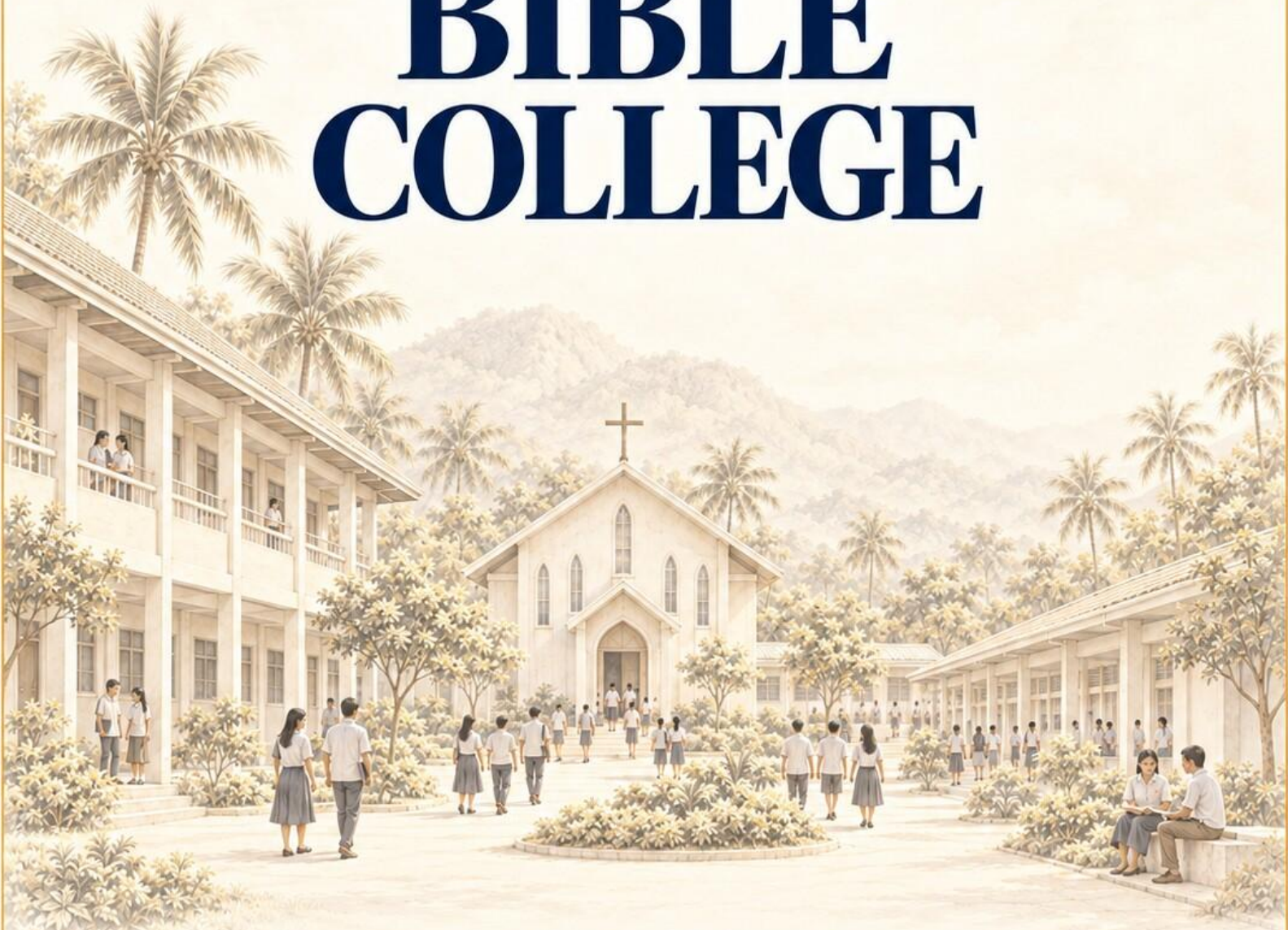




REASON TOGETHER CHURCH



BIBLE COLLEGE



*Does God's Calling Have to
Make Financial Sense?*



LUKE 14:25-33

SERMON & PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

RTS-081

BIBLE COLLEGE

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Sermon Transcript

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Aloha.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether you are with us every week or this is your first time visiting, we are grateful that you are here.

If you are an honored guest, please know that you will not be singled out or embarrassed.

You are welcome to listen.

You are welcome to ask questions.

You are welcome to disagree respectfully and open your Bible with us.

That is what Reason Together Church is about.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

If you received a guest card, we ask for only your first name and email address.

We are not trying to collect a long list of personal information.

We simply want the opportunity to thank you for visiting and to continue the conversation if you would like us to do so.

Our Keiki are welcome in the Keiki Kids Center.

After our time together, please join us in the Reason Together Cafe.

The coffee is free.

The conversations are free.

And there are always free refills on conversations.

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father,

Thank You for allowing us to gather around Your Word.

Thank You for every person who has come through these doors.

Thank You for those who have served You for many years and for those who are still deciding what they believe.

Give us wisdom today.

Help us distinguish faith from foolishness.

Help us distinguish sacrifice from carelessness.

Help us understand what Jesus meant when He told us to count the cost.

We pray for Pastors, missionaries, Bible students and church workers around the world.
We pray for those who are preparing to serve in places where there may never be financial security or public recognition.

Most of all, direct our attention to Jesus Christ.

May Your Word correct us, encourage us and lead us closer to You.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Our Scripture reading today is Luke chapter 14, beginning with verse 25.

The King James Version reads:

"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Before we begin the study, I want to say a brief word about giving.

Reason Together Church does not pass an offering plate.

Guests are never expected to give.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to support your home church.

For those who consider Reason Together Church their church home, there is a giving box in the back.

Give only as God leads you.

The Bible teaches that God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving is not merely about placing money in a box.

It is about recognizing that everything in our hands belongs to God.

Sometimes God asks us to go.

Sometimes He gives us the opportunity to help someone else go.

Today we are going to meet some students who were preparing to give far more than money.

It took me eight years of college to be called Doctor.

I worked hard for those degrees.

I studied.

I sacrificed time.

I sacrificed money.

There were nights when I would rather have been doing almost anything other than reading another textbook or completing another assignment.

But I continued because I believed there would be a return on that investment.

I will be honest with you.

I did not pursue all of that education merely because I loved sitting in classrooms.

I expected it to improve my professional opportunities.

