navigate us safely through a world of ever-growing hazards. **NE**

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG NEWBOLD