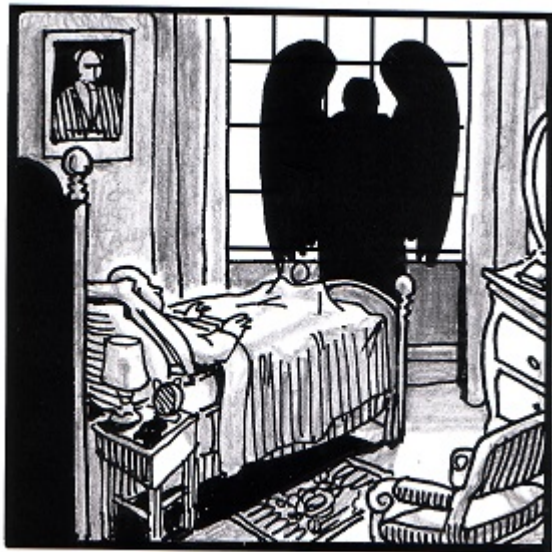


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by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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[Eph 2:1-10](#); Luke 12:13-21(Luke 12:15).

“Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, life does not consist of possessions” (Luke 12:15).

Anxiety about a possible global recession has people with savings checking with their fund managers and wealth consultants. Will the money they set aside for retirement be eroded by inflation or some other nameless tech disaster no one foresees and cannot explain. I sometimes think that my financial cushion is only a number in some computer that could evaporate overnight. It has happened, like the 2008 mortgage crisis when everyone with a portfolio was assessing the percentage lost to the bursting bubble of paper wealth. It was a time of sober reflection on assumptions about the system, our government and the talking heads on TV.

The wealthy landowner in Jesus’ parable in today’s Gospel congratulated himself on harvests that filled his barns, giving him a sense of security for years to come. But he will die that very night, and God calls him a fool for building up material wealth without attending to the riches that really matter before God.

Money is necessary for our survival, but what Jesus is addressing is preoccupation with earning and managing wealth as the consuming passion of our lives. Not only does this create the illusion of success and security, but it also keeps us from valuing other forms of personal investment in relationships and service that in the end prove to be the real source of well-being.

Greed, also known as avarice, is a capital sin because he gets to the root of our being and takes over our conscious perceptions. We see it everywhere, judge this or that valuable only if it converts to cash or can lead to monetary gain. We calculate our lives, our friendships, define success, envy wealthy people, lie awake worrying about interest rates and the markets, whether to invest or divest, how to turn a profit in any situation.

For Jesus, the antidote to greed was trust in God and a day-by-day focus on true wealth measured in the heart, building trust with friends, maintaining a realistic view of how little happiness money can buy but how investing love everywhere will always bring a harvest of goodwill and reliable friendship. Jesus lived this way, traveled light, gave himself away and came in on empty. Not a bad way to pass through this world rich in every way that really counts.

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