I expected it to increase my income.

I expected it to produce a life of greater comfort and relative ease.

And to a substantial degree, it did.

My education opened doors.

It helped me succeed in business.

It helped place me in positions of responsibility.

It contributed to the lifestyle I was able to enjoy.

Why would I work that hard and that long if I did not expect to be financially rewarded?

That question sounds reasonable.

For most people, it is one of the reasons for attending college.

We tell our children to study hard so they can obtain good jobs.

We encourage them to choose degrees that will create opportunities.

We compare tuition with expected salaries.

We talk about the return on an educational investment.
There is nothing automatically sinful about any of that.
Education is not evil.
Professional success is not evil.
Earning a good income is not evil.
God later used my education, my business experience and the resources He allowed me to earn
in ways I never imagined when I first entered a classroom.
But then I met some other college students.
They studied hard too.
They sacrificed too.
They were preparing for their futures too.
But they expected an entirely different return on their education.
They were studying to become Pastors, missionaries, teachers and church workers in the
Philippines.
They were not pursuing careers that promised increased wealth.
Many of them were preparing for lives in which financial hardship was not merely possible.
It was likely.
My education was intended, at least in part, to help improve my life.
Their education was intended to prepare them to give their lives.
Both educations involved sacrifice.
But the anticipated rewards were very different.
That leads us to our question.
Does God's calling have to make financial sense?
The world asks what an education will enable you to earn.
God may ask what that education will enable you to give.
At the time, God had blessed me financially.
I was living a comfortable life while remaining active and faithful in church.
I gave money in the offering plate.
I supported ministry.
But I began to desire something more than simply writing a check.
I decided to go on a mission trip.

My plan was for a ten-day trip through the Philippines and Viet Nam.
I had an itinerary.
I knew when I expected to leave.
I knew when I expected to return.
But God has never been obligated to follow one of my itineraries.
Events changed at the last minute.
Instead of continuing according to my original plan, I remained on the island of Cebu.
While I was there, I met a church worker at a local Baptist congregation.
Her name was Danielin.
We would fall in love and eventually marry.
The ten-day mission trip became approximately one year of missionary service.
I traveled through the islands.
I preached in places I had never expected to visit.
Danielin and I ministered together.
I went to the mission field believing that I was going to do something for God.
God used the mission field to do something within me.
He changed my geography.
He changed my schedule.
He changed my relationships.
He changed the direction of my life.
And He began changing my definition of success.
You can make an itinerary.
You can purchase a ticket.
You can schedule your return.
But when God begins changing a life, He may change more than the itinerary.
My travels took me around the islands as Danielin and I ministered and as I preached wherever
God opened a door.
In one town, I was asked to speak at a Pastor's Conference.
When the first night's activities were completed and most of the members had gone home,
several Pastors remained for dinner.
Many of those Pastors and their wives had graduated from the Bible college Danielin attended.

Before graduating as valedictorian, Danielin had served as a group leader over some of the students who later became Pastors.

As we ate together, they began telling me what life had been like at the college.

Their stories changed my understanding of what going to college could mean.

The students lived in crowded dormitory rooms.

Their mornings began at 4:00.

At that hour, everyone was expected to gather in a study room for morning devotions.

Before many of us would have reached for the alarm clock, their day with God and their preparation for ministry had already begun.

Their breakfast consisted of one scoop of rice, a small dried fish and a cup of coffee.

Lunch and dinner were similar, with the addition of a bowl of vegetable soup and a different beverage.

Students rotated through the kitchen.

They prepared the food.

They served one another.

They cleaned the church.

They cleaned the school.

They cleaned the dormitories.

The men's dormitory was located almost a mile from the school.

The men walked while the sun was still down so they could arrive on time.

If they were late, they received demerits.

Too many demerits could lead to expulsion.

Their days were filled with a demanding academic schedule.

There were classes, chapel services and Bible studies.

Saturday was not a weekend escape from ministry.

They were expected at the church by 7:00 in the morning for Bible study and prayer.

From there they went out witnessing in dump areas and squatter villages.

On Sunday morning, they picked up children and escorted them to the 7:30 service.

Later they went out again to bring older children to afternoon services.

Between those responsibilities, they attended their own Sunday School and worship service.

Monday was their only day off.

That was when they could visit friends, do laundry or run errands.
They still had to return to the dormitory by 5:00.
These young people were not merely learning how to explain ministry.
Ministry was already shaping the way they lived.
I had visited many colleges and universities.
I had attended several of them.
I had even spoken at colleges during my years in business.
I had seen the brochures showing beautiful campuses, comfortable dormitories and smiling students.
I had never seen a promotional brochure describing student life like this.
Later I contacted my friend, Dr. Armie Jesalva, and asked permission to tour the campus.
I had spoken to Bible students before, but I had never walked through the place where they lived and studied.
What I discovered was that the graduates had told the truth.
There had been no exaggeration.
If anything, they had made the conditions sound better than they were.
There is a difference between admiring sacrifice from a distance and walking through the place where the sacrifice is being made.
I saw young men and women enduring conditions that few Americans would willingly tolerate.
I also saw the results.
When I met graduates of that college, I repeatedly saw people of character and honor.
We need to be careful at this point.
Hardship is not automatically holiness.
Getting up early does not save anyone.
Eating a small meal does not make someone spiritually mature.
Walking a mile before sunrise does not create a calling.
Deprivation is not a sacrament.
We should not look at poverty as though poverty itself makes a person pleasing to God.
So the question is not whether those students were faithful because their lives were hard.
The better question is whether they remained faithful while their lives were hard.
Difficulty does not prove that a person is obeying God.

But faithfulness during difficulty reveals something about what that person values.

Now return with me to Luke chapter 14.

Verse 25 says, "And there went great multitudes with him."

Jesus had a crowd.

Church leaders are often told that a crowd must be protected.

Do not say anything too demanding.

Do not make anyone uncomfortable.

Do not tell people that following Jesus could cost them something.

Jesus turned toward the multitude and did exactly that.

He did not hide the cost of discipleship in the small print.

He did not promise an easy road and reveal the cross after people had already joined.

He told them the truth.

He said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

That word "hate" deserves careful attention.

Jesus was not commanding husbands to despise their wives.

He was not commanding parents to reject their children.

He was not overturning the commandment to honor father and mother.

Matthew chapter 10 helps us understand the comparison.

