

**Joe & Annie Shea**  
[joe@AGenerationInNeed.com](mailto:joe@AGenerationInNeed.com)  
 508-873-2838

# A GENERATION

[www.agenerationinneed.com](http://www.agenerationinneed.com)  
[joe@agenerationinneed.com](mailto:joe@agenerationinneed.com)

Christmas 2016  
 New Years 2017



## Rewinding Christmas from a Rapid Heart...

On Christmas day I concluded a three part sermon series at one of our supporting churches. The series was called "Rewinding Christmas."

Most often at Christmas there are sermons about and around events that lead up to our Savior's birth. So, always looking at things differently... rather than moving on a trajectory forward... I took a different path, by going past His birth and looked at a trajectory leading back to the incarnation.

Christmas can often be a challenging time for many of us. While we all have our own individual challenges and fears, many experience increased levels of stress connected to family, work, school, budgets, and gift buying. For others depression and anxiety seem to be more overpowering. Some of us may have lost loved ones and dealing with the devastation and loss over Christmas is especially hard. Those of us struggling with health related issues find it more difficult to cope. Add if you add to

all that an election year more dividing than any other election I can remember... and you have the makings of a relationship with God that could be listed on a Facebook status as, "It's complicated."

In the first sermon of this series I talked about the wisemen following a bright star that pointed to Jesus, perhaps we could use our own Bethlehem star in the sky pointing us to the Christ-child? Many of you know I struggled with a heart condition that began



in my late-teens. In 2003 I had a procedure called an ablation that resolved most of my issues. The condition was related to the electrical system in my heart and would cause a race condition as fast as 250 beats per minute. Sometimes it would happen in my sleep and I would wakeup to a

vibration in my chest and the need to get to the hospital. Well in 1989 we were blessed with our first son (we have 4) and Jeremiah was only a few months old. Once again I woke up suddenly with a racing heart! Now you may think of me as a man of faith but there are times when my faith is eclipsed by fear and faith seems to get thrown out the window, and this was one of those times! This time I was really panicking because not only did we have to get to the hospital but we had to bundle Jeremiah up and take him with us. I was frustrated, full of fear and anxiety... In my panic, I likely mouthed or at least thought the the words, "Why now God! Why now!!!"

Annie saw my panic and calmly went into Jeremiah's room. Without waking him she carefully picked him up, cradling our newborn child in her arms. She quietly carried him into our room. I was sitting on the side of the bed feeling weak from the lack of blood being allowed into my heart between beats and I was freaking out!

Annie lowered Jeremiah down to me and motioned for me to take him. I looked at her with confusion, and said, "What are you doing I can't hold him right now!" She paid no attention and placed him in my fumbling arms and

gently whispered in my ear, "Hold your son."

As my eyes focused on his closed sleeping eye lids. As I watched the rhythm of his tiny chest expanding and compressing. As I took in the dense beauty and peaceful-calm that only a sleeping child can accurately convey, I was mesmerized!

Overwhelmed with such a deep deep love, my faith came back through the same window I had just thrown it out of. Like a switch my heart rate converted to a normal rhythm, and my strength returned... perfect love had cast out all fear (1st John 1:18).

Without Jeremiah ever waking up, Annie carefully took him from my arms and set him back in his crib. We both prayed a prayer of thanksgiving and immediately we fell back to sleep!

As we face this Christmas season and New Year, in the midst of all that is going on around us, would you consider rewinding Christmas with me? Allow yourself and others around you to be brought back, all the way back to the manger. Envision yourself holding Emanuel, "God with us" (Matt 1:23). Imagine gazing upon him and hearing your heavenly Father whisper in your ear, "This is my son..." see the rhythm of His Spirit breathing upon you, and allow His perfect love to cast out all fear!

I leave you with simple and profound words of Jesus to ponder, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." (John 14:1)

December is an important month for us from a support raising perspective. When looking at our support needs from a committed perspective (individuals and churches who support us on an ongoing basis) we are receiving approximately 75% of what is needed. The remaining 25% comes from intermittent and one-time donations. Raising support is hard work and time consuming but so valuable to the ministry we do! It's through our support raising efforts that a solid prayer base is established. It's through support raising that unchurched students begin to grasp that there are individuals, churches, and businesses who actually value and care about them. It's through support raising that some individuals are challenged and receive the call to campus ministry (*happened to me!*). And lastly it's through support raising that our supporters are blessed to see this "generation in need" being reached and transformed by the Gospel. Support raising is indeed ministry too!

So would you please join us financially and prayerfully, either with an ongoing commitment or an end of the year (tax deductible) donation?

If you're already supporting us thank you!!!

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!!!

=== JOE ===

## Be part of it:

To join us in financial support just fill out the envelope enclosed with this newsletter including a check made out to Missions Door. If you don't have an envelope please include a separate note that you would like to support Joe and Annie Shea and how often in faith you plan to donate and mail to the address at the bottom of this page or simply go online to our website.