Message: *"Checking-in for the Son of God"*

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

(12-08-24 Pastor Tony Hao)

Luke's portrayal of Joseph may lead some to wonder if he were slow to pick up on Jesus' identity. Surely Mary told Joseph about Gabriel's announcement of her son's identity. Joseph was right there when the shepherds arrived soon after Jesus' birth. He too must have pondered the shepherds' words (2:19). He saw Simeon take Jesus in his arms and proclaim that his little boy would grow up to fulfill God's promises of salvation. Like Mary, he must have marveled at Simeon's prophecy (2:33). He was there as Jesus grew up in the favor of God and people alike. With all of these, did Joseph fully understand that Jesus must be in His [heavenly] Father's house (2:50)?

Like Joseph, we may never fully understand the event of that first Christmas, but we too can look into our own hearts and ponder: (1) what is God doing in this world? (2) what does God want to be done now? And (3) what does God want to do in and through me? Despite lacking full understanding of God's plan for his adopted son, we know Joseph obeyed everything he was told to do for Jesus.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. Joseph lovingly cared for Mary when she gave birth to Jesus in an outdoor shelter. Do you think he was prepared for the shepherds' arrival telling of a glorious visit by an angel who announced the birth of the Messiah (2:16-20)?

2. One wonders what Joseph thought when he heard Simeon's word to Mary, "and a sword will pierce through your own soul also" (2:35). Do you think he shared to a great degree the deep anguish Mary felt about her son?

3. After three agonizing days of searching, Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the temple. When Mary reproaches Jesus, He simply responds that they should have known he would be in His Father's house (2:50). What does that mean?

4. Despite lacking full understanding of God's plan for his adopted son, Joseph explicitly obeyed everything he was told to do for Jesus. Are we ready to do likewise?