Jesus said that the person who loves father or mother more than Him is not worthy of Him.

The issue is supreme allegiance.

No human relationship can be placed above Christ.

Not even our relationship with our own life can be placed above Him.

Then Jesus said, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

We sometimes use the word "cross" for an inconvenience.

Someone has an irritating neighbor and calls that person a cross to bear.

Someone has a difficult assignment at work and calls it a cross.

The people listening to Jesus did not think of jewelry or a decorative symbol when He spoke about a cross.

They thought about death.

The cross was an instrument of execution.

To bear the cross was to surrender the claim that my life remains mine to control.

Jesus does not become one more helpful influence within a life that still belongs to me.

The disciple belongs to Jesus.

Then Jesus speaks about a builder.

The builder intends to construct a tower.

Before beginning, he sits down and counts the cost.

He asks whether he has sufficient resources to finish.

If he lays a foundation and cannot complete the work, people will mock him.

Then Jesus speaks about a king.

The king has ten thousand soldiers.

Another king is approaching with twenty thousand.

The king sits down and considers the situation.

Jesus does not condemn careful thinking.

He commands it.

Faith is not the refusal to think.

Faith is not an excuse to ignore responsibilities.

Faith is not making the most dangerous financial decision available and assuming that difficulty proves God requested it.

Jesus said to count the cost.

Then He said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

That does not mean every Christian must immediately dispose of every possession.

It means that Christ's claim comes before our claim.

My home is under His authority.

My education is under His authority.

My career is under His authority.

My bank account is under His authority.

My calendar is under His authority.

My future is under His authority.

God's calling must make Biblical sense, even when it does not make financial sense.

Let us define that carefully.

When we say that God's calling may not make financial sense, we do not mean that Christians should ignore budgets.

We do not mean that a person should neglect his family.

First Timothy chapter 5 says that a person who refuses appropriate provision for his own household has denied the faith.

The qualifications for pastoral ministry include faithful leadership within the home.

A claimed calling cannot be used as permission to disobey another clear command of God.

God may call someone to accept less income.

God may call someone away from prestige.

God may call someone to live more simply so the Gospel can be carried somewhere else.

But God does not ask us to stop using the wisdom He gave us.

We must not confuse sacrifice with carelessness.

We must not confuse faith with presumption.

We must not confuse calling with impulse.

We must not confuse poverty with holiness.

And we must not confuse prosperity with Divine approval.

A decision does not become God's will simply because it is difficult, expensive or dangerous.

The calling must make Biblical sense.

It may not produce a financial profit.

That brings us to another important distinction.

Jesus told us to count the cost of discipleship.

He did not tell us that our sacrifice could purchase salvation.

Salvation is not the reward God gives to the person who suffers the most.

Salvation is not earned by getting up at 4:00 in the morning.

Salvation is not earned by eating rice and dried fish.

Salvation is not earned by attending Bible college.

Salvation is not earned by preaching in a squatter village.

Salvation is not earned by supporting a missionary.

Ephesians chapter 2 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Salvation is free to us because Jesus paid its full price.

The students did not purchase salvation through their sacrifice.

I could not purchase salvation by helping them.

You cannot purchase salvation by giving money to a church.

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Salvation is free.

But discipleship costs everything.

The saved person now belongs to the Savior.

Second Corinthians chapter 8 says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Those students accepted hardship to prepare for Gospel ministry.

But they are not the greatest example in this sermon.

Jesus is.

He left Heaven's glory.

He took upon Him the form of a servant.

He humbled Himself.

He became obedient unto death.

Even the death of the cross.

The greatest sacrifice in this story was not made by the students preparing to preach Jesus.

It was made by Jesus, who gave Himself to save the students, the sponsors and every sinner who will come to Him.

Did Jesus promise that following Him would improve our lives?

The answer depends upon what we mean by improve.

In Mark chapter 10, Peter said, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee."

Jesus replied that no one who had left house, family or lands for His sake and the Gospel's would be forgotten.

He spoke of receiving abundantly through the new family God creates among His people.

He spoke of eternal life in the world to come.

But He included two words we often overlook.

"With persecutions."

Jesus gives forgiveness.

Jesus gives reconciliation with God.

Jesus gives purpose.

Jesus gives a spiritual family.

Jesus gives His presence.

Jesus gives eternal life.

Jesus promises resurrection.

Jesus promises an inheritance that cannot be corrupted.

But Jesus never promised every disciple a larger paycheck.

He never promised constant physical comfort.

He never promised social approval.

He never promised freedom from hardship.

He never promised an uncomplicated earthly life.

When Jesus spoke about abundant life in John chapter 10, He spoke as the Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd protects His sheep.

The Good Shepherd knows His sheep.

The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Abundant life is not another name for luxury.

It is life under the care of the Good Shepherd.

God may financially bless a Christian.

Scripture includes faithful believers who possessed substantial resources and used them for God.

God may also lead a faithful believer through financial hardship.

Neither wealth nor poverty proves faithfulness by itself.

Now we need to ask another question.

Can Bible college create a calling?

The Bible never says that a person must possess a college diploma before he can serve Christ.

Acts chapter 4 describes Peter and John as unlearned and ignorant men.

Yet the people took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

That does not make ignorance a qualification.

Paul possessed extensive education.

Apollos was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures.

Even Apollos remained teachable when Aquila and Priscilla explained the way of God more perfectly.

Paul told Timothy to commit the truth to faithful men who would be able to teach others also.

Faithfulness matters.

Ability matters.

Doctrine matters.

Character matters.

Teachability matters.

The church's recognition matters.

In Acts chapter 13, Barnabas and Saul were already serving when the Holy Ghost directed the church to separate them for the work.

Their calling was personal, but it was not merely private.

The church prayed.

The church fasted.

The church laid hands upon them.

The church sent them.

Bible college can provide knowledge.

It can develop discipline.

It can strengthen practical skills.

It can provide supervised ministry experience.

It can connect students with experienced teachers.

It can expose weaknesses that need correction.

But Bible college cannot regenerate a sinner.

It cannot manufacture character.

It cannot replace time with Jesus.

It cannot create God's calling.

It cannot guarantee doctrinal faithfulness.

It cannot make an unqualified person Biblically qualified.

Education can prepare a called person.

Education cannot call an uncalled person.

Those students were willing to sacrifice.

But their willingness does not give the rest of the church permission to abandon them.

First Corinthians chapter 9 asks a series of practical questions.

