

Slip-n-Slide

Scripture: Psalm 37:23 – 31 and Ephesians 5:15 – 17

August 13th, 2023

Slip-n-slides – do you remember them? I do! In fact, many years ago at summer church camp at Nordmont Christian Camp in Northeastern PA, we had a local farmer who gave the camp some very large sheet of plastic. They came from the wrapping he would put around his round rolls of hay. The sheets were 10' wide and almost 50 yards long! We put these large sheets of plastic to good use by stretching the plastic out to make a huge slip-n-slide or as we called it – 'Death by Plastic'!

The slip-n-slide stretched half a football field and it was placed on the slightly sloped hill in front of the dorms and director house. We would run a hose out to the plastic and we used a LOT of Dish soap. The slip-n-slide was very slippery!

The staff would get out chairs and sit beside the slip-n-slide while the youth slide down the slide. We would give them a score like they do in the Olympics from one to ten – one being poor to ten being excellent. What a wonderful time and a wonderful memory this is of the slip-n-slide or 'Death by Plastic'!

It is easy to slide downhill when we are on a slip-n-slide. In fact, trying to reverse course and go uphill is near to impossible as the momentum increases.

In Psalm 37, we have some wise instructions as to how we may avoid sin's slippery slope. As we meditate on God's Word, we know which actions to take.

But, what if we are already traveling downhill with sin? Do not despair, help is available! In the 37th Psalm David tells us that even if we do fall, God holds us by the hand.

Picture that in your mind – God holds us by hand. Boy, the picture I get is a parent holding a child's hand. Does not God hold our hand like a parent holding a child's hand? So when you find yourself sinning, turn to the One who is willing to rescue you from the slip-n-slide of sin.

Famous explorer Marco Polo is well known for his exploits across the Silk Road. As one of the first Europeans to travel widely in China, Marco Polo opened the eyes of an entire continent to the life and culture of the Far East.

It seems he inherited the travel bug from his father. In 1260, when Marco Polo was just six, his father and uncle traveled to Mongolia. When they arrived there, the emperor Kublai Kahn revealed an interest in Christianity. Kublai Kahn asked the brothers to take a letter to Pope Clement IV requesting as many as 100 wise men to spread the Gospel among the subjects of the vast Chinese empire.

Three years later, the brothers arrived back home and two years later, they set out on their return trek. But instead of taking with them 100 Christian missionaries and teachers, they were joined by just two friars because that is all the church felt it could spare. And even they did not complete the journey.

Talk about a missed opportunity! Imagine what could have happened if the church had boldly accepted the emperor's invitation. The entire history of China may have been changed!

Imagine a world leader asking the modern day church that they could send 100 missionaries, and the modern day church sends just two!

For every single one of us, each single day, God presents us with opportunities to make a difference for his kingdom. Every single day, we have a chance to change things for Christ! We have opportunities to show love. We have opportunities to speak the truth about Jesus. And we have the opportunities to meet the needs of those who need help!

The trick is to see them and seize them! The trick is for each of us to see these opportunities and seize upon them!

So what opportunities has God put in our lives today? What invitation to make a difference have we received? Do not worry about what to do, just focus on how we respond.

Because when we say 'YES' to God's invitation, lives are transformed.

So what opportunities has God put in your life today? What invitation to make a difference have you received? Do not worry about what to do, just focus on how you respond.

Because when you say 'YES' to God's invitation, lives are transformed – including your own!

Let us pray:

O God, trust in your love to order our steps correctly. Let us use our slip-n-slides of life to slide into your glory and let us never try to go against the flow of your love.

O God, let us choose the opportunities you send our way. Make our giving so profound that it makes a difference for your kingdom. Give us the strength to say 'YES' to you. AMEN.