

HANG ON

-Ryan Parsons-

I can remember a picture on the bulletin board outside the classrooms in nursing school. It was a frog being eaten by a stork. As the frog is being swallowed, he reaches around and squeezes the throat of the predator preventing his descent. At the bottom it reads “Never ever give up!” Another one that made its way to the board was a kitten at the bottom of a rope dangling and holding on with every ounce of strength. The caption read “Hang in there!”

Without a doubt, people are ready to put 2020 in the rearview mirror. It has taken its toll on us in many different ways. I have heard some people liken it to drowning with the phrases “treading water” and “trying to keep my head above water.” This reminded me of my time as a lifeguard. In your training to save a drowning victim, they teach you about the “grasping at straws” concept. It has been observed for centuries that *a drowning man will grab any floating object, even a straw, to save himself.* This includes lifeguards. More than once, a drowning victim has drowned their rescuer along with themselves in the panic. Sadly, this has happened with a life saving flotation device only an arms reach away.

If nothing else, this year has confirmed that we are swimming in the deep end. Society and culture is struggling, and people are frustrated and hurting. As a result, there is no shortage of straws in the water around us. However, we need something that has buoyancy to sustain us, not for a single year, but for eternity.

All this simply begs the question: “What are we holding on to?”

Psalm 63:7-8

for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Deuteronomy 10:20-21

20 You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and **hold fast to him**, and by his name you shall swear. 21 He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen.

Psalm 119:30-32

I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I set your rules before me.
I cling to your testimonies, O Lord;
let me not be put to shame!
I will run in the way of your commandments
when you enlarge my heart

Thankfully, our life saver is always within reach. Hang on!