Who goes to war at his own expense?

Who plants a vineyard and is forbidden to eat its fruit?

Who feeds a flock and is forbidden to drink its milk?

Paul refers to the command that the ox treading grain should not be muzzled.

He refers to those who served at the altar.

Then he writes, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Someone may object, "But Paul made tents."

Yes, he did.

Paul sometimes worked with his own hands.

Paul sometimes voluntarily declined financial support.

But the entire argument of First Corinthians chapter 9 is that Paul possessed the right to receive that support.

He surrendered the right in certain circumstances so no accusation would hinder the Gospel.

Paul was willing to preach without being paid.

That did not mean Christians were entitled to leave him unpaid.

A true minister must not enter ministry because he sees an opportunity to become wealthy.

The church must also refuse to use a faithful minister's sincerity as an excuse to neglect him.

The willingness of a servant to sacrifice never excuses the church from supporting that servant.

Danielin understood this in a deeply personal way.

She knew what those students experienced because she had lived it.

She graduated as valedictorian.

She served as a leader over students who later became Pastors.

After graduation, she had opportunities that could have provided a better salary.

Instead, she chose to serve in places where she believed she could be of greater help.

She worked among people in squatter communities and dump-site areas.

Years later, after we were living in Florida, I asked what she wanted for her birthday.

She knew that if I could afford it, I would probably give her whatever she requested.

She could have asked for clothing.

She could have asked for jewelry.

She could have asked for a vacation.

She could have asked for something comfortable for herself.

Instead, she asked that we provide a good meal for all the Bible students.

That was what she wanted for her birthday.

We granted her request.

Years after Danielin left that campus, the campus had never left her heart.

That tells us something about what her education produced.

Ezra chapter 7 says, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

Notice the order.

He prepared his heart.

He sought the Word.

He did what the Word said.

Then he taught it.

Biblical education is incomplete when it fills the mind but never reaches the life.

A diploma may tell us what classes someone completed.

The life tells us what the education produced.

At the time the original story was written, tuition, room and board at the Bible college cost approximately one hundred fifty dollars per semester.

Approximately three hundred dollars could support a student for a year.

Those are historical figures from the time of the article.

They should not be assumed to represent the current cost.

But even then, an amount that sounded modest to many Americans was more than some local families could afford.

The students did not have access to the American system of student loans and Pell Grants.

If their families could not pay, they could not attend.

Danielin and I began helping students.

We paid tuition.

We purchased musical instruments.

We supported academic activities.

We sent care packages.

We provided meals.

We did not preach the sermons those graduates would later preach.

We did not visit every community they would later enter.

But Scripture gives us a beautiful phrase for this kind of partnership.

Third John says, "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."

An early Christian writing called The Shepherd of Hermas used the picture of an elm tree and a vine.

This writing is not Scripture.

It does not establish our doctrine.

But the illustration is helpful.

A vine can produce fruit.

Yet when the vine lies unsupported on the ground, its fruit may be damaged.

An elm tree may appear to produce no fruit at all.

But when the vine is lifted upon the elm, the vine can flourish.

The visible fruit grows from the vine, but the elm helped hold it up.

The student may eventually preach the sermon.

The missionary may travel to the village.

The Pastor may lead someone to Christ.

The supporter may never stand behind that pulpit.

The supporter may never meet the person who was saved.

But Heaven does not see two unrelated acts.

Heaven sees one shared work.

The person who faithfully helps a Gospel worker becomes a fellowhelper to the truth.

The early Christian writing known as the Didache reveals that believers in the early church wrestled with the same balance.

Again, the Didache is not Scripture.

But historically it shows Christians trying to support genuine teachers while guarding against people who used spiritual claims to obtain money.

Generosity requires discernment.

Discernment must not become an excuse for selfishness.

We should examine doctrine.

We should examine character.

We should value accountability.

And when faithful workers are carrying the Gospel, we should not leave them to carry every burden alone.

Some are called to preach.

Some are called to teach.

Some are equipped to give.

Some can provide a meal.

Some can open a home.

Some can encourage a discouraged student.

Some can help a Pastor remain in the field.

Some can use business knowledge and organizational ability behind the scenes.

Not everyone will stand in front of a congregation.

Not everyone should.

There is valuable Gospel work accomplished quietly by people whose names may never appear on a church sign.

The question is not whether everyone must attend Bible college.

The question is whether everything God has given us is available for His service.

If you are considering ministry, do not begin only by asking what the position pays.

Ask whether Christ has saved you.

Ask whether your character meets the qualifications of Scripture.

Ask whether you are teachable.

Ask whether the church recognizes evidence of your calling.

Ask whether you would remain faithful if the financial reward were small.

If you are a student, ask what your education is forming within you.

Is it merely preparing you to earn?

Or is it also preparing you to serve?

If you are a professional, God may not be asking you to leave your profession.

He may be asking whether your education, experience and income are available to Him.

If you are a parent, do not measure your child's future only by salary, prestige and security.

Help that child test every desire Biblically.

If you are part of a church, do not merely praise sacrificial servants.

Ask whether they are being supported.

If God has entrusted you with financial comfort, do not apologize for every blessing.

Ask what the blessing makes possible.

What return are you expecting from the life God gave you?

Must obedience improve your comfort before you will consider it God's will?

What has God placed in your hands that could help someone else obey Him?

Before we close, we must return to the most important truth in this study.

You cannot purchase salvation by sacrifice.

You cannot earn salvation through education.

You cannot deserve salvation through ministry.

You cannot buy forgiveness by giving money to a church or missionary.

The Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Sin separates us from a holy God.

The wages of sin is death.

But God loved us.

Jesus Christ came into this world.

He lived without sin.

He died on the cross for our sins.

He was buried.

On the third day, He rose again.

The price has already been paid.

The gift is offered through Jesus Christ.

If you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior, you can come to Him now.

Recognize your sin.

Turn to Christ.

Believe that He died for you and rose again.

Place your faith in Jesus Christ alone.

I am going to pray a simple prayer.

The words themselves cannot save you.

Repeating a formula cannot save you.

Jesus saves the person who sincerely comes to Him in repentance and faith.

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, you may pray with me.

Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner.

I know that I cannot save myself.

I believe that You died for my sins.

I believe that You were buried and that You rose again.

I turn from my sin and place my faith in You alone.

Please forgive me.

Please save me.

Help me follow You.

Thank You for giving me eternal life.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Before we leave, return in your mind to that campus.

It is still dark outside.

The students rise at 4:00 in the morning.

The men begin walking from the dormitory before sunrise.

There is rice, a small dried fish and coffee.

There are classes, chapel services and cleaning assignments.

There are dump-site communities and squatter villages where people still need to hear about Jesus.

There are children waiting for someone to bring them to church.

There are students preparing for work that may never provide financial security.

Then picture a birthday in Florida.

A husband asks his wife what she wants.

She could request something for herself.

She remembers the students.

She asks that they receive a good meal.

What has your education prepared you to do?

What has your career placed in your hands?

What has your comfort made possible?

What return are you expecting from the life God gave you?

Some will preach.

Some will teach.

Some will give.

Some will encourage.

Some will open doors.

Some will provide meals.

Some will quietly make it possible for another servant to finish the preparation God has placed before him.

All of us can place what we have in the hands of God.

The world asks what an education will enable you to earn.

God may ask what that education will enable you to give.

God's calling must always make Biblical sense.

But it will not always make financial sense.

The final question is not whether following Jesus will make us more comfortable.

The question is whether Jesus is worthy of everything we have.

He is.

If you trusted Christ today, please speak with me before you leave.

If you have questions about the study, I will be available after the service and in the Cafe.

You do not need to settle every question before the coffee gets cold.

The conversation can continue.

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

Bible College

Does God's Calling Have to Make Financial Sense?

Luke 14:25-33

RTS-081

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Bring your questions. Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Introduction

The story that prompted this study contains an arresting reversal. One education was pursued partly because years of labor seemed likely to produce wealth and relative ease. Another education was pursued by young men and women who expected that their chosen service might leave them near poverty. The first calculation is familiar: sacrifice now so that life will become easier later. The second is difficult to explain unless the value of obedience exceeds the value of financial return.

That contrast raises the study's principal question: Does God's calling have to make financial sense? It also exposes a related question: Did Jesus promise that following Him would improve our lives in the ordinary sense of comfort, status and purchasing power? Scripture answers with greater precision than either romantic poverty or prosperity preaching permits. Christ gives life, peace, joy, fellowship and eternal treasure. He also calls disciples to deny themselves, bear a cross, surrender rival claims and accept losses that may never be repaid in this age.

The controlling passage is Luke 14:25-33. Jesus addresses a large crowd and refuses to recruit it with softened terms. He speaks of supreme allegiance, cross-bearing, deliberate calculation and the surrender of all possessions. The two short illustrations, a tower left unfinished and a king facing a stronger army, are not lessons in household budgeting detached from discipleship. They explain why a person must consider what it means to identify with Jesus before claiming the name disciple.

Controlling conclusion

God's calling does not always make financial sense, but it must make Biblical sense. The call of Christ never excuses presumption, neglect of family, contempt for work or the church's refusal to support faithful laborers.

1. The Narrative Question Behind the Text

Two Kinds of Educational Return

The magazine article begins with eight years of college and an honest admission that increased wealth and relative ease were among the expected rewards. That is not inherently sinful.

Education can be a form of stewardship. Scripture commends skill, diligence, counsel and

preparation. The problem begins when financial return becomes the governing measure of whether obedience is reasonable.

The Bible-college students in Cebu presented a different calculation. Their preparation led toward Pastoral and church work for which hardship was not an unlikely accident but a common prospect. They lived in crowded dormitories, began morning devotions at 4:00 AM, ate simple meals, rotated kitchen duty, cleaned the facilities and maintained a rigorous schedule of academics, chapel, Bible study and ministry. Saturdays involved evangelism in dump areas and squatter villages. Sundays involved bringing children to services. Monday chores and errands had to end before the dormitory deadline.

Those details are valuable because they make cost visible. Yet the commentary must resist turning deprivation into spectacle. Rice, dried fish, early mornings and crowded rooms did not prove that every student was called. Hardship is not a sacrament. What impressed the author was the combination of disciplined preparation, continued service and the character observed among graduates. The narrative works best as an illustration of costly preparation, not as an independent test of divine calling.

The Financial Figures Are Historical

The article reported tuition, room and board of about \$150 per semester and invited readers to consider approximately \$300 for a year. Those figures belong to the article's historical setting. They should not be presented as current prices or as a continuing offer. Their value in this study is comparative: a sum that seemed modest from an American perspective could still bar a local student from training.

From Illustration to Doctrine

Experience may open the question, but Scripture must govern the answer. A compelling story can show what obedience felt like for particular people. It cannot establish that every believer should attend Bible college, that every ministry hardship is God's will or that poor compensation proves spiritual authenticity. Luke 14 supplies the doctrine. The story supplies a human window through which that doctrine can be seen.

2. Literary Setting of Luke 14

Meals, Invitations and the Kingdom

Luke 14 begins with Jesus eating in the house of a chief Pharisee. He heals a man with dropsy, confronts pride over places of honor and teaches generosity toward guests who cannot repay. He then tells of a great supper whose invited guests excuse themselves because of property, work and family concerns. The master brings in the poor, maimed, halt and blind. The chapter repeatedly asks what people value, whom they honor and what excuses keep them from the kingdom.

The movement from the supper to the great multitude is important. People may be attracted to Jesus as they are attracted to a feast. Christ turns to the crowd and explains that discipleship cannot be treated as a convenient addition to an already sovereign life. The excuses in the supper story involve a field, oxen and a marriage. The demands in verses 26 and 33 concern family, life and possessions. Luke is not condemning these created goods. He is exposing their power to become rival claims.

A Crowd Is Not Yet a Company of Disciples

Luke carefully says that great multitudes went with Jesus. Physical proximity is not the same as discipleship. Crowds can admire miracles, enjoy teaching and move in the same direction for a time. Jesus turns and speaks words that test whether those following His route are willing to follow His rule.

The passage therefore opposes manipulative recruitment. Jesus does not conceal difficult terms until enthusiasm has produced a commitment. He places allegiance, cross and surrender in the foreground. Christian preaching should have the same honesty. Grace must be offered freely, but grace must not be advertised as a device for protecting every present preference.

Luke 14:25-27

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

3. Luke 14:26: Supreme Allegiance

The Meaning of Hate

The word 'hate' shocks the reader because Scripture elsewhere commands honor toward parents, love within marriage, care for children and even love for enemies. Jesus cannot be commanding malicious hostility toward the very people His law tells us to love. The expression is comparative and covenantal. Matthew 10:37 gives the close parallel: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' Luke preserves the forceful form so that the supremacy of Christ cannot be domesticated.

Genesis 29:30-31 provides a useful Old Testament background. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and Leah is then described as hated. The contrast concerns preference, not a command to injure. In Luke 14 the disciple's love for Christ must be so governing that every other loyalty is subordinate when loyalties conflict.

Family Love Is Subordinate, Not Abolished

Jesus does not authorize a student or minister to baptize irresponsibility as sacrifice. First Timothy 5:8 condemns failure to provide for one's own household. Ephesians 5 and 6 preserve duties among husbands, wives, parents and children. The Pastoral qualifications assume ordered homes. A claimed call that consistently discards clear Biblical obligations has failed a necessary test.

At the same time, family approval cannot be made a condition of obedience. A parent may desire a more prestigious career. A spouse may fear a genuine transition. A community may define success almost entirely by income. The disciple must listen humbly, plan carefully and honor legitimate duties, but Christ remains Lord when every other voice has been heard.

His Own Life Also

The final rival in verse 26 is not merely family but self. A person may leave home for ministry and still be governed by reputation, control, comfort or the desire to appear heroic. Jesus reaches beneath the visible sacrifice to the ownership of life itself. Calling is not permission to construct a religious identity. It is submission to Christ.

Pastoral guardrail

Supreme allegiance does not mean maximum disruption. The disciple is not required to choose the most painful option, but to choose Christ when obedience and self-rule cannot both be preserved.

4. Luke 14:27: The Cross Before the Crown

A First-Century Image of Shame and Death

Modern speech often calls any inconvenience a cross. Jesus' hearers knew the cross as an instrument of Roman execution, public shame and irreversible loss. A condemned person carrying a crossbeam was not improving his circumstances. He was moving toward death under another authority. The image makes self-denial more than delayed gratification.

Luke 9:23 adds the word 'daily.' Discipleship includes decisive surrender and repeated obedience. The daily cross may involve quiet faithfulness, rejected opportunities, disciplined purity, costly truth-telling or patient service with little recognition. It may involve persecution. It must not be reduced either to dramatic martyrdom or to ordinary annoyance.

Come After Me

Cross-bearing is not suffering for its own sake. Jesus says to bear the cross and come after Him. The direction matters. Some hardship is caused by foolishness, pride, poor planning or mistreatment by others. Such pain may still become an occasion for grace, but pain does not become holy merely because it hurts. Christian sacrifice is defined by following Christ in truth, love and obedience.

This is particularly important when discussing ministry training. Severe schedules and limited food may demonstrate endurance, but administrators cannot use Luke 14 to excuse abuse or unnecessary deprivation. A school serves the church when its discipline forms students for faithful service. It betrays that purpose when hardship is manufactured as a spiritual credential or when authority becomes unaccountable.

The Pattern of Christ

Philippians 2:5-8 grounds Christian self-emptying in Jesus, who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Second Corinthians 8:9 says that though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor. The disciple's sacrifice is therefore responsive, not redemptive. We do not pay for salvation. We follow the One who purchased us.

5. Luke 14:28-30: The Unfinished Tower

Luke 14:28-30

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Sit Down First

Jesus commends deliberate consideration. The prospective builder does not display faith by refusing to calculate. He sits down before construction begins. This directly corrects the idea that planning is unbelief. Proverbs commends counsel and foresight. A person considering Bible college may properly examine doctrine, church recognition, family responsibilities, cost, work possibilities, health and the school's record.

Counting the cost is not an attempt to discover whether Christ is worth the price. His worth is not in question. The counting exposes whether the hearer understands the claim being made. The builder must not confuse emotional beginning with faithful completion.

Enough to Finish

The language of sufficiency can be misunderstood as though discipleship were completed by natural willpower. The wider Gospel of Luke teaches dependence upon God's mercy and the Spirit's power. Yet grace does not eliminate perseverance. The person who publicly identifies with Christ should understand that the path is not a temporary project adopted only while the conditions remain favorable.

For ministry candidates, completion has several dimensions. Academic completion matters, but a diploma is not the finish line. Sound doctrine, tested character, service under authority and long obedience matter more than commencement exercises. The church should celebrate education without confusing credentials with qualification.

The Shame of an Abandoned Claim

The unfinished structure becomes a public contradiction. The builder announced an intention but could not carry it through. Jesus is not encouraging believers to ridicule those who struggle or fall. He is warning against a profession that was never willing to receive the terms of discipleship. Restoration remains possible for the repentant, as Peter's history demonstrates. The warning is against casual allegiance, not against grace for failure.

6. Luke 14:31-33: The King and Total Surrender

Luke 14:31-33

Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

A Stronger King Is Coming

The second illustration intensifies the first. A builder decides whether to begin. A king faces another king whose force is twice as large. The situation does not flatter human autonomy. The weaker king must recognize reality and seek terms while there is time. Many interpreters understand this as another picture of considering the cost. It may also suggest that the hearer cannot defeat the rightful King and must yield.

Both meanings press toward the same conclusion. Jesus is not one adviser among several. The question is not how to fit Him into a protected life plan. The question is whether the hearer will receive His terms. Discipleship begins with surrender because Christ is Lord.

Forsaketh Not All That He Hath

The verb can carry the sense of saying farewell, renouncing or relinquishing a claim. Luke records occasions of literal divestment. The first disciples leave nets. Levi leaves the receipt of custom. Zacchaeus radically reorders his wealth. The early Jerusalem believers share possessions. Yet Luke also records disciples who retain homes and resources for hospitality and mission.

Verse 33 therefore cannot be reduced to a universal mathematical rule that every Christian must own nothing. It does establish universal dispossession at the level of lordship. The disciple may hold property only as a steward under Christ. Jesus has the right to redirect its use, remove it or require generosity. A possession that cannot be surrendered has become a possessor.

The Direct Answer to the Study Question

God's call does not have to satisfy an ordinary return-on-investment analysis. Abraham leaves without knowing the destination. Moses chooses affliction with God's people rather than the treasures of Egypt. The fishermen leave income-producing nets. Paul counts former gains as loss for Christ. None of these decisions was irrational because each rested upon the character and promise of God. They were financially costly and spiritually reasoned.

The distinction matters. Biblical faith is not a leap into meaninglessness. A call that contradicts Scripture, rejects tested counsel, neglects dependents or depends upon false claims does not become divine merely because it loses money. Financial disadvantage can accompany obedience. It cannot certify obedience.

A compact formula

Calling must make Biblical sense. It should be tested by Scripture, character, gifting, providence and church recognition. Financial consequences belong inside that discernment, but they do not sit on the throne.

7. Did Jesus Promise to Improve Your Life?

Abundant Life Is Not a Luxury Contract

John 10:10 records Jesus saying that He came so His sheep might have life more abundantly. The verse is sometimes detached from the shepherd discourse and turned into a promise of material increase. In context, Jesus contrasts Himself with thieves and hirelings. He gives life, knows His sheep and lays down His life for them. Abundance is the fullness of life under the Good Shepherd, not a guarantee of rising income.

The New Testament does promise profound improvement. The believer receives forgiveness, reconciliation with God, adoption, the Holy Spirit, a new family, purpose, hope and eternal life. These are not consolation prizes for missing material prosperity. They are the central riches of salvation. Yet the same New Testament promises tribulation, opposition, discipline and participation in Christ's sufferings.

Mark 10: The Hundredfold With Persecutions

Peter says that the disciples have left all and followed Jesus. Christ answers that no one who has left house, family or lands for His sake and the Gospel's will fail to receive a hundredfold now, with persecutions, and eternal life in the world to come. The promise includes the new covenant community, in which believers receive homes, brothers, sisters and shared provision. It does not omit persecution. The words 'with persecutions' prevent the promise from becoming a prosperity formula.

Loss and Gain in Philippians 3

Paul describes inherited status, religious achievement and social capital as gain that he counted loss for Christ. He does not say the former things had no value in any setting. He says their value could not compete with the excellency of knowing Christ. The accounting language is deliberate. Christian discipleship has a ledger, but Christ changes the categories by which gain and loss are measured.

Therefore the honest answer is both yes and no. Jesus infinitely improves life by reconciling sinners to God and bringing them into His kingdom. He does not promise to improve every earthly circumstance. He may lead a disciple toward less security, less applause and less control. The life He gives is better because He is its center, not because it is easier.

8. Salvation Is Free, Discipleship Costs Everything

Avoiding a False Opposition

The familiar sentence that salvation is free while discipleship costs everything can be useful if its terms are carefully explained. Romans 6:23 calls eternal life the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8-9 excludes works as the basis of salvation. No tuition, missionary sacrifice, surrendered career or act of poverty can purchase justification.

The same grace that saves also creates a people for good works. Ephesians 2:10 follows verses 8 and 9. Titus 2 says that grace teaches believers to deny ungodliness. The call to discipleship is not an advanced elective for unusually serious Christians. Everyone who belongs to Christ comes under His lordship, though believers mature at different rates and require patient correction.

Cost Is Response, Not Purchase Price

When Jesus commands surrender, He is not naming the price by which a sinner buys entry. He is exposing the impossibility of receiving Him while reserving a higher throne for self. The treasure hidden in a field and the pearl of great price evoke joyful relinquishment because the kingdom's worth has been seen.

This distinction protects both grace and obedience. If sacrifice earns salvation, the cross of Christ is diminished and pride is fed. If grace leaves possessions, ambitions and loyalties untouched, discipleship is reduced to verbal assent. Biblical preaching refuses both errors.

Hardship Is Not Merit

The difficult conditions in the Bible-college story should awaken respect and generosity. They should not create a ranking system in which those who suffer more are assumed to be more saved, more called or more useful. Paul could abound and be abased. His contentment rested in Christ in both conditions. Poverty can tempt, deform and destroy just as wealth can. Neither condition is morally self-interpreting.

9. What Bible College Can and Cannot Do

A School Can Prepare

Ezra 7:10 gives a durable pattern: Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, to do it and to teach it. Study, obedience and instruction belong together. Second Timothy 2:15 commands the workman to study so that he rightly divides the word of truth. A good Bible college can provide disciplined engagement with Scripture, church history, doctrine, languages, preaching, counseling and ministry practice.

Training also places students in community. Teachers can detect interpretive habits, peers can expose immaturity and supervised ministry can reveal whether classroom convictions survive contact with people. The schedule described in the article joined academics with chapel, prayer, practical labor and evangelistic service. That integration helps explain why the author emphasized character and honor among graduates rather than merely the possession of degrees.

A School Cannot Call

No institution can regenerate a student, manufacture the Spirit's gifting or confer divine authority by diploma. In Acts 13 the Holy Ghost calls Barnabas and Saul, and the church recognizes and sends them. In Acts 18 Apollos is eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, yet Priscilla and Aquila help him understand the way of God more perfectly. Preparation and correction matter, but neither replaces God's initiative.

The Bible also knows effective servants without formal college training. Peter and John were perceived as unlearned and ignorant men, yet their hearers recognized that they had been with Jesus. That verse should not be used to glorify ignorance. It shows that the decisive qualification is not institutional prestige. The church needs trained minds that remain visibly dependent upon Christ.

The Local Church Must Test and Recognize

First Timothy 3 and Titus 1 emphasize observable character: blamelessness, fidelity, sobriety, hospitality, sound doctrine and ordered family life. Second Timothy 2:2 describes truth committed through faithful people who will teach others also. Desire for ministry is examined within the community that can observe a candidate over time.

A wise process therefore asks several questions. Is the candidate's doctrine sound? Is there evidence of conversion and growing holiness? Are gifts recognizable in actual service? Does the person receive correction? Do mature believers and church leaders recognize the direction? Is providence opening a responsible path? Bible college may serve that process. It must not bypass it.

Institutional limit

Bible college can sharpen tools, deepen knowledge and test discipline. It cannot replace the Holy Ghost, the authority of Scripture or the confirming judgment of a faithful local church.

10. Financial Planning, Family Duty and Ministerial Support

Planning Is Not Unbelief

Luke 14 itself tells the hearer to sit down and count. A ministry candidate should know the actual cost of training, expected debt, realistic employment, family needs and available church support. Plans may change under providence, but a refusal to ask ordinary questions is not superior faith. First Timothy 5:8 remains in force. A married candidate cannot use calling language to silence a spouse or conceal preventable instability. Churches should help candidates distinguish between necessary sacrifice and avoidable chaos. In some cases the faithful path will be full-time study. In others it will be part-time study, apprenticeship, local mentoring or continued employment while preparation develops.

Those Who Preach May Live of the Gospel

First Corinthians 9 gives sustained attention to ministerial support. Paul appeals to ordinary labor, the law concerning the unmuzzled ox, temple service and the Lord's command that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. He sometimes waived that right so that the Gospel would not be hindered. His voluntary surrender did not erase the right itself.

This is essential when Paul is presented as the model tentmaker. Acts 18 records his trade. Acts 20 records his labor with his hands and his concern for the weak. Yet a church cannot use Paul's exceptional self-denial as a policy for keeping faithful ministers unsupported. A gift ceases to be voluntary when an institution demands it while benefiting from the sacrifice.

Double Honor and Shared Burden

First Timothy 5:17-18 connects elders who labor in word and doctrine with double honor, then cites both the unmuzzled ox and the laborer's wages. Galatians 6:6 tells the taught to communicate unto the teacher in all good things. Third John commends support for traveling servants so that believers may become fellowhelpers to the truth.

The students' willingness to live simply therefore creates an obligation of admiration and an opportunity for partnership, not an excuse for neglect. The article's appeal recognized this. Tom and Danielin paid tuition, purchased instruments, sponsored events, sent care packages and provided meals. Danielin's birthday request for a good meal for all the students turns support into a personal expression of shared calling.

Support Requires Discernment

Generosity should be informed. Donors and churches should know the school's doctrine, governance, safeguarding, financial accountability and relationship to local churches. They should ask whether aid reaches students fairly and whether recipients are being prepared for actual service. Compassion and due diligence are friends, not rivals.

11. Historical Witness Beyond the Canon

The Didache: Hospitality With Discernment

The Didache is an early Christian church manual. It is not Scripture and cannot establish doctrine. Its treatment of traveling apostles, prophets and teachers nevertheless shows that early congregations wrestled with a familiar tension. Genuine laborers were to be received and supported, but communities were also warned about those who exploited hospitality or remained for personal gain.

That witness helps us see that support and accountability have long belonged together. A church that refuses all support contradicts New Testament generosity. A church that gives without discernment may reward manipulation. The canonical standard remains controlling, while the Didache illustrates how early believers attempted to practice it.

The Shepherd of Hermas: Elm and Vine

The Shepherd of Hermas uses the picture of an elm and a vine. The vine bears fruit but needs support. The elm appears fruitless, yet when it supports the vine both participate in fruitfulness. The image has often been used to describe partnership between those with material resources and those devoted to ministry.

Again, the writing is not canonical and should not be quoted as divine authority. Its usefulness is historical and illustrative. It gives a memorable shape to the principle stated authoritatively in Third John: those who help faithful workers become fellowhelpers to the truth.

Why Include Noncanonical Sources?

Historical Christian texts can show how earlier believers heard, organized and applied Biblical commands. They may preserve illuminating metaphors or evidence of church practice. They must remain witnesses under Scripture. They cannot correct an apostle, create an obligation that the Bible does not create or settle a doctrine by antiquity alone.

Authority statement

The KJV text of canonical Scripture controls every conclusion in this commentary. The Didache and The Shepherd of Hermas are included only as early historical witnesses.

12. Pastoral Conclusions for Calling and College

A Call Must Be Tested

The phrase 'God called me' is weighty because it places a decision under divine authority. It should therefore invite testing rather than end discussion. Scripture, character, gifting, church recognition, providence and responsible counsel should converge over time. The test is not whether the path is painless. The test is whether it is faithful.

Sacrifice Must Not Be Romanticized

The Cebu students' discipline deserves honor. Their circumstances should also move believers with resources toward practical fellowship. Admiration without assistance can become a refined form of distance. At the same time, supporters should not prefer stories in which people remain

visibly poor because those stories feel spiritually moving. The goal is not to preserve deprivation. The goal is to equip faithful servants and strengthen healthy churches.

Financial Sense Is a Servant, Not a Lord

Budgets tell the truth about limited resources. They help a family prepare, a church steward funds and a student avoid preventable bondage. Financial analysis becomes idolatrous only when it is granted veto power over every costly act of obedience. A decision may have a negative earthly return and still be wise because God's kingdom supplies the governing horizon.

Calling Is Larger Than Occupation

Not every Christian calling requires leaving a career. Many believers honor Christ precisely by remaining in business, trades, education, government, medicine or the home. They support ministry, practice justice, witness to colleagues and steward resources. The study should not divide Christians into spiritual ministers and secular supporters. The body has many members under one Head.

Tom's narrative itself contains both modes. Prosperity enabled giving and mission travel. Later full-time ministry changed the available income but not the calling to serve. The important continuity is not occupational status. It is the transfer of ownership to Christ.

The Final Measure

Jesus does not ask whether the tower produced the highest resale value. He asks whether the would-be disciple has faced the terms of following Him. The final measure is not comfort gained, income protected or hardship accumulated. It is faithfulness to the Lord who bore the cross before commanding His people to carry theirs.

Pastoral Summary

Luke 14:25-33 is not a recruitment slogan for reckless decisions. It is Christ's candid declaration that He will not accept a subordinate place. Family, life and possessions are good gifts, but none may become a rival lord. The disciple must count the cost because superficial beginnings are spiritually dangerous. The disciple must surrender because the stronger King has rightful authority.

The Bible-college story gives these truths faces, meals, schedules and choices. Young people prepared for service without expecting education to multiply their wealth. Their example does not prove every individual call, nor does it sanctify every hardship. It does reveal how strange obedience can appear when money is treated as the only rational measure.

The church's response should contain both discernment and generosity. Test those who say they are called. Train those whose character and gifts are being recognized. Require sound doctrine and accountable conduct. Then refuse to let their willingness to sacrifice become an excuse for withholding support. The laborer is worthy of his hire, and those who help faithful workers become fellowhelpers to the truth.

Final answer

No, God's calling does not have to make financial sense. It must make Biblical sense. Jesus promises a life richer in Him, not a life insulated from sacrifice. Count honestly, surrender completely, obey responsibly and support faithfully.

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Grace and costly obedience: Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:5-8; Philippians 3:7-11; Hebrews 11:24-26.

Preparation and qualification: Ezra 7:10; Acts 4:13; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:2, 15; Titus 1:5-9.

Work, provision and support: Acts 20:33-35; 1 Corinthians 9:7-18; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Timothy 5:8, 17-18; 3 John 5-8.

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